



CASE – Centrum Analiz Społeczno-Ekonomicznych
CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research

Workers migrating to Poland from other EU Member States

Barriers, obstacles and possible directions for action



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Abstract

This report was prepared by CASE – Centre for Social and Economic Research in 2025 and commissioned by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (MRPiPS). The report discusses **how the free movement of workers (FMW) works in practice in Poland** from the perspective of mobile workers from EU Member States as well as institutions and employers. It is based on the study using mixed methods, including the **online survey** (N=63) and in-depth **interviews** with mobile workers (N=22) as well as representatives of institutions and stakeholders (N=21).

Key barriers and experience

Intra-EU mobility to Poland is still limited and has a smaller scale than inflows from third countries. Despite formal legal equality and general satisfaction with the quality of life in large cities, EU workers surveyed face significant obstacles, in particular:

- 1. Language and information barrier:** This is the difficulty most frequently cited (63.8% of respondents). Problems mainly relate to the understanding of regulations, procedures and documents (51.7%). Key formal and legal matters - such as employment documents, correspondence with ZUS or the tax office, and information on employee benefits (PPE/PPK) - **are often only available in Polish**, forcing foreigners to rely on the assistance of partners, friends or translators.
- 2. Lack of a standardised administrative service:** Difficulties in self-service at government offices (e.g. PESEL, registration, banking matters) due to the lack of service in English. A barrier is also the complicated, legal and official language of the letters, difficult to understand even for people with basic knowledge of Polish.
- 3. Limited institutional support:** Mobile workers rarely use formal support institutions such as job centres, EURES or NGOs. **The main sources of assistance in the adaptation process are employers** (who helped 39.7% to access state services) and informal networks and partners of Polish origin.
- 4. Barriers in the housing and financial market:** Foreigners face difficulties in renting (e.g. due to *occasional tenancy* requirements and the lack of local guarantors) and stricter conditions when applying for a mortgage, limiting their opportunities for permanent settlement.

5. **Social climate:** Although the majority of respondents in the corporate environment do not experience direct discrimination due to nationality, some emphasise a **deterioration of the social climate** and growing resentment towards migrants in public space. **The instrumental nature of employment** is also apparent in some workplaces (perceived as a “language carrier” rather than a full team member)

The importance and impact of migration

According to stakeholders, migration from the EU, although limited in terms of numbers, is of **significant qualitative importance** for the Polish economy. Mobile workers from the EU replenish shortages in highly specialised occupations, support the development of the IT, finance and BSS/SSC sectors, and contribute to technology transfer and the professionalisation of work culture.

Recommendations

We propose four main lines of action to make Poland more attractive for EU citizens and improve its integration:

1. **Building the brand of Poland as an attractive place for living and working:** Promotional and informational initiatives should be launched to challenge outdated stereotypes and raise awareness of Poland as a modern country with favourable employment conditions and a high quality of life. It is recommended to create a single, comprehensive, multilingual website (supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Polish Tourist Organisation and other entities).

2. **Simplification and standardisation of communication with EU citizens:** It is necessary to introduce a **minimum standard of service in English** in key public institutions. Moreover, a structured, easy to understand information (in simple language) on labour and social security law instruments (PPK, PPE, family benefits) should be prepared and a single central website or app should be created as a step-by-step information source.

3. **Supporting employers in the integration and development of intercultural competence:** It is recommended to undertake educational and promotional activities that will help employers to recognise the potential of EU workers and disseminate good practices (e.g. relocation packages, *buddy programmes*).

4. **Working on social climate and narrative:** In order to counteract polarisation and attitudes of resentment towards migrants, it is necessary to promote a positive image of mobile workers in society and to develop intercultural competence and communication at a workplace, involving local authorities, schools and employers.

