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**GLOBALISATION PROCESSES AND THE LABOUR MARKET. SELECTED COUNTRIES AND ASPECTS**

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**PROCESY GLOBALIZACYJNE A RYNEK PRACY. WYBRANE KRAJE I ASPEKTY**

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**Summary:** Changes of an economic, social and even political character are consequences of the process of globalisation that has been expanding for several recent decades. Changes in employment structure and thereby in the vision of the labour market are one of the results of this process. Changes of this type have their origins in modern technologies because they transform industrial civilisation into service civilisation. The scale of these changes indirectly depends on the potential of the labour resources occurring in local labour markets (they represent the whole countries). The paper focusses on analyses of the dynamics of changes in employment structures in major economy sectors in selected European Union states with a clear emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe in connection with changes in the consumption model approached as an echo of the globalisation processes.

**Keywords:** globalisation, servicisation, consumption model, labour market.

**Streszczenie:** Konsekwencją procesu globalizacji rozwijającego w ostatnich latach XX wieku są zmiany o charakterze gospodarczym, społecznym, a nawet politycznym. Jednym z rezultatów tego procesu są zmiany w strukturze zatrudnienia, a tym samym w strukturze rynku pracy. Zmiany te mają swoje korzenie przede wszystkim w nowoczesnych technologiach i powodują przekształcenie cywilizacji przemysłowej w cywilizację usługową, a ich skala zależy pośrednio od potencjału zasobów pracy występujących na lokalnych rynkach pracy (rozumianych w ujęciu całych państw). W artykule skoncentrowano się na analizie dynamiki zmian struktury zatrudnienia w głównych sektorach gospodarki w wybranych państwach Unii Europejskiej z wyraźnym naciskiem na państwa Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Jednocześnie zwrócono uwagę na fakt, że zmiany w modelu konsumpcji traktować należy jako echo procesów globalizacyjnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** globalizacja, serwicyzacja, model konsumpcji, rynek pracy.

## 1. Introductory remarks

The paper is focused on the analyses of the dynamics of the parameters characterising the labour market in selected EU states with reference to globalisation processes. The major purpose of the paper is to assess the changes in the labour market structure that echo the globalisation processes associated with the accession of Poland and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to the European Union. The detailed analyses include discussions concerning the dynamics of changes in occupational activity rates and employment rates. They take into account the dynamics of changes in employment structure in view of the progressing servicisation process. With reference to three major economy sectors, for the purpose of simplification, employment indices were replaced by percentage shares of people employed in every sector of the economy. The time range includes the period between 2004 and 2013, and the group of states selected for analyses includes the countries of Central and Eastern Europe bloc that belong to the structures of the European Union. Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Lithuania as well as Latvia and Estonia, are the countries that are included in the detailed analyses in the paper. Applied research methods are limited to analyses of indices, and the methods of prediction associated with the so-called principle of allotting most importance to more recent observations [Nowak 2002, p. 190], e.g. the method of harmonic weights is used for the purpose of the construction of forecasts.

The labour markets of the selected countries have been subject to considerable changes after 2004 due to the necessity of adjustment to the requirements of the EU, the need to comply with a series of common economic strategies (e.g. the Lisbon Strategy), or simply the consequences of the so-called “open borders”, as well as the intensified wave of labour-related migration observed after 2004. Therefore the period of research common for all the countries includes the time between 2004 and 2013, even though Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU a little later. Data accessible on the Eurostat site and national statistical offices constituted the database. The main research methods applied in the study in particular include rate analysis, construction of trend line and an attempt to determine the projections of a selected group of parameters defining the situation on the labour market. Graphic interpretations of selected rates are also applied if necessary.

## 2. Globalisation processes and their consequences

In general, globalisation is a relatively new notion that emerged in the 1980s. In its simplest expression it represents the joining and permeating of economic systems which leads to the formation of international connections abolishing economic, social and political borders, among others. The globalisation process is associated with the specific hopes and fears of an economic and social nature. With reference to the process of globalisation, the object of the observations, analyses and assessment

comprises changes that occur in various spheres of economy functioning, particularly in the sphere of the functioning of the labour market, including those related to the consumers' position and changes in consumption.

Recognising consumption as a significant element of social and economic reality determined by the coincidence of various factors, attention should be paid, among others, to the globalisation of labour division and knowledge, the growing economic and financial risk, demographic changes, and also the emergence of a new economic and political order. Consumption has become one of the most important categories not only in economics but also in other social disciplines, particularly in sociology, psychology and anthropology. The dynamics of changes in the consumption model directly affects the structure of the labour market, especially in the sphere of the expanding phenomenon of economy servicisation.

Economy servicisation in practice represents an increase in the importance of services in the economy, expressed both in the share of service sector III and the expansion of diversified service functions in other sectors. Structural changes in the economy have their sources in modern technologies. They transform industrial civilisation into a service civilisation created by a knowledge society. The scale of these changes indirectly depends on the potential of the labour resources occurring on local (national) labour markets.

