

EMN Asylum and Migration overview

Part II – national report
Poland 2025

This National Report was prepared by the Office for Foreigners acting as the coordinator of the National Contact Point to the European Migration Network in Poland (EMN Poland) and is a compilation of responses to questions from the European Migration Network (EMN) template for the Report. It follows the common specifications and methodology prepared by the European Migration Network.

The European Migration Network is a Europe-wide network providing information on migration and asylum. The EMN consists of National Contact Points (NCPs) in the EMN Member States (EU Member States except Denmark), Observer Countries (NO, GE, MD, UA, ME, AM, RS, MK, AL, UK) and the European Commission and is supported by the EMN Service Provider providing information on migration and asylum.

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The electronic version (both English and Polish) of the National Report is available at https://www.gov.pl/web/european-migration-network under "Publications".

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Executive summary 4
Introduction 5

1. Overview of key developments in migration and asylum 6
2. Overview of asylum and migration developments 10
3. Legal migration 12
4. International protection 15
5. Temporary protection and other measures in response to persons fleeing the war in Ukraine 17
6. Unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups 21
7. Integration and inclusion of migrants 23
8. Citizenship and statelessness 25
9. Schengen governance and other developments in border management and visa policy 26
10. Irregular migration 29
11. Trafficking in human beings 30
12. Return and readmission 36
13. Migration and development 37

Annex 38

Executive summary

Over the last few years, the migration situation in Poland has changed significantly, and 2025 was the year with a historically high number of foreign nationals holding valid residence documents. Poland remains a country characterised by an exceptionally high concentration of nationals from two neighbouring states – Ukraine and Belarus. This concerns both individuals who hold valid rights for residence, as well as those who apply for residence permits. At the same time, in 2025, a decline in the number of applications for international protection in comparison to 2024 was observed.

From 1 January to 30 June 2025, Poland held the Presidency at the Council of the European Union. Work was undertaken to strengthen security and reduce abuses related to entry and stay within the territory of the EU and the Schengen Area, ensure effective protection of the EU's external borders and counter hybrid threats resulting from the instrumentalisation of migration, as well as to limit the influx of irregular migrants into the EU.

In 2025, a number of important developments in the area of asylum and migration took place. Amendments to legislation introduced the electronic system: Case Handling Module (*Moduł Obsługi Spraw, MOS*) for applications for temporary residence, permanent residence, and longterm EU resident status (as of 27 April 2026), allowing Ukrainian citizens under temporary protection to submit applications for 3-year temporary residency (as of 5 May 2026). Significant changes were also adopted, among others, in relation to work-related migration and foreign students, as well as researchers.

By the amendment of the Act for Foreigners, a formal definition of 'instrumentalisation' was adopted. Actions undertaken by Belarus resulted in the introduction of temporary restrictions on the right to lodge an application for international protection, applied at the state border with the Republic of Belarus. Moreover, a temporary ban on staying in a designated area of the border zone at the Polish-Belarusian state border was announced, and further investments aimed at strengthening border security continued. As a result of persistent migratory pressure on the internal border with the Republic of Lithuania and the Federal Republic of Germany, the decision was also made to reintroduce temporary controls on these borders.

2025 brought about changes to legislation related to temporary protection concerning verification of the identity of beneficiaries of temporary protection, additional clarification regarding guardianship, as well as their rights and access to basic services. Other important solutions introduced in 2025 in Poland were related to the reception framework, unaccompanied minors, family reunification, integration, acquisition of citizenship, Poland's participation in large-scale EU IT systems and combatting trafficking in human beings and their return.

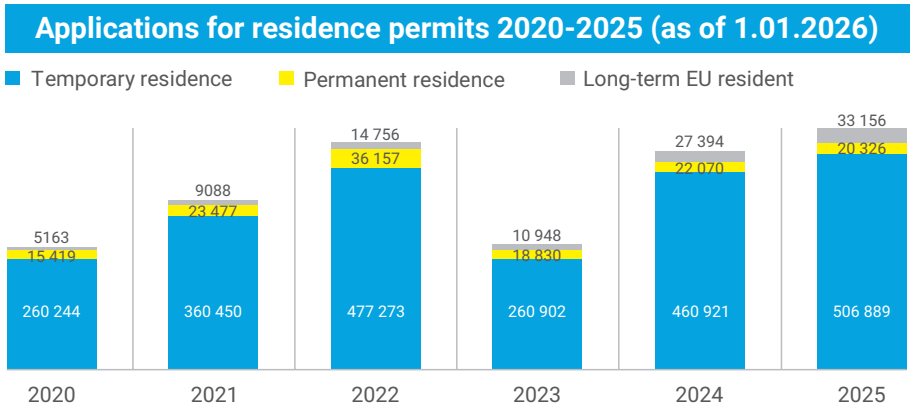
Introduction

In accordance with Article 9(1) of Council Decision 2008/381/EC establishing the European Migration Network, each EMN National Contact Point is required to provide an annual report describing the migration and asylum situation and developments in the Member State, as well as statistical data.

The EMN Asylum and Migration Overview on Migration and Asylum consists of two parts and a Statistical Annex (separate publication). Part I and the Statistical Annex are intended to inform policymakers, as well as the wider audience, about national developments in EMN Member States and Observer Countries. Part II, however, is aimed at those interested in a wider overview of the asylum and immigration situation in each of the EMN Member States – in this case, Poland. The National Report is structured to provide an overview of all aspects of migration and asylum in Poland, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025. It consists of 13 sections and the annex.

1. Overview of key developments in migration and asylum

Over the past six years, Poland has evolved from a country with relatively low migration pressure into one of the primary host nations within the European Union. The period between 2020 and 2025 witnessed unprecedented influx dynamics regarding foreign nationals, driven predominantly by armed conflicts in the region and growing labour market demands. In just five years, the volume of applications for residence permits doubled, rising from 280 000 in 2020 to approximately 560 000[1] in 2025. Throughout the entire period under review, employment has remained the underlying reason for roughly 75% of all temporary residence applications.



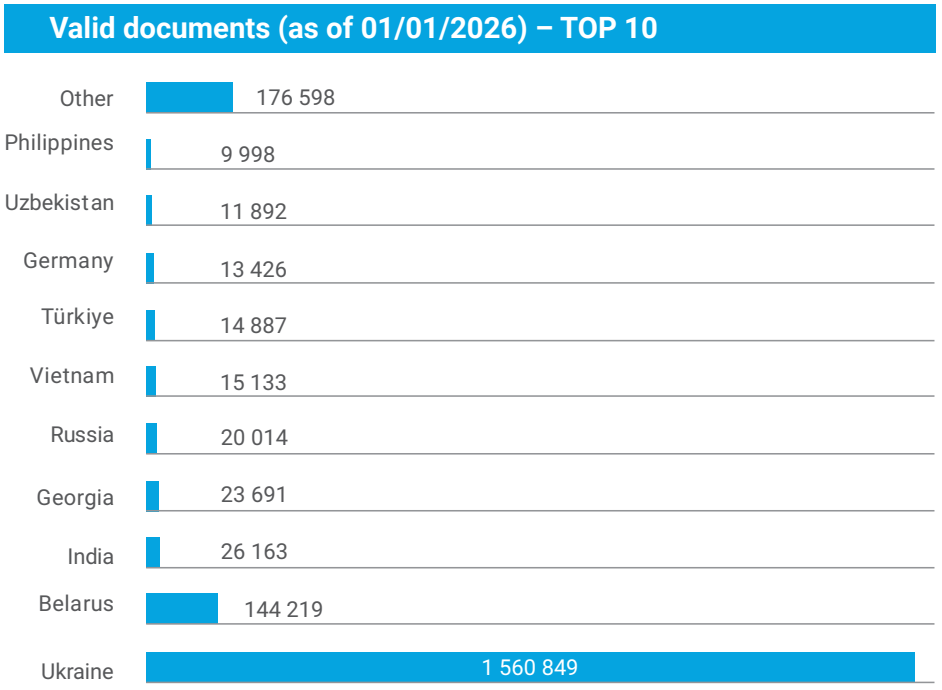
Valid residence permits

The number of foreign nationals holding valid residence documents in Poland reached a historic high of **2 017 000** at the end of 2025. This represents an increase of 42 000 (+2%) compared to the beginning of the previous year and an approximate 400% surge relative to 2020. Poland remains a country characterised by an exceptionally high concentration of nationals from two neighbouring states, who collectively account for 84% of all foreign nationals holding a valid permit of residence. Although the breakdown by nationality continues to be dominated by neighbouring countries, it is undergoing continuous diversification:

- **Ukraine:** 1 600 000 individuals (77% of the total),
- **Belarus:** 144 000 individuals (7% of the total).

Next in line are nationals from India (26 000), Georgia (24 000), Russia (20 000), Vietnam and Türkiye (15 000 each), Germany (13 000), Uzbekistan (12 000) and the Philippines (10 000). Despite the overwhelming numerical dominance of Ukrainian and Belarusian nationals, the presence of India, Uzbekistan and the Philippines within the top ten is a clear indicator of significant structural shifts. This trend demonstrates the growing importance of active workforce recruitment from non-European labour markets, which is becoming increasingly essential in the face of a deepening labour deficit in the Polish economy.

[1] Figures in the main text have been rounded for readability in illustrating trends. Exact values are displayed within the corresponding graphics.



Residence permit applications

In 2025, voivodeship offices received a total of 560,000 applications for residence permits (temporary, permanent and long-term EU resident). In terms of nationality, **Ukrainian citizens** continued to dominate, accounting for **58% of the total (326 800),** although their share has fluctuated in recent years (a significant drop from 73% in 2020). This decline in percentage does not result from a lower volume of applications but rather from the growing diversification of migrants' nationalities.

The subsequent groups include citizens of:

- **Belarus** (9%, 52 300) – holding a stable second position, with a significant increase from 13,500 in 2020.
- **Colombia** (4%, 23 000) – a phenomenon in 2025, climbing into the top three nationality groups due to the active recruitment of workers from Latin America.
- **Georgia** (4%, 20 600) and **India** (3%, 18 800) – both countries have maintained a consistently strong representation in labour migration statistics over recent years.

Temporary residence applications attract the greatest interest, with 507 000 submissions in 2025. The breakdown by purpose of stay is as follows:

- employment: 74%
- family reunification: 17%
- education: 3%
- other grounds: 6%

The most significant qualitative shift in recent years has been long-term EU residence status surpassing permanent residence. In 2025, this trend intensified (33 200 EU long-term residence permits vs. 20 000 permanent residence permits), demonstrating that immigrants (primarily from Ukraine and Belarus) increasingly view Poland as a launchpad for long-term integration into EU structures.