Index of abbreviations

BSS	<i>Business Support Services</i>
DSZ	Department for Coordination of Social Security Systems at the MRPiPS
DPP	Labour Law Department at the MRPiPS
DRP	Labour Market Department at the MRPiPS
EESSI	<i>Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information</i>
EFTA	<i>European Free Trade Association</i>
ELA	<i>European Labour Authority</i>
EEA	<i>European Economic Area</i>
EURES	<i>European Employment Services</i>
GUS	Statistics Poland
HR	Human resources, human resources management
IOM	<i>International Organisation for Migration</i>
IT	Information technology
KAS	National Revenue Administration
MKiDN	Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
MRiT	Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
MRPiPS	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy
MSZ	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	<i>Non-governmental organisation</i>
OHP	Voluntary Labour Corps
PAIH	Polish Agency of Investment and Trade (Polish: Polska Agencja Inwestycji i Handlu)
POT	Polish Tourist Organisation
PPE	Employee Pension Schemes
PIP	State Labour Inspection
PPK	Employee Capital Plans
PUP	District Labour Office
RPO	Commissioner for Human Rights
SPP	Freedom of movement for workers
SSC	<i>Shared Services Centre</i>

TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
EU	European Union
UdSC	Office for Foreigners
WUP	Voivodship Labour Office
ZUS	Social Insurance Institution

Introduction

This report is based on the results of the survey focusing on the situation of citizens of European Union (EU) Member States working in Poland and the barriers to the full exercise of the principle of freedom of movement for workers (SPP). This report was carried out in 2025 by CASE – Centre for Social and Economic Research and commissioned by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (MRPiPS). The aim of the project was to describe **how the SPP works in practice in Poland from the perspective of mobile workers from other EU countries as well as the institutions and employers** that deal with them on a daily basis.

The starting point of the project was the assumption that although freedom of movement of workers is one of the basic principles of European integration, its implementation takes place in specific national, institutional and local contexts. Citizens of other EU countries formally have the right to take up employment in Poland based on the same rules as Polish citizens. In practice, however, they may face administrative and legal barriers, information problems, linguistic and cultural constraints, as well as ambiguous labour market practices ranging from vaguely communicated terms and conditions of employment, through difficulties in the recognition of qualifications, to experience of unequal treatment. The project was therefore both diagnostic and analytical: the aim was to capture not only the scale of the phenomena, but also the mechanisms underlying them.

The project focused on several key **research questions**:

- 1) what is the profile of mobile EU workers in Poland (countries of origin, industries, level of qualification, forms of employment, length of stay);
- 2) what barriers and obstacles they face in the labour market (e.g. lack of information, unclear procedures, problems with recognition of qualifications, unequal treatment, delays in payment of wages);
- 3) how their social integration proceeds, including their knowledge of the Polish language, their relations with the community, their use of public services and institutional support;
- 4) what is the experience of public institutions, NGOs, employment agencies and employers in the scope of service and employment of EU citizens;
- 5) what measures and regulatory changes can improve the situation of mobile workers and increase the attractiveness of Poland as the destination country.

In the report, we have used several basic terms. “Mobile workers from the EU” mean persons with citizenship of an **EU Member State** other than Poland (**as well as EEA and**

Switzerland) who take up employment in Poland regardless of the legal form of employment (employment contract, civil law contracts, self-employment, temporary work). Freedom of movement for workers means the right to work in another Member State without discrimination due to nationality, as well as an access to a range of social and labour rights on an equal basis with nationals of a given country. Accordingly, we do not focus on posted workers in this report, as due to the nature of this phenomenon (they remain employed with a foreign entity) the issue is not so much related to the free movement of workers as to the free movement of services. We understand the concept of “barriers” broadly: as formal restrictions (e.g. procedures, documents, administrative requirements), information and language barriers, institutional practices that hinder the exercise of rights, but also experience of unequal or unfriendly treatment at work and in everyday life. We also refer to the categories of “new” EU Member States (which joined the EU in 2004 and later) and “old” EU Member States.

The freedom of movement for workers (SPP) in the EU is primarily defined by Articles 45-48 of the TFEU and Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 on freedom of movement for workers, supplemented by Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009 on the coordination of social security systems and Directive 2014/54/EU on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers.. At the national level, the following legislation is of key importance: **Act of 20 March 2025 on the labour market and employment services**, the Labour Code and **the Act of 14 July 2006 on the entry, stay and departure of EU citizens and their family members**; the regime of recognition of qualifications (Directive 2005/36/EC) also provides the background.