### **3. Occupational activity and the level of employment – the dynamics of post-accession changes**

Analysing the major rate describing the situation on the labour market, e.g. the occupational activity rate defined in the simplest way as a percentage share of occupationally active people (that is working people or non-working people but interested in starting work, and the unemployed) in the total population of a particular category distinguished by age, level of education and gender, its general shape is firstly discussed for the 15 to 64 age group. On the basis of reliable sources<sup>1</sup> providing the values of occupational activity rate, it can be stated that the intensity of the rate was definitely different for selected countries, which is not surprising considering the varied economic conditions. In 2004 the lowest level of occupational activity was observed in Hungary (60.2%), whereas it was the highest in Estonia. In the successive years in the case of all the states, an insignificant growth of the level of occupational activity was observed. On average, the increase was not higher than 1% per year but this brought a definite improvement in the level of occupational activity in the scale of the studied ten years. The largest dynamics of change measured on the basis of

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<sup>1</sup> As was already mentioned, the studies presented in the EUROSTAT database, and in cases when they were not available, the values of the rates accessible on the websites of the central statistical offices of the particular countries were the major source of data.

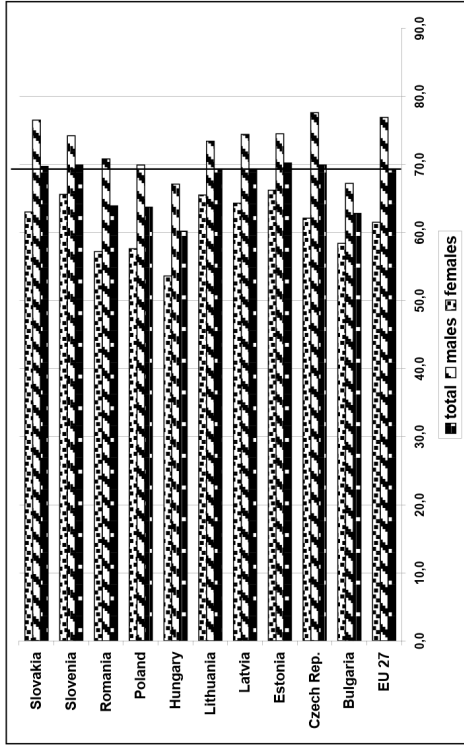
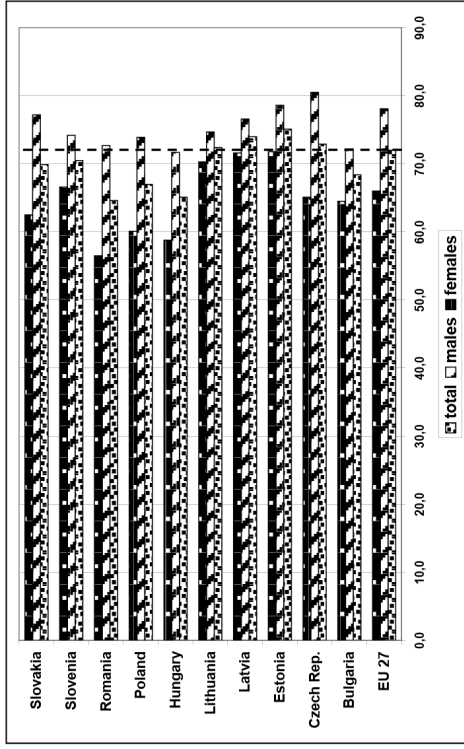


Fig. 1. The level of occupational activity in selected EU states in 2004 and 2013 in %.

Source: own case study on the basis of [Internet 1].

geometric mean<sup>2</sup> was observed in Hungary and Bulgaria, and the smallest in Slovenia and Slovakia (about 0.95% and 0.032% respectively). Taking into consideration a mean level of the rate for all EU countries, in 2013 only Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and the Czech Republic slightly exceeded its level, whereas other states did not reach the average EU level that was 69% in 2004, and 72% in 2013 (Figure 1).

The actual situation on the labour market is more precisely described by the employment rate and therefore its value is usually applied in detailed analyses with additional factors taken into account. Analysing the dynamics of the employment level between 2004 and 2013, it can be generally stated that the level of employment increased in 2013 in comparison with 2004 (Figure 2). However the rate of growth in particular states was not the same, but on the contrary, in some of them (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia or Slovenia) a reversal of direction of changes was observed in 2008. Unfavourable changes occurring on financial markets at the time had a significant impact on the economic situation of countries and thus on the labour market, or perhaps the financial crisis negatively influenced the labour market through a reduction in employment, which in turn caused economic collapse. Therefore the tendency of the decline in the employment level observed after 2008 can be considered as a consequence of the financial crisis that affected not only Europe but other countries in the world.