The number of EU citizen residence registrations has steadily increased, reaching 7 800 in 2025. Citizens of Romania, Germany and Italy registered their residence most frequently, accounting for approximately 40% of the total EU registrations. Citizens of Bulgaria, France and Spain also represent a significant share of the figures.

Residence permit decisions

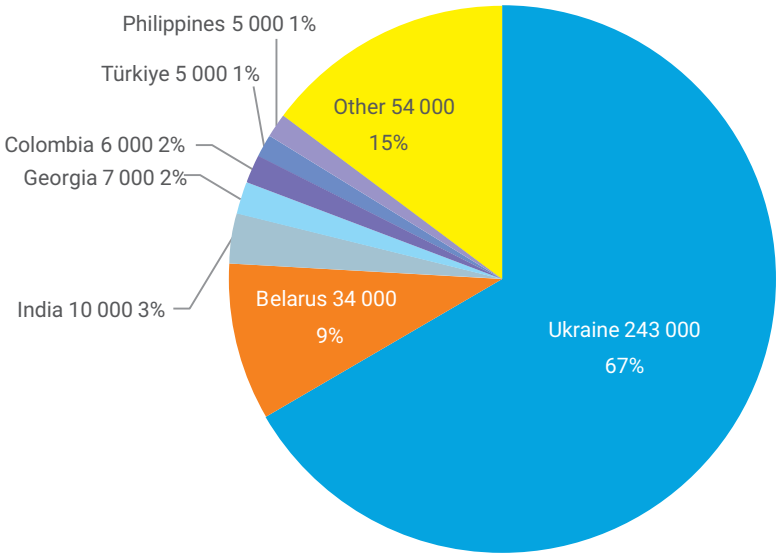
In the first instance, nearly 411 000 decisions were issued, of which 88% were positive, 8% were negative, and 4% resulted in the discontinuation of proceedings. An additional 52 000 applications were left without consideration. Out of nearly 364 000 positive decisions, 90% concerned temporary residence (nearly 329 000), 6% long-term EU residence (19 400) and 4% permanent residence (16 000).

Ukrainian citizens accounted for 243,000 of all granted residence permits. Aside from Ukraine, the highest number of positive decisions were issued to citizens of:

- Belarus (34 000)
- India (10 000)
- Georgia (7 000)
- Colombia (6 000)
- Türkiye and the Philippines (5 000 each)

Refusals to grant a permit were most frequently issued to citizens of Ukraine (5 000), Belarus (4 000), Georgia (3 000), as well as Türkiye, Uzbekistan, India and Vietnam (2 000 each).

Residence permits issued in 2025



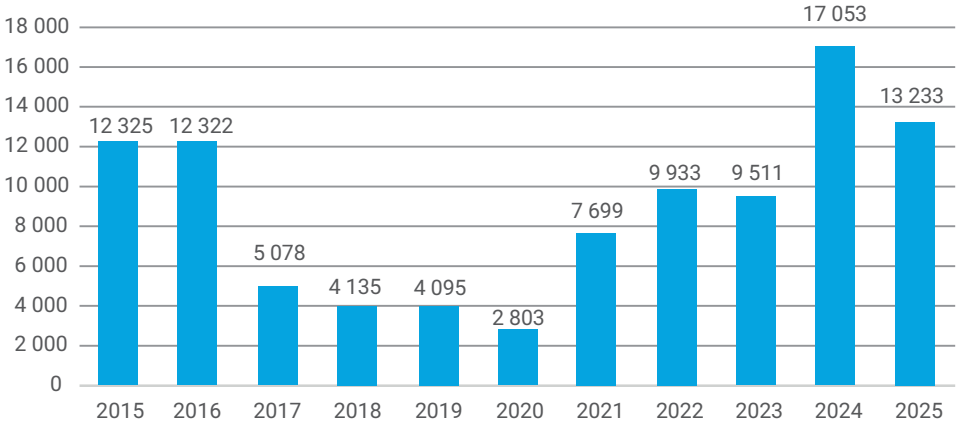
International protection

Data from 2025 indicate that the number of individuals applying for international protection (13 200) declined by nearly a quarter compared to 2024 (17 000). This decrease was primarily driven by a lower volume of applicants from Belarus, as well as from Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Syria and Russia.

Applications for international protection were submitted by nationals from 89 countries. However, the primary countries of origin for these applicants were Ukraine (7 008), Belarus (2 995), Russia (628), Tajikistan (260) and Afghanistan (237). Notably, citizens of the top three countries accounted for 80% of all applications filed.

In 2025, the Head of the Office for Foreigners (*Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców*, UdSC) issued 10 500 decisions regarding international protection, including 3 700 positive outcomes: 300 refugee status recognitions and 3,400 grants of subsidiary protection. Additionally, there were nearly 4 000 negative decisions and close to 3 000 discontinuations of proceedings.

International protection applicants in Poland from 2015–2025



Refugee status was granted primarily to citizens of Belarus (147), Russia (55), Afghanistan (21), Iran (14) and Türkiye (13). Subsidiary protection was most frequently extended to citizens of Belarus (1,587) and Ukraine (1 520), as well as Ethiopia (68), Russia (30) and Sudan (26). Negative decisions were issued to 3 917 foreign nationals – predominantly from Ukraine (2 845), Russia (368), Belarus (112), Tajikistan (56) and Georgia (53).

Furthermore, proceedings were discontinued for 2 898 individuals (including 985 Ukrainian citizens, 180 Belarusian citizens, 168 Ethiopian citizens, 160 Russian citizens and 129 Tajik citizens). Ethiopia ranked fourth among the countries with the highest volume of decisions (238 decisions), which was driven primarily by an exceptionally high discontinuation rate, accounting for 71% of all outcomes for this nationality.

The number of individuals applying for international protection is 20% higher than the number of decisions issued. In 2025, the overall recognition rate stood at 48%. The breakdown by country of origin was as follows: 99% for Ethiopia, 94% for Belarus, 51% for Afghanistan, 35% for Ukraine, 20% for Tajikistan and 19% for Russia. As of 1 January 2026, the number of pending cases reached 8,900, with the average processing time currently running at 202 days.

Temporary protection

Since the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine (24 February 2022) until the end of 2025, the temporary protection system in Poland has covered an unprecedented number of individuals. A total of 2 110 000 foreign nationals were registered across municipal offices. As of 31 December 2025, 966 000 Ukrainian citizens held valid temporary protection status. The demographic profile of this group displays a significant polarisation in terms of gender and age distribution: women account for 58% of the total (564 000), and their share rises to 69% within the adult population. Furthermore, every second registered Ukrainian citizen is a minor.

In 2025 alone, 152 703 new individuals were entered into the PESEL registry, with Ukrainian citizens making up 99.88% of these (152 500). The Head of the Office for Foreigners issued an additional 25 temporary protection certificates. Aside from Ukrainians, the primary beneficiaries of this protection framework continue to be citizens of Russia, Moldova, Belarus and Georgia.

2. Overview of asylum and migration developments

From 1 January to 30 June 2025, Poland held the Presidency at the Council of the European Union.

In the area of migration and asylum, the Polish Presidency continued the course of action initiated by the European Council conclusions of October 2024. EU leaders unequivocally supported the need to ensure effective protection of the EU's external borders and to counter hybrid threats resulting from the instrumentalisation of migration for political purposes. Consequently, the Council, upon the initiative of the Polish Presidency, repeatedly addressed the issue of instrumentalisation of migration.

As part of the Operational Coordination Mechanism for the External Dimension of Migration (MOCADEM), the Commission developed joint communications on the instrumentalisation of migrants used as weapons by the Belarusian and Russian regimes and proposed a coordinated approach to cooperation with Ethiopia and Somalia as some of the main countries of origin of migrants attempting to illegally cross the eastern section of the EU's external border.

The activities of the interior ministers also focused on innovative solutions to ensure effective border protection and stop illegal migration to the EU. The Council of the EU began work on proposals in this area, including the European Commission's proposal for a new common European return system, published on 11 March 2025, as well as proposals concerning a list of safe countries of origin and a revision of the safe third country concept. These solutions will contribute to increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of returns of migrants staying in the EU illegally, including by harmonising regulations on cooperation and information exchange and externalising certain asylum procedures outside the EU.

The Presidency conducted work aimed at increasing security and reducing abuses related to entry and stay within the territory of the EU and the Schengen Area. To provide reliable data on entries, exits and refusals of entry, an agreement was reached with the European Parliament on the gradual roll-out of the Entry Exit System (EES). This will enable effective identification of foreigners, combat identity fraud and provide Member States with real-time access to the personal data of third-country nationals, their travel history and information on whether they are complying with the permitted period of stay in the Schengen area.

The Presidency held a series of meetings as part of the negotiations on the draft regulation establishing the EU Talent Pool. Agreement was reached with the European Parliament on some of the provisions of the regulation, such as those concerning the structure of the EU Talent Pool, including the National Contact Points, and the list of shortage professions for which job candidates may be recruited.

In the context of limiting the influx of irregular migrants into the EU, the Presidency also resumed suspended work on the draft regulation on measures against transport operators who facilitate or engage in trafficking in persons or smuggling of migrants in relation to illegal entry into the territory of the EU. A progress report was adopted.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Schengen Agreement, which fell during the Polish Presidency, a Schengen Declaration was developed. The text focused on the long-term objectives of Schengen, emphasising the principle of free movement of persons while responding to security threats. Furthermore, the Schengen area priorities agreed upon by ministers for the next cycle of the Schengen Council included key issues from the perspective of the Presidency's priorities: internal security, the resilience of external borders and returns.

In the context of war refugees from Ukraine residing within the EU, steps were taken to develop the most appropriate solutions for the future of temporary protection in the EU. During the Council meeting in June 2025, ministers reached a political agreement to extend the temporary protection for war refugees from Ukraine until March 2027, which

included the possibility of shortening the duration of this measure. In parallel, work was undertaken on a strategy for a coordinated transition out of the temporary protection system for this group.

In 2025, two significant legislative developments – amendments to the Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland – regarding reception of applicants for international protection were adopted and entered into force, which significantly affected the national migration and asylum framework.

Legislation introduced by the Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts, effective as of 1 June 2025, repealed Article 76 and 78 of the Act on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland[2]. This change eliminated the legal basis for withdrawal of social assistance in cases of aggressive behaviour in reception centres and implemented a judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union. The amendment aimed to ensure compliance with EU law and strengthen legal safeguards for applicants with regard to basic needs.