In the project, the **mixed approach** was applied. On the one hand, **the online questionnaire survey** was conducted among EU citizens working in Poland (quantitative part), which provides the context for the analyses presented in the report. On the other hand, **in-depth interviews** were carried out with mobile workers and with representatives of public institutions, NGOs, employment agencies and employers (qualitative part), which enabled an insight into the more complex mechanisms and contexts behind the responses to the survey.

The structure of the report reflects this logical approach. In the introduction, we present statistical data on the mobility of EU citizens to Poland and a brief literature review on the freedom of movement of workers and intra-EU migration. Subsequently, we present a map of the institutional ecosystem, identifying the main actors responsible for implementing the SPP and supporting the mobile workforce. The next section of the report outlines the methodology and describes the results of the surveys and interviews, structured around three main thematic blocks: work, daily life and integration, as well as future plans and mobility. The overall report is concluded by presenting an overview of institutional stakeholders from a broader perspective

and a set of recommendations addressed to the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, labour market institutions, social organisations and employers.

Literature review

The existing research on mobile workers from EU countries migrating to Poland **is fragmented and presented in a limited scope**. The latest broader analyses in this area **were conducted about five years ago** (e.g. Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020; Nowicka, 2021). The results of these studies have shown that the migration aspirations of this group are complex and dynamic. Besides **economic factors** - such as the search for stable employment or adequate working conditions compatible with one's qualifications - as well as **educational factors** related to the development of new competence and the extending practical skills through learning experience, **non-economic concerns** also play an important role. These include the search for a partner to start a family, the pursuit of personal development, gaining cultural experience or the search for a satisfactory lifestyle. These factors highlight the strong links between individual, social and economic dimensions in the process of intra-EU migrants' choice of place of residence (Andrejuk, 2017a).

The literature distinguishes five types of migrants from the EU countries arriving in Poland (Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020):

a) the first type - **citizens of EU countries with family ties to Polish citizens** (spouses, partners), whose migration decisions are mainly based on family or economic premises (Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020 p. 218);

b) the second type - **young, mobile workers from Southern Europe**, especially Spain and Italy, who started to arrive gradually after the global economic crisis of 2008. Their migration was motivated by both economic reasons and a desire to gain work experience. With the increasing importance of financial stability and security in this group, the role of non-economic motives has diminished (Bartolini et al., 2017; Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020, p. 218);

c) the third type - **expats**, i.e. highly qualified professionals, managers, researchers and workers operating in transnational spaces. Following Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, significant changes have taken place in this group: whereas previously expats included mainly professionals and managers posted by corporations, after 2004 a growing number of entrepreneurs and professionals who consciously choose Poland as a place to work and live has been recorded. This category also includes teachers, employees of non-governmental organisations

and individuals who decided to stay in Poland permanently after the termination of their employment contract (Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020, pp. 215-217);

d) the fourth type - **graduates of Polish universities**, especially medical and veterinary faculties, who decide to continue their career in Poland after the graduation (Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020, p. 218);

e) the fifth type - **lifestyle migrants** (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Benson & O'Reilly, 2015; Andrejuk, 2017a), arriving in search for a better quality of life, self-fulfilment and cultural experience. Their professional activity is often secondary and serves mainly for maintenance rather than career development. In Poland, they work, among others, as language teachers, artists or small business owners. Many people come after former experience of academic exchange, e.g. under the Erasmus+ programme (Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020, p. 217).

As the literature on the adaptation and integration of migrants from EU countries in Poland and the barriers accompanying these processes shows, **the process of integration is selective and fragmented**. It depends on the professional and family context, as well as on the geographical origin of the migrants. For example, highly skilled migrants in Warsaw operate, to a large extent, within their own expat spaces - international schools, social organisations, cafés or shopping centres. **These spaces enable building of support networks and contacts**, but do not foster deeper integration with the local society. Relationships with residents tend to be instrumental and limited to certain contacts, selective in terms of time and space (Piekut, 2013a; Piekut, 2013b). Female migrants are more likely to build local and transnational ties, while male migrants focus mainly on professional activity, reinforcing the traditional distribution of roles within the family (Piekut, 2013b).