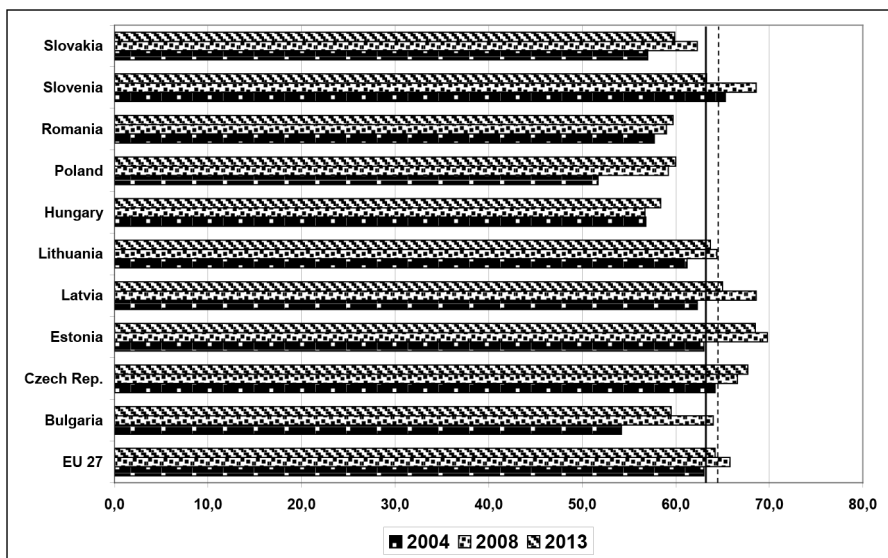


Fig. 2. Employment rate in selected EU countries in 2004, 2008 and 2013 in %

Source: own case study on the basis of [Internet 2].

<sup>2</sup> Own calculations.

#### 4. Dynamics of changes in employment by sectors of economy

Analysing the employment level, it ought to be indicated that it is closely related to factors of a demographic nature and their influence on this rate must not be ignored. In general, in the analysed period between 2004 and 2013 a slight increase in employment occurred on the scale of the whole European Union structure (around 2%), however in individual countries the scale of growth was not maintained at the general EU level, whereas in some of them the increase in employment rate was more significant (Bulgaria, Estonia and Poland), and in the case of others a clear decline was observed (Slovenia and Hungary).

The sectoral character of the economy in the approach of the simplest three-sector division into industry, services and agriculture is another factor diversifying the employment level. The economic restructuring of particular EU states forced changes in the proportion of the employment structure. The necessity to commence work in the sector of services and not industry was occurring on an increasingly larger scale. At the same time, the notion of “services” definitely changed. To a large degree this was associated with the emergence of new types of services and the change in their role and scope. This affected economic development in a direct and indirect sense through the increasing competitiveness of various branches of the economy.

The economic policy of governments started in the 1990s in the sphere of the restructuring process in many countries including Poland, caused the fall of many unprofitable state enterprises. This resulted in a significant decline in the importance of industry and agriculture in general economic structures. The rapid growth of the role of trade, mainly due to the low capital intensity in the creation of new work places was an additional reason for the growth of the service sector in the economy. As a result of the political changes and restructuring the economy, growth of the service infrastructure was observed, and the scope of its activity largely expanded. Modernisation of the economy and the improvement in its competitiveness has been obtained through the implementation of new and totally new types of knowledge-based market services. The development of the service sector associated with the development and improvement of economic processes affects their long-term and sustainable development.

Referring to the scope and role of services, it should be specified that the sphere of services includes all branches of the national economy, the basis of which is providing specific services for people (either for free or for a fee), and for the needs of the national economy, which include mainly transport and trade. Additionally, the service sector includes the sphere of non-material activity including such areas as science and technology development, education, culture and art, health protection and social welfare, physical education, tourism and recreation, housing management, finances and insurance, state administration, justice administration and also political organisations. In trying to identify the direct or indirect influence of services on

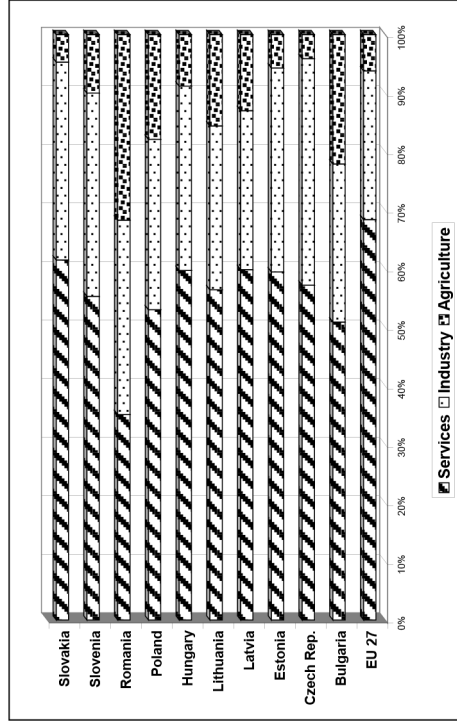
economic processes, it should be enough to indicate the close relationships between science and technology development and the rate of growth of production sectors of the national economy. The development of science and technology, the popularisation and increase in the level of education, culture development, health protection and other living and housing conditions are currently very important elements stimulating social and economic growth. The provided non-material services affect growth in the efficiency and quality of labour of people employed in the national economy through the increase in the level and quality of education, professional qualifications and the general growth in the level of culture and quality of life. They also accelerate the rate of the social and economic development of the country. Therefore in detailed analyses in the sphere of the labour market structure, the employment dynamics in the service sector, e.g. the third sector of the national economy, must not be neglected.