Provision adopted by the Act of 21 November 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[3], introduced broader changes to the reception framework. Although adopted in 2025, these provisions were to enter into force on 1 January 2026. The amendment refined the legal framework governing access to social assistance and medical care, clarified entitlement rules and strengthened legal certainty. In particular, it clarified negative eligibility criteria and specified the grounds for suspending reception conditions, adjusting the rules applicable to applicants residing outside reception centres, including safeguards for vulnerable persons. Moreover, it indicated conditions for granting a cash benefit covering the costs of living outside the reception centre, related to aggressive behaviour towards persons in the centre, which is in fact a complement to the changes introduced by the first amendment mentioned.

The abovementioned amendments sought to modernise and systematise the reception framework by introducing clearer and more coherent rules on the provision of material reception conditions and medical assistance. A key objective was to ensure proportionality and legal certainty in decisions affecting access to reception support, while at the same time strengthening the capacity of the authorities to manage reception systems effectively.

These developments were also driven by the need to draw upon operational experience gained since 2022, address identified legal and organisational gaps in the reception system and ensure compliance with evolving EU standards and jurisprudence. Additional drivers were considerations related to the long-term financial and administrative impact of reception policies, as well as the necessity to strengthen the preparedness and resilience of the national reception system.

2 Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act of Foreigners and certain other acts, accessed 5 May 2026
3 Act of 21 November 2025 amending the Act on foreigners and certain other acts, accessed 5 May 2026

3. Legal migration

Some of the most significant developments in the area of legal migration were legal changes in the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[4] which introduced the mandatory electronic system: Case Management Module (*Moduł Obsługi Spraw,* MOS) for submitting applications for temporary residence, permanent residence and longterm EU resident status. The Act provides for phased entry into force, including provisions that started to apply on the date indicated in a ministerial announcement on technical readiness, i.e. on 27 April 2026. The MOS system also allows Ukrainian citizens under temporary protection to submit applications for a 3-year temporary residence permit starting from 4 May 2026.

The changes aim to eliminate the activities of dishonest intermediaries and representatives, detect fictitious applications more quickly and effectively, shorten processing times and reducing administrative burden, improve information exchange between regional authorities and the Internal Security Agency (*Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego*, ABW) and enable more accurate statistical reporting. This is the step towards digitalisation of legal stay procedures and improving the accessibility and efficiency of procedures.

Work-related migration

Act of 20 March 2025 on the conditions for the admissibility of entrusting work to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland[5] introduced a number of new developments in the area of work-related migration. It replaced the Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions and entered into force on 1 June 2025.

The most important provisions introduced:

- increased penalties for illegal employment (currently: between PLN 3 000 and 50 000);
- new grounds for refusal of issuing work permits;
- digitalisation of procedures;
- flexible procedure that permits the limitation of access to local labour markets (in place of labour market tests);
- restrictions on the possibility of foreigners working on the basis of a tourist visa, a visa for visiting family or friends, transit visas, medical visas and visas issued by other Schengen countries;
- the possibility for the Border Guard to initiate checks on the legality of employment without prior notification of the entity concerned and to impose fines of up to PLN 10 000;
- obligation on employment agencies to be present on the market for at least 2 years, have premises within the territory of the Republic of Poland and to keep employee records at that location;
- new grounds for refusing to grant a work permit or register declaration of entrusting work, including the case in which an application is done for pretence;
- provisions on integration programmes for foreign workers.

The objective of the abovementioned changes was to comprehensively regulate the issuance of foreigners' access to the labour market in a new and separate act. Previously, the provisions defining the conditions for foreigners' access to the labour market had been amended and supplemented multiple times, which made their application more difficult.

Moreover, it aimed to link economic migration to the actual needs of the Polish labour market and eliminate abuses in the access of foreigners to the Polish labour market. The increased number of proceedings resulted in longer waiting times for the conclusion of such proceedings, and new legislation is aimed at simplification and acceleration of procedures.

As far as the driver for the new developments is concerned, it was, among others, the need to increase the transparency of the system, eliminate interpretative doubts, reduce the risk of informal practices

4 Ibid.
5 Act of 20 March 2025 on the conditions for the admissibility of entrusting work to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland, accessed 7 May 2026

by foreigners and employers, tighten up the system of employment of foreigners in terms of assigning work and referring foreigners to work through employment agencies, strengthen the protection of fair competition in the labour market and protect employee rights.

Previous regulations concerning the issuance of work permits and declarations on entrusting work to a foreigner were widely abused. Often, the entity applying for a work permit was not intending to employ the foreign national but merely to provide them with a document justifying the purpose and conditions of their stay, usually in exchange for a high fee.

At the same time, a considerable number of labour migrants are arriving in Poland, which involves risks such as the displacement of local workers from the labour market, lowering wages, exploitation of foreign workers, the development of the so-called shadow economy and trafficking in human beings.

Highly qualified workers and intra-corporate transferees

An amendment to the Act on Foreigners was adopted on 24 April 2025,[6] aligning Polish legislation with the provisions of the EU Blue Card Directive (EU) 2021/1883 on the conditions of entry and residence of third country nationals for the purpose of employment in a highly skilled professions, which entered into force on 1 June 2025.

EU law requires Member States to introduce legal solutions regarding the entry conditions, rights and issuance of residence permits for the purpose of employing third country nationals in highly skilled professions under the EU Blue Card scheme. This also concerns the entry and residence conditions, as well as the rights, of their family members. The directive also regulates the right of EU Blue Card holders to make use of short-term and long-term mobility in another Member State other than the one that first issued the Blue Card. Short-term mobility allows an EU Blue Card holder to stay in another EU Member State for up to 90 days within any 180 day period for the purpose of pursuing professional activities.

Other remunerated workers

As a result of the state of relations between Poland and Georgia, as well as abuses of migration law by some Georgian citizens, a new Regulation of the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy of 21 November 2025 on countries whose nationals may be covered by declarations on entrusting work to a foreigner and on certain provisions concerning seasonal work permits was issued.[7] Compared to the previous regulation concerning this matter, it excluded citizens of Georgia from the list of nations that can be covered by the procedure. The list now consists of Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

The citizens of Georgia who were employed based on the declaration at the time of entering the decree into force may continue their employment until the date indicated in the declaration.

Students and researchers

Developments regarding students and researchers were introduced by the Act of 4 April 2025 amending certain acts in order to eliminate irregularities in the visa system of the Republic of Poland[8]. The Act entered into force on 1 June 2025.

Over the past years within the territory of the Republic of Poland, a phenomenon of abusing the simplified path of enrolment in studies and obtaining a national visa for the purpose of undertaking studies by foreigners had been observed, where their actual purpose of entry into the territory of the Republic of Poland could have been taking up employment or emigrating to other states of the Schengen Area. Some higher education institutions recruited students from states with increased migration risk, even though their level of knowledge and proficiency in the language of instruction did not allow for – in the

6 Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on foreigners and certain other acts, accessed 5 May 2026
7 Regulation of 21 November 2025 of the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy on the countries whose nationals may be covered by declarations on entrusting work to a foreigner and on certain provisions concerning seasonal work permits, accessed 18 May 2026
8 Act of 4 April 2025 amending certain Acts in order to eliminate irregularities in the visa system of the Republic of Poland, accessed 18 May 2026

assessment of consuls examining applications for a national visa for the purpose of undertaking studies – the commencement of studies in the selected field.

Therefore, the abovementioned Act introduced, among others, the following changes:

- granting the minister competent for foreign affairs and consuls access to ICT systems containing a register of students and a register of persons applying for a doctoral degree;
- creating a register of foreigners admitted to studies and doctoral schools,
- introducing changes to the rules for issuing foreigners a national visa for the purpose of undertaking studies within the territory of the Republic of Poland, systems for issuing foreigners a temporary residence permit for the purpose of studying and for using student mobility within the territory of the Republic of Poland;
- modifying the existing system for approving units conducting studies for the purposes of admitting foreigners to undertake or continue studies and establishing a limit on the number of foreigners studying at a given higher education institution;
- establishing a new recruitment system for first-cycle studies and long-cycle Master's studies with regard to foreigners.

Moreover, regarding doctoral studies and researchers, based on the new provisions, applications for the issuance of a national visa are examined taking into account the priority of foreigners admitted to a doctoral school or participating in the conduct of scientific activity at higher education academic institutions, scientific institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences (*Polska Akademia Nauk*, PAN) or research institutes if such participation is connected with the necessity to carry out research work within the territory of the Republic of Poland. The first temporary residence permit for the purpose of education in a doctoral school is granted to a foreigner undertaking education in a doctoral school for a period of 2 years and 6 months. The driver for this development was simplification of the procedure for issuing a national visa to foreigners admitted to a doctoral school or participating in the conduct of scientific activity, as well as the procedure for issuing a temporary residence permit for the purpose of education in a doctoral school. The Act of 21 November 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts also introduced a priority principle as regards to examination of applications for the issuance of a temporary residence permits for foreigners admitted to doctoral schools or participating in scientific activities at academic institutions, scientific institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences or research institutes, starting from 27 April 2026.

Family reunification

Based on the Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[9], specific rules were introduced for granting a temporary residence permit for the purpose of family reunification to family members of holders of the EU Blue Card.

The aim was a transposition into Polish law of the provisions of Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC (OJ EU L 382/1 of 28.10.2021, p. 1). This Directive replaces Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25 May 2009 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment.

Information on routes to and conditions of legal migration

Building upon the previous experiences of the Green Line (*Zielona Linia*) platform[10] in providing support for foreigners, a new multi-channel platform titled 'Working and living in Poland' was created within the framework of the European Social Fund+. This platform is designed to serve as a centralised hub where third-country nationals can find reliable and comprehensive information regarding living and working conditions in Poland. Additionally, the system enables users to consult directly with advisors via telephone or live chat.

9 Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on foreigners and certain other acts, accessed 5 May 2026
10 Zielona Linia, accessed 18 May 2026

4. International protection

2025 brought new overarching and cross-cutting developments in the area of international protection. The amendment to the Act on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland of 21 February 2025[11] aimed to establish legal instruments to prevent the destabilisation of the internal situation in Poland and other EU Member States resulting from artificially created migratory pressure by third countries bordering Poland or other hostile entities. The provisions directly respond to the instrumentalisation of migration deployed since July 2021 by the Belarusian authorities, in cooperation with the Russian regime and international criminal networks organising the smuggling of migrants into EU countries and profiting from trafficking in human beings. The same phenomenon continues to affect other EU Member States neighbouring Belarus (Lithuania and Latvia), as well as Estonia and Finland on their borders with the Russian Federation.