In the case of scientific migrants, mainly from Central and Eastern Europe, the **adaptation usually takes place through professional and family ties, cultural similarities and institutional support**. Their identity is more strongly linked to the role of a scientist than to Polish society, although professional integration strengthens the sense of belonging. At the same time, **adaptation may be hindered by language, administrative and housing barriers**, limited financial resources and Poland's peripheral location in the global academic system (Mucha & Łuczaj, 2017a; Mucha & Łuczaj, 2017b).

Knowledge of the Polish language is a key factor in the integration of migrants from EU countries, affecting professional contacts, relations with state institutions and functioning in everyday life. The studies show that **many EU citizens arriving in Poland have only basic or no knowledge of the Polish language**, which results in administrative and housing difficulties. However, working in an international environment and mentoring can partially

mitigate these barriers (Nowicka, 2021). Despite the difficulties, migrants from the EU generally **feel safe and comfortable in Poland**, appreciate the urban infrastructure, access to transport and entertainment, although some of them are concerned about growing nationalism (Nowicka, 2021).

The employment situation of mobile EU workers **can generally be described as conducive to integration**: employment in the primary labour market¹, stable working conditions and satisfactory wages prevail. Job discrimination is rare, although some migrants perceive limited opportunities for promotion. However, more serious difficulties arise in the housing market and in terms of contacts with public health services, where the language barrier and complicated procedures drive many migrants to use private services (Nowicka, 2021).

Differences in the adaptation strategies of migrants from “old” and “new” EU Member States are also important. **Migrants from the “old” countries are more likely to combine self-employment with work in multinational companies** and benefit from intra-EU mobility, treating migration as part of their lifestyle. **Migrants from the “new” EU countries, on the other hand, rely on local integration, knowledge of the Polish language and ethnic networks**; despite formal equality of rights, they remain socially and culturally disadvantaged (Andrejuk, 2017b).

Although formal barriers to integration in Poland are relatively low, the lack of a coherent integration policy means that **overcoming difficulties depends, to a major extent, on the individual approach of officials and migrants themselves**. The problems most frequently indicated include the language barrier, complicated administrative procedures, difficulties related to accommodation, partial discrimination in public spaces (especially towards people with darker skin) and limited access to information in English (Nowicka, 2021; Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020). Nevertheless, migrants from EU countries rarely face serious integration problems and **their adaptation is selective, pragmatic and partly transnational**.

Systematic research on the barriers faced by EU migrants in Poland is crucial to fully understand their adaptation and integration processes in various dimensions of the host society. It allows for identification of obstacles, documenting hidden forms of discrimination and taking into account the diverse experience of migrants from both “old” and “new” EU Member States.

¹ In the framework of segmented labour market theory (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Piore, 1979), **the primary labour market** comprises stable and well-paid jobs with promotion opportunities and good social conditions, while the **secondary labourmarket** features unstable, low-paid jobs with limited promotion prospects and poor social conditions.

Statistics

During the two decades since Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, domestic migration processes have undergone a major transformation. An increasing number of returns of Polish emigrants from the post-accession period has been recorded, at the same time, accompanied by an increasing influx of immigrants, mainly from third (non-EU) countries. These phenomena contributed to the **positive migration balance** (Okólski, 2021a; Okólski, 2021b). Consequently, it is becoming increasingly less justified to define Poland as a country of “emigration” (Okólski, 2011; Lesińska & Okólski, 2013), “emigration-immigration” (Górny et al., 2010) or “future immigration” (Górny & Kaczmarczyk, 2019), while increasing evidence suggests that it should be referred to as a “**new country of immigration**” (Brunarska et al., 2020).

However, despite significant transformations in migration processes from and to Poland, intra-EU mobility - from both “new” and “old” EU Member States - although it **has increased significantly since 2020**, making Poland one of the main destination countries and allowing it to overtake Austria, France and Belgium (European Commission, 2024, p. 24) - remains limited and has a much smaller scale than inflows from third countries (Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020, p. 211; Nowicka, 2021, p. 92).