At the same time, attention should be drawn to the fact that the increase in employment in services takes place at the cost of the considerable loss of workers in two other sectors. Yet if it is easy to explain the decline in employment in industry (restructuring, liquidation of unprofitable plants and workplaces or the unwillingness of workers to change their occupational qualifications), the drastic decline in the level of employment in agriculture is alarming and difficult to explain. Apart from the implementation of a series of innovations in agricultural production, people's unwillingness to work hard can be the only explanation here. The dynamics of the decline in the level of employment in agriculture is remarkably stronger than in industry. In the analysed period of ten years, the average annual decline in the level of unemployment in agriculture ranged from 1.6% and 1.9% for Bulgaria and Slovenia to 5.7% and 6.7% for Lithuania and Latvia, at the mean level of 2.1% in the EU. On the other hand, the corresponding measures of average annual decline in employment in industry ranged between 0.8% (Bulgaria) to 1.9 (Estonia) at the level of employment decline of 1.4% in the EU. A slight employment growth in industry, on average by 0.4%, was observed only in Poland.

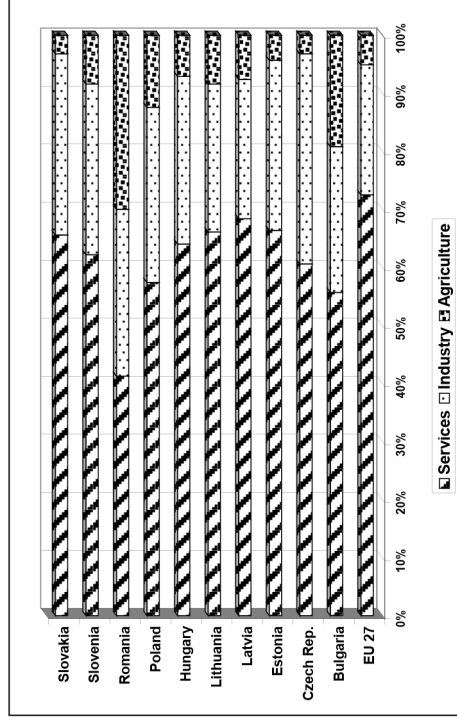
Analysing the employment structure by industries divided into three sectors (Figure 3), it can be stated that in each of the selected countries, employment in the service sector is on the highest level, and definitely exceeds the level of employment in other sectors of the economy. However, in comparison with the mean level of employment in services observed in the EU in total and amounting to 68.4% in 2004 and 72.5% in 2013, it is lower and definitely diversified in selected group of countries. Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Hungary were the closest to the mean EU level in 2004 (around 60%) and the most distant level was observed in Romania and Bulgaria (35% and 51% respectively). In 2013 the structure of arrangement by the value of the rate did not change, but the values of the rates only grew by several percentage points while still remaining below the mean EU level. The largest group of employed people in the third sector was observed in the Baltic States, i.e. Latvia (68.4%), Estonia (66.4%), Lithuania (66.1%) and in Slovakia, and the smallest number of people employed in services was reported among workers in Romania (41.3%) and Bulgaria (55.6%).



a) 2004



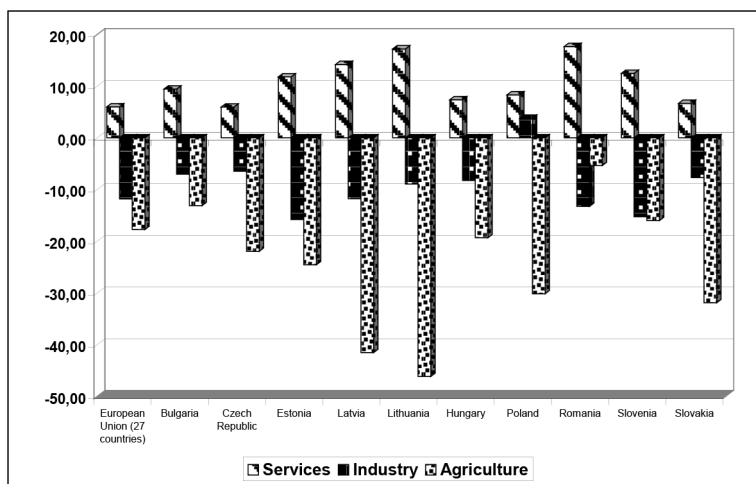
b) 2013



**Fig. 3.** Employment structure by industries in selected EU states in 2004 and 2013 in %.  
Source: own case study on the basis of [Internet 3].