The abovementioned Act introduced several key measures:

Firstly, it established a formal definition of "instrumentalisation", which is understood as actions undertaken by a state bordering the Republic of Poland or another entity, aimed at enabling foreigners to cross the external border in breach of the law. This particularly includes instances involving violence against state border security officers and soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland protecting that border or actions carried out in conjunction with the destruction of border infrastructure which may destabilise the internal situation within the territory of the Republic of Poland.

Secondly, it established cumulative conditions for a temporary restriction of the right to lodge an application for international protection, namely:

- the instrumentalisation process is ongoing;
- actions undertaken as part of instrumentalisation pose a serious and real threat to the security of the state or public safety;
- the introduction of such a restriction is strictly necessary to eliminate the threat to security or society, and alternative measures are deemed insufficient to mitigate it.

A temporary restriction of the right to lodge an application for international protection may be introduced by a regulation of the Council of Ministers, issued upon the request of the minister competent for internal affairs. The regulation specifies the period for which the restriction applies and the section of the border where it is applied. When submitting such a request, the minister competent for internal affairs must inform the Sejm (lower chamber of Parliament) committee competent for internal affairs (currently the Committee on Administration and Internal Affairs) no later than the day following the submission. The period of a restriction introduced by regulation may not exceed 60 days; if the reasons persist, it may be extended for a fixed period not longer than 60 days, upon the formal consent of the Sejm, by a regulation of the Council of Ministers. The restriction does not apply to certain vulnerable groups, e.g. pregnant women, unaccompanied minors and persons who require special treatment.

On 27 March 2025, a Regulation of the Council of Ministers introduced a 60-day temporary restriction on the right to lodge an application for international protection, applied at the state border with the Republic of Belarus[12]. The restriction was then extended for successive 60-day periods at the same border by further regulations of 23 May 2025 (effective 26 May 2025), 24 July 2025 (effective 25 July 2025), 17 September 2025 (effective 23 September 2025) and 18 November 2025 (effective 22 November 2025). In 2026, the extensions have remained applicable to date.

The described development also impacted the **access to the procedure for international protection.**

No major developments were reported in 2025 as far as implementation of the Common European

11 Act of 21 February 2025 amending the Act of granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland, accessed 18 May 2026

12 Regulation of Council of Ministers of 27 March 2025 on temporary restriction on the right to lodge an application for international protection, accessed 1 July 2026

Asylum System and related policy developments, reception of applications for international protection, relocation, resettlement, humanitarian admission and other pathways to protection are concerned.

Family reunification

In the area of family reunification, the Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[13] added a provision regulating the point in time relevant for assessing the status of a foreigner who is a joining family member in cases where the foreigner whom the minor will join is a foreigner residing within the territory of the Republic of Poland holding refugee status or subsidiary protection. This point in time will be the date of submission of the application for international protection (which subsequently led to the granting of refugee status or subsidiary protection) by the foreigner whom the minor is to join. A condition for applying this provision will be that the application for a temporary residence permit for the purpose of family reunification must be submitted on behalf of the foreigner whose minor status is subject to assessment within the three months following the granting of refugee status or the granting of subsidiary protection.

These developments derive from the obligation to align Polish law with European Union law as set out in the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 1 August 2022 in Case C-279/20 Bundesrepublik Deutschland v X.C.

Withdrawal of international protection

The Act of 21 February 2025 amending the Act on granting protection to foreigners in the territory of the Republic of Poland[14] also added legal provisions providing that a foreigner is deprived of refugee status if, after the status has been granted, the competent authority finds that the foreigner poses a threat to the security of the state in which they are staying or has been convicted by a final judgment of a particularly serious offence and poses a threat to the society of the state in which they are staying.

Until this change was introduced, under the previously existing legal framework, there was no legal basis for depriving foreigners who pose a threat to state security or from foreigners convicted by a final judgment of a particularly serious offence who pose a threat to society refugee status.

Other developments

In face of the challenges related to migration pressure on the Polish-Belarusian section of the state border, the Polish Border Guard has introduced an appropriate algorithm taking into account the new changes of asylum regulations and updated rules of conduct for the Border Guard towards foreigners requiring special treatment. The recognition questionnaire was created as support in the process of identifying foreigners who are exempt from the temporary restriction on the right to apply for international protection. It is aimed at facilitating the identification of persons requiring special treatment when applying the mechanism for restricting the acceptance of applications for international protection.

13 Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on foreigners and certain other acts, accessed on 5 May 2026
14 Act of 21 February 2025 amending the Act of granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland, accessed 18 May 2026

5. Temporary protection and other measures in response to persons fleeing the war in Ukraine

2025 brought about overarching and crosscutting developments concerning temporary protection, as well as changes related to the legal status and rights of beneficiaries of temporary protection.

On 1 November 2025, the Act of 12 September 2025 amending certain acts for the purpose of verifying the entitlement of foreign nationals to familyrelated benefits and on the conditions of assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict within the territory of that country[15] entered into force.

The solutions introduced in the Act were intended to enable the exchange and comparison of data concerning foreign nationals between various state registers, which leads to the effective elimination of abuses. It also allows the Social Insurance Institution (*Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych,* ZUS) to continuously verify whether the requirement of residing within the territory of the Republic of Poland is met by foreign nationals and their children for whom benefits are received.

These solutions, as well as linking the right to benefits with activity on the labour market, were aimed at preventing the influx of thirdcountry nationals whose primary goal is to rely on benefits offered in Poland. At the same time, the proposed changes prevent the risk of social exclusion of thirdcountry nationals who are legally residing in Poland.

The catalogue of persons considered vulnerable groups among beneficiaries of temporary protection, who have access to free accommodation in designated centres, has also been clarified.

These developments were driven by a few factors: the need to ensure the integrity and fairness of the Polish social benefit system, concerns about the potential misuse of benefits by thirdcountry nationals not genuinely residing in Poland, increased administrative demand to verify the entitlements of foreigners receiving support and the necessity to maintain targeted assistance for vulnerable beneficiaries of temporary protection, particularly Ukrainian citizens affected by the ongoing armed conflict.

The phasing-out of special solutions for Ukrainian nationals aimed to move away from ad hoc arrangements towards general mechanisms applicable to all beneficiaries of temporary protection. These developments (still ongoing) were particularly relevant for maintaining the sustainability, predictability and organisational feasibility of reception arrangements, especially in the context of potential future mass influx scenarios.

More information on specific changes introduced in the area of temporary protection can be found below.

Legal status of persons to whom temporary protection applies

Several new requirements were introduced aimed at strengthening identity verification and preventing abuses within the temporary protection and social assistance systems. These include:

- The obligation to provide the type, series, number and country of issuance of the document used to cross the border, as well as the type, series, number, date of issuance and expiry date of the document confirming the legality of a Ukrainian citizen's stay in Poland.
- The requirement to confirm the family ties of a thirdcountry national with Ukrainian citizen

15 Act of 12 September 2025 amending certain acts for the purpose of verifying the entitlement of foreign nationals to familyrelated benefits and on the conditions of assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict within the territory of that country, accessed 19 May 2026

through appropriate documentation, i.e. civil status documents or other documents issued by the competent authorities of the country concerned, except for individuals whose family ties can be verified based on data contained in the PESEL register.
- The requirement for children to be physically present—regardless of age—when being assigned a PESEL (national identification) number, except for children born in Poland.

The new requirements are to ensure accurate and reliable identification of foreign nationals by requiring comprehensive data from travel and residence documents, since a travel document constitutes the primary source of a foreigner's identification data. Failure to indicate the type of document may lead to incorrect identification of a person or hinder access to the appropriate data in state registers. Moreover, it aims to counter attempts by thirdcountry nationals to falsely claim family ties with Ukrainian citizens in order to legalise their stay, through the requirement of presenting official civil status documentation and to verify that children for whom applications for familyrelated benefits are submitted are physically present within the territory of the Republic of Poland, thereby preventing abuses related to payments for children who are not in Poland.

This regulation arises from attempts to abuse the provisions of the Assistance Act (Act of 12 March 2022 on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of that Country[16]) and efforts by thirdcountry nationals to legalise their stay despite never having had any genuine family relationship with Ukrainian citizens.

Guardianship of unaccompanied minors

The continued presence of children transferred from Ukrainian institutional foster care in Poland, the need to reinforce child safeguarding standards and consistent supervisory practice for guardians under the temporary protection response led to the adoption of the amendment introduced by the Act of 12 September 2025 amending certain acts on verifying eligibility for family benefits for foreigners and the conditions for assistance to Ukrainian nationals in connection with the armed conflict in Ukraine[17]. It clarified Article 251 of the Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with armed conflict within the territory of that state concerning supervision over the performance of the rights and duties of a guardian of a child coming from Ukrainian institutional foster care. It specified that supervision covers ensuring the child is provided with appropriate conditions of care and upbringing, including compliance with the rights of the child.

The aim of this development was to strengthen and clarify the supervision framework for guardians of children transferred from Ukrainian institutional foster care by explicitly linking oversight to the quality of care and upbringing and the protection of the child's rights.

Rights and basic services for beneficiaries of temporary protection

Access to accommodation

The rules governing collective accommodation centres and the definition of the vulnerable group entitled to this form of assistance have been changed. As of 1 November 2025, support is provided only to persons belonging to the vulnerable groups listed in the Act. These include:

- persons with disabilities (moderate or severe degree or an equivalent certificate) and their guardians, unless they receive a care benefit;
- seniors – women over 60 and men over 65 years of age, unless they receive a care benefit (Polish pension benefit),
- pregnant women and persons raising a child up to 12 months of age;
- single guardians of three or more children, if at

16 Act of 12 March 2022 on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country, accessed 19 May 2026

17 Act of 12 September 2025 amending certain acts for the purpose of verifying the entitlement of foreign nationals to familyrelated benefits and on the conditions of assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict within the territory of that country, accessed 18 May 2026

least one child is under 7 years of age;
- minors in foster care or those who are not receiving childcare benefits;
- temporary guardians or guardians appointed by Ukrainian authorities for minors;
- adult students of uppersecondary schools (full-time mode), up to the end of the school year in which they turn 20;
- individuals after hospitalisation (lasting at least 7 days), financed by the National Health Fund (*Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia,* NFZ) or the Aid Fund (*Fundusz Pomocy)*, until the cause of hospitalisation ceases;
- individuals contributing to the cost of assistance in advance at the rate of PLN 15 per person-day, i.e.: minors receiving childcare benefits and retirees receiving Polish pension benefits.

The Act also specifies the voivode's authority to issue an order for immediate eviction of a Ukrainian citizen who:

- persistently violates the internal regulations of the accommodation facility regarding quiet hours, cleanliness and order in the rooms used, receiving guests or rules for keeping pets;
- consumes alcohol or intoxicants or uses physical or psychological violence against others;
- fails to make the required advance contributions to the cost of accommodation.