At the same time, statistics on the number of EU citizens in Poland **remain incomplete and poorly harmonised**, as different institutions collect only fragmentary and hardly comparable data². Such deficiencies in the records of intra-EU migrants seriously hinder, and sometimes even prevent, comprehensive and reliable monitoring of their situation in various dimensions of society - both nationally and in individual voivodships (Budyta-Budzyńska, 2020, p. 214; Nowicka, 2021, p. 92).

Existing discrepancies between statistical data on mobile EU workers in Poland derived from general EU sources (e.g. Eurostat) and state data from the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS), the Office for Foreigners (UdSC) and Statistics Poland (GUS) mainly result from differences in definitions and the purposes of information collection. Eurostat data on which the European Commission reports are based and GUS data jointly reflect the number of residents - people actually living in Poland and registered as residents of the country. On the other hand,

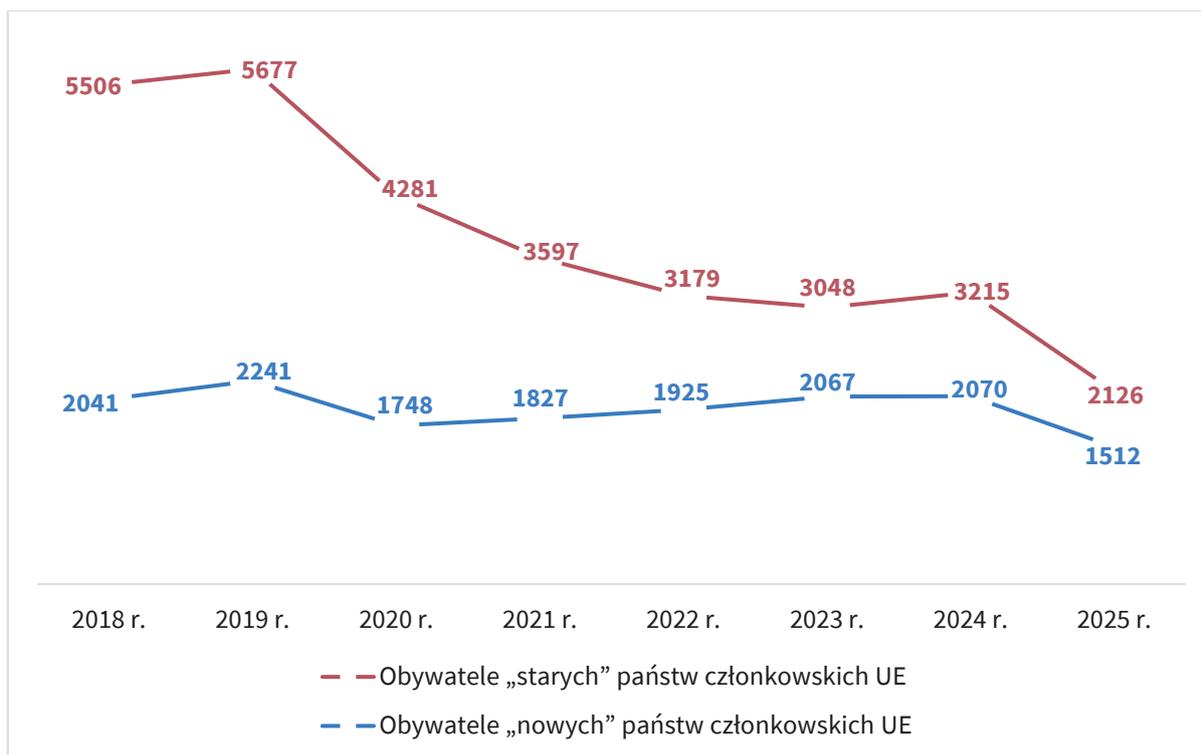
² Information on migration from EU countries to Poland is provided by institutions and organisations such as the Office for Foreigners, Statistics Poland, the Social Insurance Institution, the European Commission, the OECD, the IOM and others.

ZUS covers all persons working and registered in the social security system, including EU citizens employed on a short-term or seasonal basis. Therefore, the ZUS data may be higher than the Eurostat and GUS demographic data, since they are not limited to permanent residents of Poland. The UdSC data, on the other hand, reflect administrative procedures rather than the actual number of residents from EU countries - they show the number of permits issued and applications submitted. These differences lead to systematic disparities in terms of both the size and the structure of migrant groups from EU Member States.