Analysing the reasons for these divergences, different dynamics of economy restructuring and first of all the slightly later accession of these two countries to the EU structures can be indicated. Changes in the system of management imposed more dynamic development of modern technologies and thereby changes in the employment structure in member states. Reducing the role of industry and the so-called non-employment growth of GDP have had an undeniable influence on the increase in employment in the sphere of services and the reduction of employment in other sectors. The change in the method of employment consisting in self-employment, part-time employment or multi-employment is also important. These new forms of employment can be implemented in the sector of services on a larger scale than in industry. A detailed analysis of the mean rate of changes in employment level in the indicated three sectors of the economy in successive years of the time range between 2004 and 2013 shows that the most dynamic changes perceived as an annual increase in the level of employment in services were observed in Romania (1.82%) and Lithuania (1.78%). They were almost three times higher than the annual increase in employment in services in the whole EU (0.65%). On the other hand, the lowest rate of increase was observed in the Czech Republic (0.64%), and was slightly lower than the EU level.



**Fig. 4.** Dynamics of changes in the employment rate by sectors of the economy in 2013 in comparison with 2004 for selected EU states

Source: own case study on the basis of [Internet 3].

At the same time, as has been mentioned, a decline in the level of employment in industry and agriculture was observed. As expected, the decrease in employment in agriculture was definitely larger than in industry, and more severe in the countries

in which employment in services was growing most rapidly. This was observed in Lithuania (−6.65%), Latvia (−5.79%) and Slovakia (−5.79%). The smallest annual decline in employment in agriculture was observed in Romania (−0.61%).

If we assess the scale of growth and decline in employment in individual sectors in 2013 in comparison with 2004 for each of the states (Figure 4), it can be noticed that an increase was reported in each of the selected states. Furthermore, it must be indicated that a growing trend in the employment level in industry was observed only in Poland, whereas the decline of the percentage of people employed in agriculture was considerable and reached the level of 40% (Lithuania and Latvia).

## 5. Development trend in employment by sectors

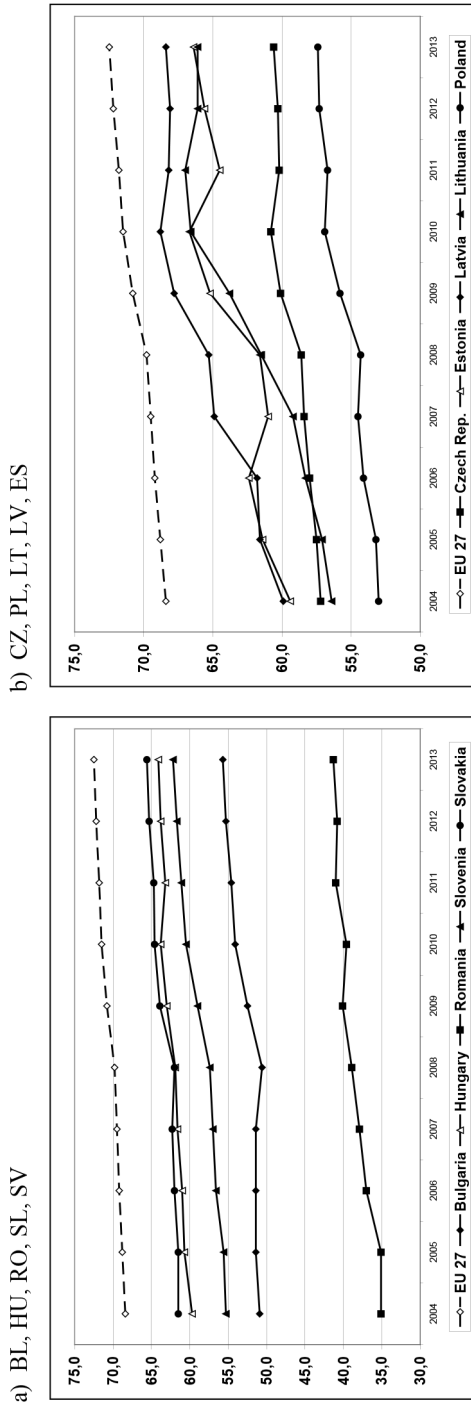
Analysing the changes in employment in individual sectors in detail, and particular the development trend of employment rates, it can be unequivocally stated that all ten selected states of Central-Eastern Europe show a similar or even the same growing or declining trend, namely a clear increase in the employment rate in services (Figures 5 a) and b)) that does not reach the mean employment rate in services in the EU, but is more dynamic. This is clear in the case of Romania (the mean annual growth in employment level in services is 1.82%), Lithuania (1.77% respectively) and Latvia (1.48%), whereas for the whole EU the mean rate of changes represents an increase of 0.64%. The rate of employment growth in services is close to the all-European level in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and amounts to 0.64% and 0.71%.

The opposite trend is observed while analysing employment in industry. Because of the fact that employment in services is increased by the cost of the loss of employment in industry and agriculture, the employment rate in both sectors shows a declining trend (Figures 6 a), b) and Figures 7 a) and b)).

The dynamics of changes is higher and more diversified in Bulgaria, Slovenia and Lithuania as well as Latvia and Estonia but employment in industry is on a higher level in each of the ten selected countries than the mean EU level.