The rationale behind those changes was to ensure that collective accommodation remains reserved for those genuinely requiring protection and belonging to clearly defined vulnerable groups and to align assistance more closely with individual needs and prevent overuse of statefunded accommodation by persons who are not in conditions of vulnerability. Also very important was to maintain safety and order within accommodation facilities by enabling swift intervention—including eviction—against individuals whose behaviour disrupts communal living or threatens others.

The changes were driven by the need to ensure uniform practices across voivodeships, as previous exemptions from copayments were applied inconsistently. Moreover, these changes were driven by: growing demand to better target publicly funded assistance towards those most in need; increasing operational and financial pressure on collective accommodation facilities; documented cases of misuse or occupancy by persons who do not meet vulnerability criteria; and recurring problems with safety, compliance with facility rules and nonpayment of required contributions, necessitating stronger administrative tools for facility management.

Access to medical care

Since 30 September 2025, Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection retain the right to healthcare services under the same rules as persons covered by compulsory and voluntary health insurance under the Act of 27 August 2004 on healthcare services financed from public funds, with certain exclusions. Restrictions were introduced on access to healthcare services for Ukrainian citizens who are not covered by health insurance through the exclusion of the following services:

- spa treatment and spa rehabilitation;
- administration of medicinal products dispensed to beneficiaries within health policy programmes of the minister responsible for health matters;
- health programmes;
- therapeutic rehabilitation;
- dental treatment;
- drug programmes;
- emergency access to drug technologies;
- transplantation or application of human cells, tissues and organs as specified;
- endoprosthesis and cataract removal procedures;
- reimbursed medicines, foodstuffs for special nutritional purposes and medical devices available at a pharmacy on prescription;
- supply and repair of medical devices under the reimbursement rules.

The limitation of the catalogue of healthcare services is linked to the need to minimise the negative impact that assistance to Ukrainian citizens has on the availability of healthcare services for Polish citizens, as well as the need to reduce the costs of such assistance and to ensure financial sustainability of the public healthcare system. However, it needs to be underline that safeguards are in place to ensure continuation of previously started treatment and special protection for children (the restrictions on access to healthcare services introduced by the amended provision will not apply to beneficiaries of temporary protection who are Ukrainian citizens under the age of 18).

Moreover, these developments aim to prevent the risk of misuse of access to health care within the territory of the Republic of Poland by Ukrainian citizens who sometimes arrive to Poland primarily or exclusively to receive specific medical services, such as treatment under drug programmes, planned orthopaedic procedures or dental treatment.

Access to education

An important development was reported in the area of civic orientation programmes. The Council of Ministers adopted a resolution on the government programme for equality of educational opportunities for children and young people 'Friendly school' for 2025-2027[18]. The programme is co-financed from the European Social Fund+ within the framework of the European Funds for Social Development 2021-2027 Programme. Almost PLN 500,000,000 is dedicated to its implementation.

The main objective of the Programme is to support schools with Ukrainian pupils by creating conditions where entire school communities feel safe and where children and young people can build friendly peer relationships and develop their knowledge, skills and competences.

The programme is divided into 3 modules:

Module 1 – Assistants' support – co-financing the employment of intercultural assistants
Module 2 – Well-being of the school community
Module 3 – Professional development of the educational staff

18 Regulation of 11 July 2025 of the Council of Ministers on detailed conditions for providing support to promote equal educational opportunities for children and youth covered by the Government's "Friendly School" Program for Promoting Equal Educational Opportunities for Children and Youth for the years 2025–2027, accessed 18 May 2026

6. Unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups

A few developments in this area were reported regarding unaccompanied minors, but no major changes were introduced in 2025 in the area of other vulnerable groups.

Reception of unaccompanied minors

The Act of 21 November 2025, amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[19], introduced change in the jurisdiction of courts in cases of the placement of an unaccompanied minor in care and educational institutions or detention centres based on the current place of residence of the minor (previously the place of detention).

Moreover, the Act introduced the possibility of staying in a detention centre in a situation where the unaccompanied minor declares their intention to apply for international protection and the court decides to place the minor in a detention centre. Pursuant to the above amendment, after a minor staying in a detention centre has submitted a declaration of intent to apply for international protection, it is no longer necessary to place them in foster care each time. It will not be necessary to take an unaccompanied minor who has submitted a declaration of intent to apply for international protection to a professional family acting as an emergency family or an intervention-type care and educational facility if an application has been made to place the unaccompanied minor in a detention centre, unless the court refuses this.

The application of this solution is exceptional and strictly limited in time. It is initiated solely on the basis of a court order, driven by the primacy of safeguarding the best interests of the child.

The aim of the change is to prevent escapes from foster care, counter illegal migration to other EU countries, as well as to protect minors against traffickers. The uncontrolled departure of minors from civilian facilities exposes them to a huge risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, exploitation and other violations of their rights. Placement in a secure centre is intended to guarantee the physical safety of children until their cases are resolved.

Guardianship of unaccompanied minors

In order to adapt national regulations to international standards of children's protection of rights, the Act of 21 November 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts extended the list of matters handled by the guardian, i.e. representing the minor in the administrative court in proceedings for granting of international protection, transfer to another Member State on the basis of Regulation 604/2013, social assistance and assistance in voluntary return to the country of origin, as well as submission of an application for assistance aimed at integration.[20] The assumption behind this change was to ensure full and effective protection of the rights of unaccompanied minors by appointing a legal representative for all key procedures.

Family reunification of unaccompanied minors

In order to align Polish law with European Union law as set out in the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 30 January 2024 in Case C-560/20 CR, GF, TY v Landeshauptman von Wien, the Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[21] introduced developments regarding family reunification.

It added provisions allowing the parents of a foreigner granted international protection to also be recognised as that foreigner's family members where, on the date the application for family

19 Act of 21 November 2025 amending the Act on foreigners and certain other acts, accessed 18 May 2026
20 Ibid.
21 Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on foreigners and certain other acts, accessed 5 May 2026

reunification was submitted, the foreigner was an unaccompanied minor staying within the territory of the Republic of Poland. Moreover, it introduced a provision allowing a temporary residence permit to be granted to the siblings of a minor refugee who, due to a serious illness, are wholly and permanently dependent on their parents' assistance, where refusing such a permit would result in depriving that refugee of the right to family reunification covering their ascendants.

7. Integration and inclusion of migrants

In the area of integration and inclusion, major developments in 2025 included those related to the national integration strategy and the involvement of multi-stakeholders.

No major developments were reported in 2025 in the areas of pre-departure/arrival integration programmes, labour market and skills, basic services, active participation of migrants and the receiving societies in integration and fighting racism and discrimination.

National integration strategy

In 2025, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy conducted works on the final version of the internal document entitled 'Poland's Integration Strategy 2026–2030/35'. This development is connected to implementation of the long-term migration strategy of the Republic of Poland and is aimed at addressing the issue of integration, including within the area of labour migration.

The implementation of this task is scheduled for the first quarter of 2026. The implementation of the integration policy within the framework of the activities of the government, local governments and non-governmental organisations is planned for the third quarter of 2026.

Involvement of multi-stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations

Within the framework of the foreigner integration system in Poland and in order to create a coherent, systemic model of migrant support, National Integration Offices (Krajowe Biura Integracji, KBI), formerly known as Foreigner Integration Centres (Centra Integracji Społecznej), were established. After a pilot project conducted in the Wielkopolska and Opole Voivodeships (2022–2023), which was positively assessed, the model was expanded to other regions. By the end of 2025, nineteen National Integration Offices were operating in seven voivodeships: Lower Silesia (4 Offices), Lubuskie (2), Mazovia (1), Pomerania (2), Silesia (3), Greater Poland (5) and West Pomerania (2). The twentieth Office, in Ostrów Wielkopolski, opened in 2026. Each Centre operates as a one-stop shop, offering comprehensive assistance in one place, including administrative and legal advice, psychological support, Polish language training and adaptation courses, career counselling and job placement, social animation and intercultural activities and training and counselling for the host community.

The model used by National Integration Offices is based on a tripartite partnership:

- the local government (marshal) – the project leader,
- the Voivode – a partner representing the government administration,
- a non-governmental organisation or NGO consortium – an operational partner conducting activities directly with migrants.

The driver for this development was a need to combine the stability of public administration with the flexibility of the social sector.

In addition, it is worth noting that the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy is developing the National Integration Network, which brings together institutions and organisations involved in the integration of foreigners in Poland. At its core are National Integration Offices, established under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), but other entities with similar activities may also join the Network.

In 2024, following the announcement of the so-called Mid-Term Review for the current programming period of the European Funds for Social Development 2021–2027, the Department of Social Integration in the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, within the framework of the opportunity to use additional funds, prepared – in cooperation with the Intermediate Body and the Managing Authority – the concept note

for an open and competitive call for external entities to develop a project proposal entitled "Social Integration of Foreigners Particularly Vulnerable to Exclusion". The project is to be implemented under the priority for social cohesion and health and under the specific objective of the European Social Fund+ aimed at supporting the socio-economic integration of third-country nationals, including migrants.

The selected project implementer will first conduct a social study and consultations with relevant stakeholders and then develop and ensure the widest possible dissemination of the reports. The implementer will also be responsible for conducting training sessions in selected institutions. Key findings from the research and the developed reports, as well as the overall evaluation and summary of the training sessions, will serve as the basis for developing recommendations on the nationwide dissemination of the standard and work model.

The project derives from the need to improve working methods and quality standards for activities in the identified areas supporting foreigners belonging to particularly vulnerable groups at risk of multiple exclusion. As a result, a proposal for legislative amendments in the area of social integration of foreigners particularly vulnerable to exclusion will be developed in close cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

8. Citizenship and statelessness

In 2025, there was one development reported in relation to acquisition of citizenship. No changes were reported in the area of statelessness determination, status and rights granted.

Acquisition of citizenship

An amendment to the Act of 2 April 2009[22] on Polish Citizenship extended the deadline for authorities to process cases in proceedings concerning obtaining Polish citizenship conducted under the provisions of the Act of 14 June 1960 – Code of Administrative Procedure – to six months (this does not apply to proceedings of granting Polish citizenship conducted before the President of the Republic of Poland, who is not bound by any deadlines). In addition, stamp duties for applications in matters concerning Polish citizenship were increased.

Under the previous legal framework, the authority was required to issue a decision within one month, and in complex cases, within two months. This was too short a period for a thorough review of the case, especially in terms of assessing any potential threat to national security or public order. Moreover, the previous fees were established in 2006 and did not reflect the current economic situation.