The European Commission's report on intra-EU mobility of workers shows that in the years 2018-2023, **the median of the number of EU nationals** living in Poland was **approximately 25,500**. However, at the beginning of 2021, a sharp **increase to 61,000 people** was recorded, followed by the equally rapid decline of 59%, bringing the figure back closer to the median value (25,000 people) (European Commission, 2025, p. 147). In 2023, **the structure of the economically active population in Poland** was as follows: Polish citizens accounted for 98.2%, 1.6% were third-country nationals and only **0.1% were citizens of other EU countries**. By comparison, on average across the EU, nationals of other Member States account for 4.3% of the economically active population. This means that their share in Poland was **as much as 43 times lower than the EU average**. In Poland, EU citizens are also much less numerous than workers from third countries - **their percentage is 16 times lower**. Across the Union, this difference is much smaller, averaging only around 2.4 times (4.3% vs. 10.5%) (EURES, 2024).

It is worth noting that between 2018 and 2025, the number of EU nationals applying for registration of residence or exchange of the certificate of residence registration in Poland shows **a clear downward trend** (Figure 1). Among citizens of the “old” EU countries, the number of applications **decreased** from 5506 in 2018 to 2126 in 2025, **down by more than 60%**. In case of nationals of the “new” EU Member States, **the decline was smaller**, from 2,041 to 1,512 applications, down by **approximately 26%** (UdSC, 2025a).

Figure 1. Number of EU nationals who applied for registration of residence or exchange of the certificate of registration of residence of an EU national in the years 2018-2025.



Obywatele „starych” państw członkowskich UE	Citizens of the “old” EU Member States
Obywatele „nowych” państw członkowskich UE	Citizens of the “new” EU Member States

Source: own compilation based on data (UdSC, 2025).

For example, the number of applications submitted by German nationals fell from 1,896 in 2018 to 466 in 2025, by Italians - from 840 to 433 and by Spaniards - from 547 to 246. A similar trend can be recorded among citizens of the “new” EU Member States. The number of applications submitted by Romanians remained almost unchanged (526 in 2018 and 528 in 2025), while a significant decrease was recorded for Bulgarians, from 506 to 230 applications. Despite the overall decrease, in all years analysed, the number of applications from nationals of the “old” EU countries remains higher than the number of applications from nationals of the “new” EU Member States. However, some fluctuations occurred in individual years: in 2024, the number of applications submitted rose to 3,215 for “old” EU nationals and to 2,070 for “new” EU nationals (UdSC, 2025a).

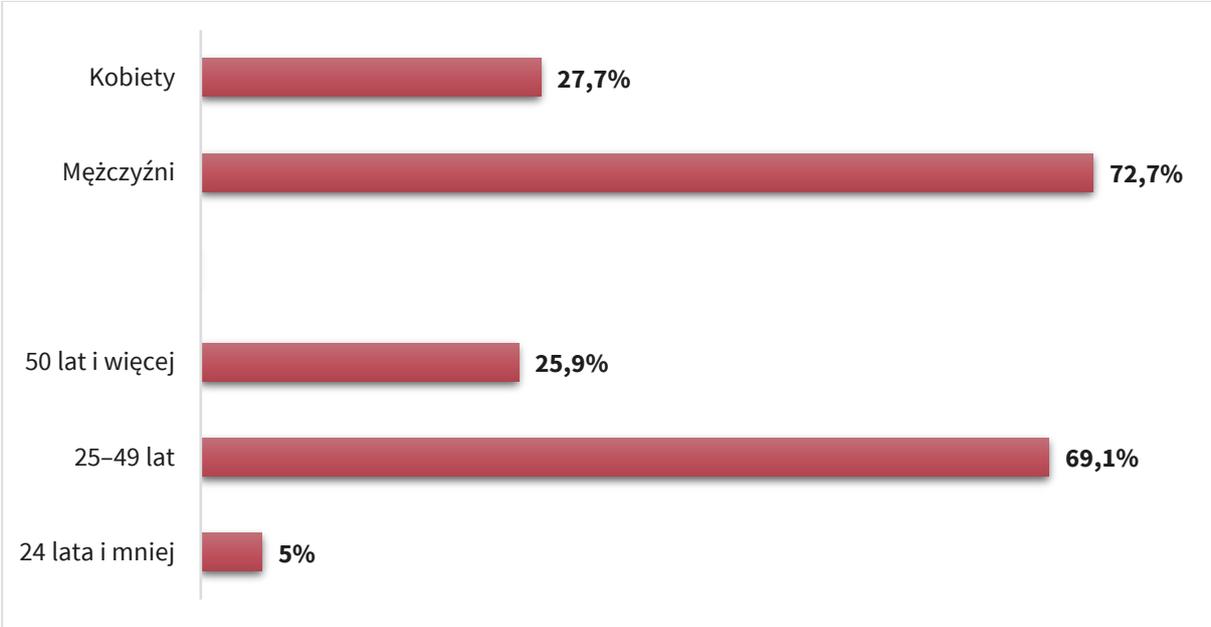
According to GUS, on 1 January 2024, the number of **EU nationals** with the right to reside in Poland amounted to **approximately 62,000 persons**, which accounted for **3.3% of the total number of registered migrants** (GUS, 2024). The UdSC, on the other hand, estimated their **share at 7%**, with a similar number of individuals (approximately 62,000) (UdSC,