In the selected countries employment in agriculture is also higher than the mean level of all EU states except for Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The largest number of workers is employed in agriculture in Romania, Bulgaria and Poland. However, the pace of decline is not satisfactory (it is too fast) and, if it is retained in the coming years in all the countries, except for Romania and Bulgaria, employment in agriculture will not exceed the level of 10% compared with the total number of employed population.

The conducted detailed analyses concerning the dynamics of changes in these shares, and the obtained shape of the trend line allowed for the determination of forecasts of employment share by sectors for the coming years. However the forecasts obtained on the basis of the determined forms of trend function were affected by significant errors and therefore one of the adaptation methods, i.e. prediction with



**Fig. 5.** Empirical trend function of the share of people employed in services for selected states for the years between 2004 and 2013

Source: own calculations.

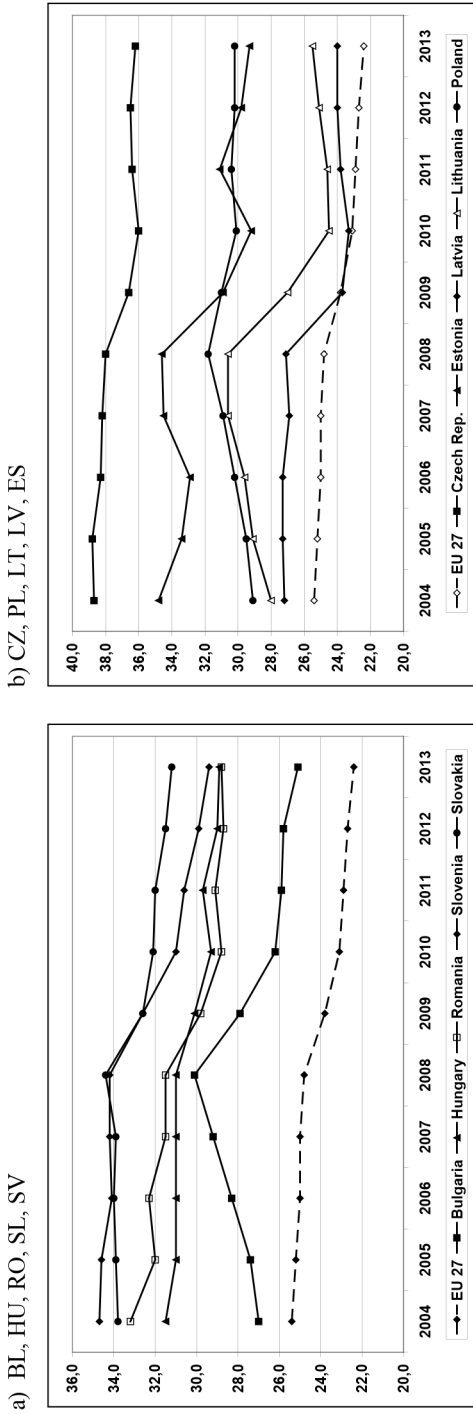


Fig. 6. Empirical trend function of the share of people employed in industry in selected states for the years between 2004 and 2013  
Source: own case study.

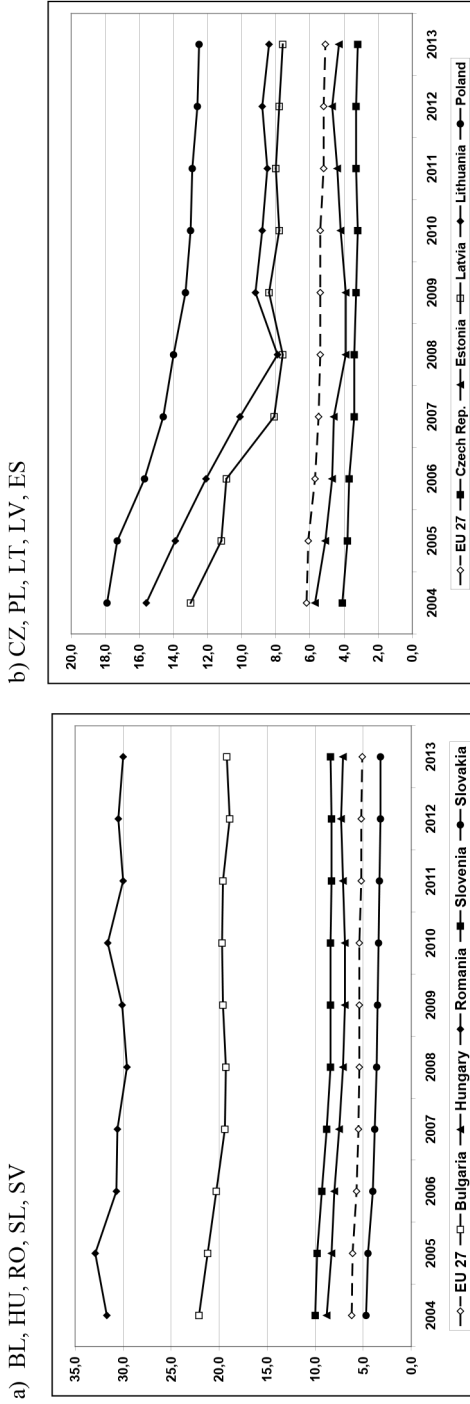


Fig. 7. Empirical trend function of the share of population working in agriculture in selected states for the years between 2004 and 2013  
Source: own case study.