At the same time, it is important to mention that the abovementioned changes in the regulations do not result in a change in state policy in this regard.

22 Act of 25 June 2025 amending the Act on repatriation and certain other acts, accessed 1 August 2025

9. Schengen governance and other developments in border management and visa policy

In 2025 in Poland, developments were made regarding Schengen governance related to both the Schengen area and border management. No major changes were reported in connection to visa policy.

Schengen area

This section contains information on developments made regarding Poland's participation in large-scale EU IT systems.

a. Entry/Exit System (EES)

Four implementing regulations have been adopted pursuant to the Act on the participation of the Republic of Poland in the Entry/Exit System (EES)[23]. The regulation provided detailed provisions for implementation of Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) for registration of data relating to the entry and exit of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the country and data relating to refused entry. It also specified the entities authorised to access the EES and the specific conditions governing such access, as imposed on the basis of legal protection and related to the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulation (EC) No. 767/2008 and (EU) No. 1077/2011[24]. The introduction of relevant legal provisions aims primarily to enhance security, support the automation of border control procedures and increase their overall efficiency.

b. European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)

As part of the Act on Poland's participation in ETIAS, the legal basis for the exchange of information and cooperation between ENU and national public authorities, including the national SIRENE bureau, the national Europol unit, the Interpol unit and intelligence services, was in the process of preparation (the publication of the draft legislation by the government). The project assumes that the time for the exchange of information on third-country nationals at a national level will not exceed 48 hours. A national workflow is still under detailed consultations (watchlist and national exchange of information following watchlist HITs, cooperation with competent national authorities). This development is a response to challenges in implementation of the ETIAS system in Poland.

The aim of ETIAS is to enhance the internal security of the European Union and improve border management. The system is designed to address the lack of information on travellers entering the Schengen area under visa-free travel.

23 Regulation on 27 December 2024 of the Minister of the Interior and Administration on access to the National IT System for the Entry/Exit System, accessed 1 June 2026, Regulation on 26 March 2025 of the Minister of the Interior and Administration on the technical conditions for data processing by the National Information System for the Entry/Exit System, accessed 1 June 2026, Regulation on 18 July 2025 of the Minister of the Interior and Administration on the designation of operating units and the receipt and processing of requests to the central access point for EES data, accessed 1 June 2026; Regulation on 1 August 2025 of the Minister of the Interior and Administration on submitting applications to the National Entry/Exit System Unit regarding entering data into the Entry/Exit System, modifying and deleting them, accessed 1 June 2026

24 Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011, accessed 27 May 2026

c. Schengen Information System (SIS)

The Act of 21 November 2025, amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[25], enables foreigners to travel through the territory of the Republic of Poland in order to comply with a return decision issued by an authority of another country applying Directive 2008/115/EC, in particular by instructing the foreigner of the obligation to immediately leave for the country to which the foreigner is traveling, in accordance with a return decision issued by an authority of a country applying Directive 2008/115/EC. The decision should be provided in writing and in a language understandable to the foreigner.

The objective of this amendment is the adjustment of national law to enable the enforcement of return decisions issued by an authority of another state applying Directive 2008/2015/EC.

European Integrated Border Management

In July 2025, the Strategy for Integrated Management of the State Border of the Republic of Poland until 2027 was adopted by the Council of Ministers. This is a document developing a multiannual strategic policy for integrated European border management in accordance with Article 8(6) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896. The Strategy assumes the cooperation of institutions and services whose statutory tasks together constitute the state border management system of the Republic of Poland and defines the vision and mission of integrated border management, including strategic directions for the activities of actors involved in integrated border management at a national level.

This Strategy has identified the following strategic objectives on the way to achieve the overarching goal of effective border management:

- Supporting smooth and safe traffic flow at border crossings;
- Developing border crossing infrastructure;
- Strengthening border security;
- Capacity development of border services and inspections;
- Strengthening the effectiveness of border services and inspections.

The aforementioned strategic objectives were outlined taking into account the anticipated challenges that Poland will have to face in border management during the coming years. Achieving these objectives will translate directly into adequate preparedness and the operational capacity of the state.

Situation at the internal borders in the Schengen area during 2025?

Temporary reintroduction of controls at the internal borders of the Republic of Poland with the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Lithuania was introduced on 7 July 2025 (initially extended on 6 August 2025 until 4 October 2025, and subsequently from 5 October 2025 for a further six-month period until 4 April 2026). A further extension was announced in 2026 – until 1 October 2026.

In order to maintain proper protection of the state border of the Republic of Poland and to ensure its inviolability and integrity while preserving the resilience of the Schengen area, the reintroduction of border controls on the border with the Republic of Lithuania and the Federal Republic of Germany can significantly contribute to minimising the migration flows of foreigners from third countries and mitigate the risk of threats to public order and internal security for the Republic of Poland.

The decision to reintroduce temporary controls on the internal border with the Republic of Lithuania and the Federal Republic of Germany was taken as a result of persistent migratory pressure on these sections of the border.

The need to re-establish control on the Polish-Lithuanian border arose primarily due to the diversion of part of the migratory pressure artificially created by Russia and Belarus from the Polish-Belarusian border (as a result of reinforcing the barrier there) to the Lithuanian and Latvian-Belarusian borders. This results in an increased threat of secondary movement of migrants illegally transiting through Polish territory via Germany and further into the European Union.

As for the internal border with the Federal Republic of Germany, the decision to temporarily reintroduce

25 Act of 21 November 2025 amending the Act on foreigners and certain other acts, accessed 18 May 2026

controls was dictated by the need to verify the legal prerequisites for the possible admission of migrants from the German side, which with the new practical way of applying provisions of the Schengen Borders Code by the German side is possible only with the reintroduction of border control.

Border management

In order to restore cross border mobility for local residents, entrepreneurs and transport operators while maintaining security at the Polish-Belarusian border, the Minister of the Interior and Administration decided to reopen traffic at the Polish- Belarusian border crossing points in Bobrowniki-Bierestowica and Kuźnica Białostocka- Bruzgi as of 17 November 2025. In Bobrowniki, freight traffic is permitted only for vehicles registered in the EU, EFTA and Switzerland. The crossing also handles passenger traffic, including buses. In Kuźnica, only passenger traffic is allowed, with buses excluded.

This decision was enabled due to strengthened and effective protection of the Polish Belarusian border, ensuring that reopening selected crossings would not compromise state security. It also responded directly to the needs and expectations of local communities and businesses affected by the long-term closure, as the reopening aims to support regional economic activity and facilitate legal movement of people and goods.

10. Irregular migration

In the area of irregular migration, the major changes concerned preventing the arrival of irregular migrants and other related issues. No major developments in the area of access to services and legal solutions for irregularly staying migrants were reported in 2025.

Preventing the arrival of irregular migrants

On 12 June 2024, the Minister of the Interior and Administration[26] introduced a temporary ban on staying in a designated area of the border zone at the Polish-Belarusian state border. The ban was initially established for a period of 90 days and was subsequently extended several times in 2024 and 2025, with the last time in 2025 from 5 December for another 90 days.[27]

The objective of this measure was to ensure national security and the safety of bystanders, police officers, border guards and soldiers, while reducing the operational capacity of smuggling groups facilitating irregular migration. It aims to stabilise the situation along the border, protect ongoing infrastructure works and prevent attacks on officers carrying out border protection tasks.

The ban has been repeatedly prolonged due to persisting high migration pressure instrumentalised by Belarus. The pressure continued throughout 2025, making further extensions necessary to maintain security and limit the activities of smuggling networks.

Other developments

Migration pressure on the Polish-Belarusian border caused by the instrumentalisation of migration by hostile regimes required the implementation of more advanced surveillance technologies and strengthened operational presence to achieve continuous monitoring, increased visibility and improved patrol mobility.

In 2025, Poland completed several key investments aimed at strengthening border security and countering irregular migration along the Polish–Belarusian border. A total of 219 km of electronic barrier was finalised on river sections (Świsłocz, Istoczanka, Bug), achieving full 24/7 monitoring coverage across the entire 418 km border. Additional infrastructure included 186 km of hardened service roads facilitating rapid patrol deployment, new unmanned aerial vehicles (vertical take-off aircraft) and five new observation towers equipped with advanced long-range optoelectronic systems. These upgrades eliminate blind spots and allow immediate detection of irregular crossings regardless of time of day or weather conditions. As a result, the effectiveness of the border barrier has increased from approximately 30% two years earlier to nearly 98% in 2025, meaning that almost every attempted illegal entry from Belarus is now intercepted.

26 Regulation on 12 June 2024 of the Minister of the Interior and Administration on establishing a temporary ban on staying in a designated area of the border zone at the Polish-Belarusian state border, accessed 18 May 2025

27 Regulation on 2 December 2025 of the Minister of the Interior and Administration on establishing a temporary ban on staying in a designated area of the border zone at the Polish-Belarusian state border, accessed 18 May 2026

11. Trafficking in human beings

In 2025, various developments were introduced in Poland regarding combatting trafficking in human beings in the area of national strategy, prevention of trafficking, detection and identification, as well as protection of victims, national referral mechanism and cooperation with third countries. At the same time, there were no major changes reported in relation to beneficiaries of temporary protection.

National strategic policy developments

In order to optimise the conditions necessary to effectively combat trafficking in human beings and to support and protect the victims of this crime, as well as to set strategic directions for state policy on combatting trafficking in human beings and to strengthen prevention and response measures by clarifying responsibilities across central and local actors and introducing updated initiatives tailored to current social and technological challenges on 19 March 2025, the Council of Ministers adopted (by circulation procedure) the National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings for 2025–2027 (*Krajowy Plan Działań Przeciwko Handlowi Ludźmi)*[28]. The document was developed by a working group operating within the Inter-ministerial Team for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and continues the government's efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. The Plan is a strategic document setting out the directions of state policy and defining responsibilities of central institutions and local units, including Regional Teams for Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings. It also introduces measures adapted to contemporary challenges, including expanding training programmes to new professional groups, strengthening education and prevention among young people and the educational/psychological community (in response to risks linked to social media) and reinforcing measures targeting job seekers – especially foreigners and people in difficult economic situations, given that forced labour is the dominant form of exploitation in Poland. The current National Action Plan includes 19 new actions[29].

This development is a response to the seriousness of trafficking in human beings as a fundamental human rights violation (dignity, freedom and security), combined with perpetrators' adaptation of methods to changing social and technological realities, and the need to respond to contemporary trends—particularly recruitment via social media and the prevalence of forced labour as the dominant form of exploitation in Poland. It is a continuation of the national strategy to combat trafficking in human beings and provide support and assistance to victims of this crime.

Prevention of trafficking in human beings

The abovementioned National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings for 2025–2027 includes an expanded chapter on prevention of trafficking in human beings, which is aimed at raising awareness of the existence of risk and underlining that the threats it carries are of paramount importance. Moreover, most of the activities carried out at this point were of a training and informational nature.

Preventive measures were implemented, including educational and informational activities addressing the issue of trafficking in human beings, targeted at the general public, including information campaigns, and development and distribution of informational materials on the phenomenon of human trafficking, with particular emphasis on trafficking in children. This also involves the organisation of a nationwide art competition for children and youth on the topic of spreading awareness and the challenges posed by the current digital era and the organisation of European Anti-Trafficking Day,

28 Portal on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Nowy Krajowy Plan Działań Przeciwko Handlowi Ludźmi na lata 2025-2027 przyjęty przez Radę Ministrów, accessed 19 May 2026

29 Report from realisation of National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings for 2025–2027 in 2025 in available on the website of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration. It is a detailed description of completed actions undertaken by different bodies of public administration and NGOs engaged in the prevention and counteracting of trafficking in human beings, including actions underlined in this overview (prevention, trainings, meetings, conferences, etc.). Accessed 11 June 2026

including at the Police academies and the Border Guard training centres. Some activities include strengthening cooperation with institutions organising job fairs to disseminate knowledge about trafficking in human beings and promote codes of conduct that minimise the risk of this phenomenon. Other activities concentrate on developing informational materials and organising informational meetings and workshops for entrepreneurs on human rights due diligence procedures in business. Others address the issue of trafficking in human beings for forced labour and the obligations of businesses in light of the new regulations on the development of due diligence procedures in the areas of environment and human rights. Some activities focus on developing informational content on trafficking in human beings, which could be later displayed on LED boards at border crossings.

In 2024, a special group was established in order to prepare new legislation – Act on Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings. In 2025, works were still ongoing, but what is worth mentioning is that the draft legislation contains a chapter on prevention and education in the field of counteracting trafficking in human beings. This development derives from the need to implement Directive (EU) 2024/1712 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims but is also an effort to unify the regulations on combatting trafficking in human beings that have been scattered in the Polish legal system so far.

The Prevention and Education chapter of the draft Act describes the scope of public administrations' responsibilities regarding the prevention and counteracting of trafficking in human beings, i.e.: mandatory educational programmes in schools and universities; social campaigns to raise awareness of the risk associated with trafficking in human beings; mandatory specialised training for the Police, prosecutors and the Border Guard in identifying victims and prosecuting perpetrators, as well as for representatives of the foster care and social assistance systems in identifying and supporting victims of trafficking in human beings, including minors; preventive training for employees of the Office for Foreigners, judges, teachers, childcare facilities, physicians, psychologists, medical services, businesses, trade unions and employer organisations; recommendations for businesses regarding the risk of engaging in trafficking in human beings for forced labour.

Detection and identification of victims

In order to increase professional competences, raise awareness, share knowledge, practical tools and identification skills of government representatives involved in combatting trafficking in human beings and protecting victims, a number of trainings were organised in 2025:

- Two editions of specialist training for representatives of the Provincial Teams for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings

  In May 2025, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration commissioned the Czas Wolności Foundation (a non-governmental organisation dealing with the issue of trafficking in human beings) to conduct two editions of specialist training for representatives of the Provincial Teams for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings. The task is part of the action entitled „Staff skills improvement of the Provincial Teams – Specialist training in the field of combatting trafficking in human beings". All training took place in September and October. This was a continuation of the trainings carried out in 2024.

- Training for employees of district and provincial labour offices in the field of counteracting trafficking in human beings

  A training programme for employees of district and provincial labour offices took place on 19 November 2025. Approximately 600 people participated in the online training. The programme covered both theoretical and practical aspects. The training was provided by representatives of four entities: the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (basics of the phenomenon and combatting system), the National Police Headquarters and the Border Guard Headquarters (roles in combatting trafficking, case studies, prevention) and the La Strada Foundation, which has been leading the public task of running the National Consulting and Intervention Centre for the Victims of Trafficking for many years.

- Specialised online training workshops for emergency number operators on countering trafficking in human beings

  Prepared and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in cooperation with the Department for Public Order at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration in December 2025. During this time, four training sessions were conducted with the participation of 80 emergency number operators and coordinators. New procedures for reporting potential victims of trafficking in human beings to law enforcement authorities were discussed. The aim of the training was also to improve the system for identifying potential victims of trafficking in human beings by implementing a dedicated module into the reporting system by emergency number operators.

- Workshops on building interdisciplinary and interagency paths for protecting children from Ukraine: "Warsaw National Capacity Building Workshop: Journeys to Safety: Multidisciplinary, Interagency Pathways for Protecting Children from Ukraine"

  Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), supported by funding from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, organised a multidisciplinary, interagency initiative aimed at pursuing the effective implementation of multidisciplinary approaches, as well as child-centred legal and case management assistance, to best support child victims of conflict-related crimes. The workshops were prepared primarily for the Border Guard, which in its daily work most often comes into contact with Ukrainian children crossing the border.

- Latin American Culture Workshop: "Violence as the Language of Power: Latin America Without a Filter"[30]

  During the training, which took place on 30 September 2025 at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, a comprehensive approach to the topic was presented, encompassing government decisions, social mechanisms and everyday interpersonal relationships in Latin America. The meeting combined discussion, case study analysis and practical exercises, providing a deeper understanding of how violence permeates various layers of social life and the factors contributing to its perpetuation. The workshops also allowed individuals to understand why citizens coming from this part of the world have limited trust in law enforcement agencies. The workshop was led by representatives of three academic centres specialising in Latin American society.

As far as measures on cooperation between national authorities are concerned, two important events took place.

During the meeting of the two Provincial Teams for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (from the Silesian and Podlaskie Voivodeships), joint actions to counteract trafficking in human beings and strengthening cooperation were discussed[31].

Due to its location on the border with the Republic of Belarus, the Podlaskie Voivodeship plays a key role as the eastern gateway to Poland and the European Union, making it an area particularly vulnerable to crimes related to trafficking in human beings. Uniformed services, non-governmental organisations and the local community constitute the first line of defence in detecting this phenomenon, especially in border regions.

The Teams are composed of representatives from public institutions, law enforcement agencies and local NGOs. Their main goals are to create a regional platform for information exchange and cooperation between entities involved in combating trafficking in human beings, support and reintegration of victims and to stimulate the activity of local governments and NGOs in this area. This meeting was design to exchange knowledge between Teams regarding the specifics of counteracting trafficking in human beings and identifying victims of trafficking in human beings in a given area.

30 Portal on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Przemoc jako język władzy: Ameryka Łacińska bez filtra. Warsztaty dla ekspertów ds. przeciwdziałania handlowi ludźmi, accessed 18 May 2026

31 Portal on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Spotkanie Dwóch Wojewódzkich Zespołów do Spraw Przeciwdziałania Handlowi Ludźmi, accessed 19 May 2026

Moreover, in November 2025, a stakeholder summit dedicated to the protection of children in the context of counteracting human trafficking was hosted by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, made available by Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) with support from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation[32]. The meeting brought together representatives of government institutions, civil society organisations and international bodies such as IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF and Frontex to create a platform for knowledge exchange and strengthening the coordination of activities in the field of protection of minors, in particular against trafficking in human beings.

The goal was to obtain a clear picture of currently ongoing projects and forms of cooperation, as well as identify potential areas of duplication of activities and those requiring intensified support.

What is also worth mentioning is that as part of European Anti-Trafficking Day, a nationwide series of educational and preventive events were held, coordinated by the Voivodeship Teams, the Police and the Border Guard. The goal was to build awareness of trafficking in human beings among society through preventive measures. Key elements of the activities included conferences such as the Podlaskie Voivodeship's 'Aware – Safe – Free' conference[33] and the Pomeranian Voivodeship's 'Awareness of the Risks is a Key to Safety—Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings' conference[34], which combined expert lectures with workshops and theatre performances. Modern educational tools were widely utilised, including 'EscapeTruck', board games, film screenings and radio spots. Officers conducted hundreds of meetings in primary and secondary schools, as well as academies and schools of uniformed services, reaching thousands of students. A key aspect was the protection of vulnerable groups, implemented through trainings for individuals experiencing homelessness, refugees and employees of companies employing foreigners. Prevention villages were established in cities such as Poznań and Rzeszów, offering direct consultations with experts from the State Labour Inspection, the Border Guard and aid foundations. Intensive media and online campaigns were conducted, including the publication of articles, contact information databases for support institutions (such as National Consulting and Intervention Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings) and appeals from education superintendents to principals. The „Blue Heart" campaign in Jędrzejów County was particularly impressive, encompassing 41 events with over 1 600 participants, numerous expert visits, „Employed in Slavery" poster exhibitions and the distribution of educational materials in multiple languages.

National referral mechanism

As a part of the tasks of the Working Group on Support for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, operating within the Inter-Ministerial Team for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, following GRETA's recommendation, a document entitled „Catalogue of the Rights of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in Polish Law" was developed in 2025.

The catalogue was published in six languages: Polish, English, Russian, Ukrainian, Spanish and Romanian. The directory's structure has been designed to be comprehensive and practical, providing a practical tool for services, offices and non-governmental organisations and, above all, providing access to comprehensive information for alleged and formally identified victims of trafficking in human beings[35].

Protection of victims and provision of information

In 2025, an important element of the new National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings concerned planned changes in the Polish legal system aimed at strengthening victim protection and more effective prosecution of perpetrators. Key

32 Portal on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, KIND Summit: Wzmocnienie koordynacji i partnerstwa przeciwko handlowi dziećmi, accessed 19 May 2026

33 Podlasie Voivodship Office in Białystok, Świadomi, więc bezpieczni – uczniowie podlaskich szkół na konferencji o handlu ludźmi, accessed 7 July 2026

34 Voivodship Labour Office in Gdańsk, Europejski Dzień Walki z Handlem Ludźmi. 15.10.2025 r. zapraszamy na konferencję i debatę, accessed 7 July 2026

35 National Consulting and Intervention Centre for the Victims of Trafficking, Prawa ofiary handlu ludźmi, accessed 10 June 2026

legislative measures include the implementation of Directive (EU) 2024/1712 amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings and protecting victims, as well as work on creating a comprehensive law on combating trafficking in human beings to regulate the state's activities in this area in a consistent and comprehensive manner. The aim of these provisions is to strengthen the protection of victims of trafficking in human beings and improve the effectiveness of prosecuting perpetrators through legal and systemic reforms, including alignment with updated EU legislation and development of a comprehensive national legal framework.