the method of harmonic weights, was applied to develop projections of values of the employment structure measures by sectors [Nowak 2002]. According to this method, new information is preferred rather than the older one. This is a two-stage method where the first time series were equalised with the use of creeping trend to determine the size of predictions with the use of harmonic weights. The results are presented in Table 1. Employment structure by sectors is generally retained. A high and growing share of employment in services and a definite decline in employment in agriculture, as well as a less intense but also declining employment in industry are also observed.

**Table 1.** Forecasts of employment structures by sectors for the years between 2014 and 2016

GEO/TIME	SERVICES			INDUSTRY			AGRICULTURE		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
EU 27	72.97	73.44	73.92	22.09	21.78	21.48	4.99	4.88	4.78
Bulgaria	56.26	56.83	57.40	24.90	24.70	24.50	18.90	18.61	18.32
Czech Republic	60.99	61.38	61.78	35.93	35.67	35.40	3.11	3.03	2.95
Estonia	67.23	68.06	68.91	28.75	28.20	27.67	4.17	4.04	3.91
Latvia	69.42	70.45	71.49	23.67	23.34	23.02	7.16	6.75	6.35
Lithuania	67.28	68.47	69.69	25.24	24.98	24.72	7.84	7.32	6.83
Hungary	64.61	65.12	65.64	28.62	28.35	28.08	6.93	6.77	6.61
Poland	57.91	58.43	58.95	30.32	30.45	30.58	12.01	11.54	11.09
Romania	42.05	42.82	43.60	28.35	27.90	27.47	29.82	29.63	29.45
Slovenia	63.02	63.85	64.69	28.86	28.34	27.82	8.24	8.08	7.93
Slovakia		66.55	67.03	30.92	30.65	30.38	3.07	2.94	2.82

Source: own case study.

Comparing the obtained forecasts with the real values of measures for 2014 (Table 2), it can be stated that the differences are not significant.

**Table 2.** Structure of employment share by sectors in 2014 in selected EU states

GEO/TIME	EU 27	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Hungary	Poland	Romania	Slovenia	Slovakia
Services	73.1	55.6	60.1	67.4	68.8	66.1	66.2	58.3	42.2	62.5	65.6
Industry	21.9	25	36.7	28.8	23.7	24.7	27.1	30.2	28.5	29.2	31.1
Agriculture	5	19.4	3.2	3.7	7.4	9.2	6.7	11.5	29.3	8.3	3.3

Source: own case study on the basis of [Internet 9].

## 6. Resolutions of the “Lisbon Strategy” and the real EU labour market

Conducting considerations in the sphere of the impact of globalisation processes on the dynamics of development and variability in the structure of the labour market, plans of the development of the European Union collectively adopted by the economic councils of member states ought to be analysed in a more detailed way. Their task was to outline a common line of economic development, and the supreme goal of the adopted plans was to make the EU the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth leading to a larger number of better work places and higher social cohesion before 2010.

In the document called the Lisbon Strategy (*The Lisbon European Council – An Agenda of Economic and Social Renewal for Europe*) of 2000, the European Commission listed six major factors essentially affecting the deficiencies in employment in the European Union in comparison with, for example, the United States. They were:

- Employment gap among women, because slightly over 50% of women aged 15-64 worked in Europe, whereas in the USA two thirds of them were employed.
- Employment gap in the service sector – observed employment in the service sector was lower in the European Union than in the USA.
- Regional inequalities reflected in the fact that in the EU 15, unemployment was mainly concentrated in Germany, France, Italy and Spain; it was the highest in the south of the continent and in peripheral regions dominated by traditional industry branches.
- Long-term structural unemployment, meaning that around half of the unemployed people were jobless for over a year.
- Gap in skills particularly observed in the sphere of ICT that resulted from too small investment in education and training.
- Age gap which is apparent in the too low level of employment of people aged 55 – 64.

“Full employment” was indicated as the major target of the activities in the sphere of labour market. This very generally formulated target was emphasised in all documents of successive EU summits. The notion of “full employment” was defined in detail in the form of five specific targets that were to have been implemented before 2010. Some of them were supposed to be absolutely achieved before 2005 (these values are provided in brackets) and included:

- Employment rate of people aged 15-64 on the level of 70 percent (67 percent in 2005).
- Employment rate among women aged 15-64 on the level of 60 percent (57 percent).
- Employment rate among people aged 55-64 on the level of 50 percent.



- 5 years increase of the age at which workers on average leave the labour market and retire.

At the same time the reason for the differences between the EU 15 and the USA in the sphere of total labour input and product per capita was identified in the form of the shorter working time in Europe that had not been taken into consideration in the diagnosis accompanying the Strategy or in its targets.