An open competition for the public task aimed at supporting victims of trafficking in human beings– Running the National Consulting and Intervention Centre for the Victims of Trafficking (*Krajowe Centrum Interwencyjno-Konsultacyjne dla Ofiar Handlu Ludźmi,* KCIK) – was conducted in 2025. The Minister of the Interior and Administration entrusted the implementation of the above-mentioned task to two non-governmental organisations: La Strada – Foundation Against Trafficking in Human Beings and Dialog Foundation. In 2025, the KCIK budget was increased by PLN 500 000, i.e. the subsidy for combatting human trafficking increased from PLN 1 500 000 to PLN 2 000 000 annually[36].

The National Consulting and Intervention Centre for the Victims of Trafficking is a public institution addressed to Polish and foreign victims of trafficking in human beings. Each year, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration announces an open contest to run KCIK. Its tasks include identification of victims of trafficking in human beings, intervention, preventive counselling, consultation for institutions and organisations and running a specialised shelter for victims. KCIK's staff provides counselling not only to victims of trafficking in human beings but also to their relatives, organisations and institutions involved in counteracting trafficking in human beings and aiding victims and people at risk of trafficking in human beings. Crucial in providing assistance to victims of human trafficking is their initial identification, which in most cases is done by law enforcement agencies. Once a victim has been identified, it is necessary to ensure his or her safety, isolate him or her from the perpetrators and place him or her in a safe place. This is the most important objective of the work carried out by KCIK: comprehensive assistance to victims of the crime, provided by NGOs. The person who benefits from the assistance can count on full support, including safe accommodation, medical and psychological care and legal consultation.

This activity is undertaken every year as a measure of implementing the National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Cooperation with third countries

To strengthen bilateral cooperation, a meeting with diplomatic representatives of the Latin American countries: the United Mexican States, the Argentine Republic, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Chile, the Republic of Peru and the Republic of Panama took place on 10 June 2025. The increasingly frequent reports from the consular services of the above-mentioned countries concerning abuses and crimes against foreigners in Poland – including hate crimes, offenses motivated by nationality and identified cases of trafficking in human beings – were discussed with the relevant institutions, along with other issues such as the employment of foreigners and violations of their rights.

Moreover, a training for diplomats: "The Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions on How to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking" was held on 8 October 2025 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw. The meeting, organised as part of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), focused on the practical application of the organisation's „Handbook".

The training was designed as a tool for diplomats to help identify presumed victims of human trafficking and to develop their competencies while raising awareness of the risks associated with trafficking in human beings. The „Handbook for Embassies and Diplomatic Missions on How to Assist and Protect Victims of Human Trafficking" has been developed as a tool for embassy and mission staff

[36] Portal on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Podpisanie umowy na realizację zadania KCIK, accessed 20 May 2026

to prevent, identify and support victims of human trafficking. It includes sections on the definition of trafficking, the international legal framework, risk assessment, assistance pathways and safe return. The handbook is built around a victim-centred and child-rights-based approach, with a particular focus on the gendered aspects of trafficking. The diplomats who participated in the training represented: the Philippines, Latvia, Lithuania, Cuba, Türkiye, Peru, Brazil, Denmark, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Argentina, Estonia, Germany, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Moldova, Ukraine and Venezuela.

Other developments in the area of counteracting trafficking in human beings

In 2025, two important conferences were organised in Poland which concentrated on the issue of trafficking in human beings.

An international conference entitled "Together against human trafficking for forced labour and labour exploitation. Current responses and a way forward" was organised as part of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 9–10 April 2025 at the National Stadium in Warsaw. The event was devoted to combating human trafficking for forced labour and the phenomenon of labour exploitation, which remain among the most pressing challenges on the European and global human rights agenda.

The conference was a unique opportunity for cross-sectoral cooperation and joint setting of directions for future actions in the area of counteracting forced labour and protecting workers' rights.[37]

On 18 September 2025, an international conference "30 Years Anti-Trafficking Work in Europe & Supporting Victim Rights – How to effectively address human trafficking and ensure that trafficked persons receive protection and support?" was held in Warsaw. It was organised by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, the Council of Europe, the La Strada Foundation against Human Trafficking and Slavery and La Strada International. The event was of a special character as 2025 saw two important anniversaries: the 20th anniversary of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the 30th anniversary of the La Strada Polska Foundation. The event was an opportunity to discuss the achievements made so far in the fight against human trafficking, as well as to formulate recommendations for the future – particularly in light of contemporary challenges such as globalisation, ongoing armed conflicts and humanitarian crises, all of which drive migration and heighten the risk of exploitation.

Moreover, it is worth noting that – as a measure aimed at implementing the National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings – the Department for Public Order at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration developed and published a report on trafficking in human beings situation in Poland for 2024. In addition to general information, the report includes i.a. information on legal changes, activities carried out in 2024 and statistic data. The report is available online (in Polish and English).[38]

As a result of overall actions and measures undertaken in the area of counteracting the trafficking in human beings, in 2025, Poland remained among the highest-rated countries in Trafficking in Persons Report (so-called Tier 1) published by the U.S. Department of State on 29 September 2025. This means that the government of the Republic of Poland fully meets the minimum standards for combating trafficking in human beings, which are set out in U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA).[39]

37 Polish Presidency at the Council of the European Union, Conference 'Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings', accessed 20 May 2026
38 Portal on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Handel ludźmi w Polsce. Raport 2024, accessed 20 May 2026
39 Portal on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Polska utrzymuje najwyższą ocenę w raporcie TIP 2025, accessed 19 May 2026

12. Return and readmission

In the area of return and readmission, the developments concerned the issue of forced returns and other developments. No major changes were reported in 2025 in area of (assisted) voluntary return and reintegration, detention and cooperation with third countries of origin and transit on return and reintegration management.

Forced return

The Act of 21 November 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[40] introduced a legal basis for issuing a European Travel Document entitling a foreigner who is obliged to return or who is subject to transfer to a third country on the basis of an international agreement on the transfer and acceptance of persons to leave the Republic of Poland. This was a response to challenges related to the identification of undocumented foreigners, as it has been observed that the effectiveness of returns increases by issuing a European Travel Document for undocumented foreigners.

Another important development in this area was that, following the increase in the number of returns and with the objective to make returns more effective, humane and sustainable, in June 2025, Frontex included Syrian nationals on the list of nationals eligible for reintegration assistance, and then, in December 2025, Afghan nationals were included (but only in the case of voluntary return). The objective was to encourage citizens of Syria and Afghanistan to voluntarily leave the EU, allowing them to rebuild their lives in their country of origin with respect for their dignity and fundamental rights.

Other developments in relation to return and readmission

In order to resolve challenges related to the legal basis for issuing a return decision, the Act of 21 November 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts[41] introduced a legal basis for issuing a return decision. Based on this, the decision to oblige a foreigner to return may be issued if their data are entered in the SIS for the purpose of refusing entry and stay, regardless of the legal regime under which the foreigner is staying within the territory of the Republic of Poland.

This development is intended to improve the effectiveness of return procedures and expand the catalogue of legal grounds for issuing a return decision.

40 Act on 21 November 2025 amending the Act of foreigners and certain other acts, accessed on 5 May 2026
41 Ibidem

13. Migration and development

No major developments were reported in this area in 2025.

Annex

Annex a: national statistics

Data provided by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy

1. Number of work permits issued in 2024 and 2025, by citizenship

Citizenship	2024	2025	Change in 2025 compared to 2024
Colombia	37 987	37 337	−650
Philippines	37 988	29 576	−8 412
India	33 928	29 524	−4 404
Nepal	31 553	18 805	−12 748
Uzbekistan	26,073	18,269	−7 804
Indonesia	14 071	13 502	−569
Zimbabwe	8 348	10 057	1 709
Bangladesh	17 580	8 906	−8 674
Kazakhstan	11 155	8,622	−2 533
Turkmenistan	10 173	6 990	−3 183
Others	94 085	69 937	−24 148
Total	322 941	251 525	−71 416

2. Number of declarations of entrusting work that were entered into the register in 2024 and 2025, by citizenship.

Citizenship	2024	2025	Change in 2025 compared to 2024
Belarus	170 084	125 026	−45 058
Ukraine	136 207	108 855	−27 352
Georgia*	76 671	56 497	−20 174
Moldova	39 423	34 786	−4 637
Armenia	5 803	2 930	−2 873
Total	428 188	328 094	−100 094

* since 1 December 2025, Georgia has been excluded from this procedure

3. Number of notifications of employment of Ukrainian citizens in 2024 and 2025, by month.

Month	2024	2025	Change in 2025 compared to 2024
January	105 512	94 314	−11 198
February	78 662	69 459	−9 203
March	88 251	79 239	−9 012

Month	2024	2025	Change in 2025 compared to 2024
April	79 299	78 565	–734
May	75 026	79 970	4 944
June	79 931	89 655	9 724
July	110 950	94 974	–15 976
August	74 289	77 152	2 863
September	84 361	101 731	17 370
October	93 995	116 060	22 065
November	76 500	85 309	8 809
December	61 096	68 068	6 972
Grand Total	1 007 872	1 034 496	26 624

Data provided by the Border Guard regarding trafficking in human beings

In 2025, the Border Guard revealed 52 alleged victims of trafficking in human beings:

- 43 citizens of Columbia: forced labour
- 6 citizens of Argentina: forced labour
- 2 citizens of Venezuela: forced labour
- 1 citizen of the Republic of Poland: sexual exploitation

Data provided by the Office for Foreigners

In 2025, institutional support for victims of human trafficking led to the issuance of 64 certificates confirming victim status and the granting of 37 temporary residence permits (under Article 176 of Act on Foreigners). Colombian nationals constituted the largest group within these procedures, receiving 51 certificates and 21 residence permits (72 administrative actions in total). Significant numbers of cases were also recorded for citizens of Argentina (6 certificates and 6 residence permits) and Venezuela (4 certificates and 7 residence permits). Other nationalities registered in 2025 included citizens of Bulgaria (3 certificates), as well as individuals from Mauritius, Mexico and Russia, who were granted 1 temporary residence permit each.

Citizenship	Certificates of being a victim of human trafficking	Temporary residence permits for victims of human trafficking	Total
ARGENTINA	6	6	12
BULGARIA	3	0	3
COLOMBIA	51	21	72
MAURITIUS	0	1	1
MEXICO	0	1	1
RUSSIA	0	1	1
VENEZUELA	4	7	11
Total	64	37	101