The so-called extensive labour supply, i.e. the number of hours worked by one employed person in a year that was regularly declining every year, was a weakness of Western Europe. At the same time in the “old” and “new” European Union, the lower employment rate was the major source of the gap in comparison with the USA with respect to labour input per one person of working age. On the other hand, thanks to the improvement in this rate in Europe, the gap was reduced.

The gap of employment in services that has been reduced by half over the last ten years was another reason for the employment gap between the EU-15 and the USA as indicated in the Lisbon Strategy. This difference was reduced both among the old and new EU member states.

In Poland, the increase in the number of people working in industry almost balanced the decline reported in agriculture. Therefore medium-term trends of the relocation of resources from agriculture to industry and services can be indicated. The trend of employment growth in services was not similar. Large inter-sector diversification could be observed, and thus the co-existence of sectors of really varied dynamics of employment growth and labour productivity was apparent.

The need to diminish inter-regional differences on the European labour market was also emphasised in the Lisbon Strategy, although the target in this sphere was not indicated. These inequalities were caused on the one hand by the lower level of development of the peripheral regions that are far from economic centres, and on the other hand by changes in the structure of the European economy, as well as the decline in importance of traditional industry branches which in many European regions brought the necessity of restructuring and the long-term growth of unemployment. Additionally, the conducted analysis of implementation of individual targets of the Lisbon Strategy shows that the countries that succeeded in achieving (or being close to) the implementation of the target concerning total employment, usually also achieved other targets in the sphere of the labour market, particularly those concerning the employment of elderly people and women.

Referring back to the notion of globalisation, it is usually perceived as a process of linking various countries and even continents with increasingly stronger economic, technological, cultural and social ties. In a strictly economic approach, “globalisation represents the world integration of regional markets through the increase in intensity of multilateral flows of goods, capital, labour and innovations” [Nowak 2002].

Major technological innovations enhancing the world’s economic integration of the post-war period emerged in the sphere of communication. Thanks to them, financial barriers, barriers of access to knowledge and innovation transfer between

countries of various levels of development were reduced on a scale never observed before. This allowed for doubling the share of the international exchange of goods in world GDP and also the considerable acceleration of the mean rate of economic growth in the developing and transforming economies of the Northern hemisphere.

Strengthening the power with which individual economies affect each other through the integration of financial, capital and product markets is the characteristic feature of contemporary globalisation. Resources and ready products are transformed from one country to another considerably faster than in the past. Consequently, this offers easier innovation flow and greater flexibility in the case of economic turbulence. This means that globalisation can activate and steer growth and recession even in distantly located regions of the world, and the development of individual countries depends on the success of their foreign partners to a larger degree than before.

Globalisation caused the emergence of a new category of enterprises, i.e. transnational corporations. These units assess their own competitive position with reference to the whole world and thus they make decisions about commencing, continuing or withdrawing from business activity of a specific type in a particular area while taking into consideration broader than local or national economic determinants.

The result of globalisation processes is also observed in the labour division in individual industry sectors, like for example in the clothing, steel, car or IT industry. The change in employment structure and the increasingly expanding phenomena of de-industrialisation and servicisation of the labour market are the other consequences of globalisation processes.

De-industrialisation, defined as a reduction in the share of industry in employment and manufactured products, is one of the major trends observed in developed countries in recent decades. Its causes and possible results are the subject of both public debate and discussions in scientific environments. Despite the universal conviction of public opinion about the key importance of international competition in this process, economists emphasise its limited impact on employment structure and labour division, both in theoretical approach and on the basis of empirical data [Krugman, Lawrence 1994].

The accession of new countries to the already existing economic and political structures, as happened in 2004 and 2007 in the case of Poland and eleven other European countries, can be considered a manifestation of globalisation processes. Common economic strategies aimed at standardisation and improvement of living conditions of the inhabitants of particular regions are its consequence. The aforementioned Lisbon Strategy or currently implemented Europe 2020 strategy are examples here.

## 7. Conclusions

The dynamically changing economic reality on a world scale towards universal globalisation definitely affects the economies of individual countries. These changes force a series of successive changes in the shape of the behaviour of manufacturers of consumer goods and the very consumers themselves. The change in the consumption model observed on a micro and macroeconomic scale, as well as on the scale of production units and households, is translated into the demand and supply part of the labour market. This in turn brings changes in consumers' expectations and a change in employment in individual economy sectors. Structural changes in the economy have their sources in modern technologies; they transform industrial civilisation into a service civilisation created by a knowledge society. The scale of these changes indirectly depends on the potential of labour resources occurring on local labour markets. It is clear that economic changes have an evolutionary rather than revolutionary nature. It is not possible to implement changes in employment structure quickly while approaching them as the consequences of technological changes. In many cases technological changes, particularly in recent decades, have mostly a revolutionary character and the labour market cannot always follow them in full. The gender, age and education of the potential worker are important on the contemporary labour market and these three major demographic criteria in practice shape the structure of the contemporary labour market most significantly.

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