2024). On the other hand, according to ZUS, at the end of June 2025, **more than 42,000 workers** from EU countries were registered in the social security system, corresponding to 3.4% of all foreigners covered (ZUS, 2025a).

Foreigners from EU Member States show a slightly **different structure of labour force participation** than non-EU migrants. According to the data for December 2024, people from EU countries **were more likely to be employed under the employment contract** (65.2% compared to 57.1% among non-EU foreigners) and significantly more frequently to be engaged in non-agricultural economic activity (17.3% compared to 5.8%) (ZUS, 2025b, p. 19). In terms of industry, as at the end of 2024, the predominant sections of the Polish Classification of Activities (PKD) among migrants from EU countries included: professional, scientific and technical activities (13.3%), information and communication (13.2%) and wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, including motorbikes (11.6%) (ZUS, 2025b, p. 26).

The gender and age structure of mobile workers from other EU countries registered for pension insurance at the end of 2024 was clearly dominated by **men (72.7%)**, while women accounted for 27.3% (Figure 2) (ZUS, 2025b, p. 13).

Figure 2. Gender and age structure of EU nationals registered for pension insurance (as at the end of 2024).



Kobiety	Female
Mężczyźni	Male
50 lat i więcej	50 years and more
25-49 lat	25-49 years old

24 lata i mniej	24 years and less
-----------------	-------------------

Source: own compilation based on data (ZUS, 2025b, p. 13, 16).

The age structure was dominated by the **25-49 age group comprising 72.3%** of all registered non-EU citizens. The second largest group were those aged 50 and more (21.9%), whereas the smallest group was migrants aged 24 and younger (5.8%) (ZUS, 2025b, p. 16).

Statistical data of the UdSC on the number of foreigners holding a valid document authorising their stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland shows that at the end of September 2025, the total number of EU citizens in Poland **was approximately 61,000** (Table 1). At the same time, citizens of the “old” EU countries account for **approximately 68% of all EU citizens** registered or with permanent residence in Poland, while citizens of the “new” EU countries account for **32%**. Moreover, among citizens of both “old” and “new” EU countries, registration in the foreigner registry system is much more common than holding permanent residence permits which are issued on a different legal basis. It is worth noting that the percentage of nationals of the “new” EU countries with permanent residence permits is slightly higher than among nationals of the “old” EU countries (**17.9% vs. 13.6%**) (UdSC, 2025b). However, it should be highlighted that some of these permits may have been issued even before the EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007, including in the form of permanent residence permits, which limits the possibility to draw unambiguous conclusions regarding the settlement character of migration of citizens of the “new” EU countries in Poland.

Table 1. Number of foreigners holding a valid document authorising their stay in the territory of the Republic of Poland (as at 40 June 2025).

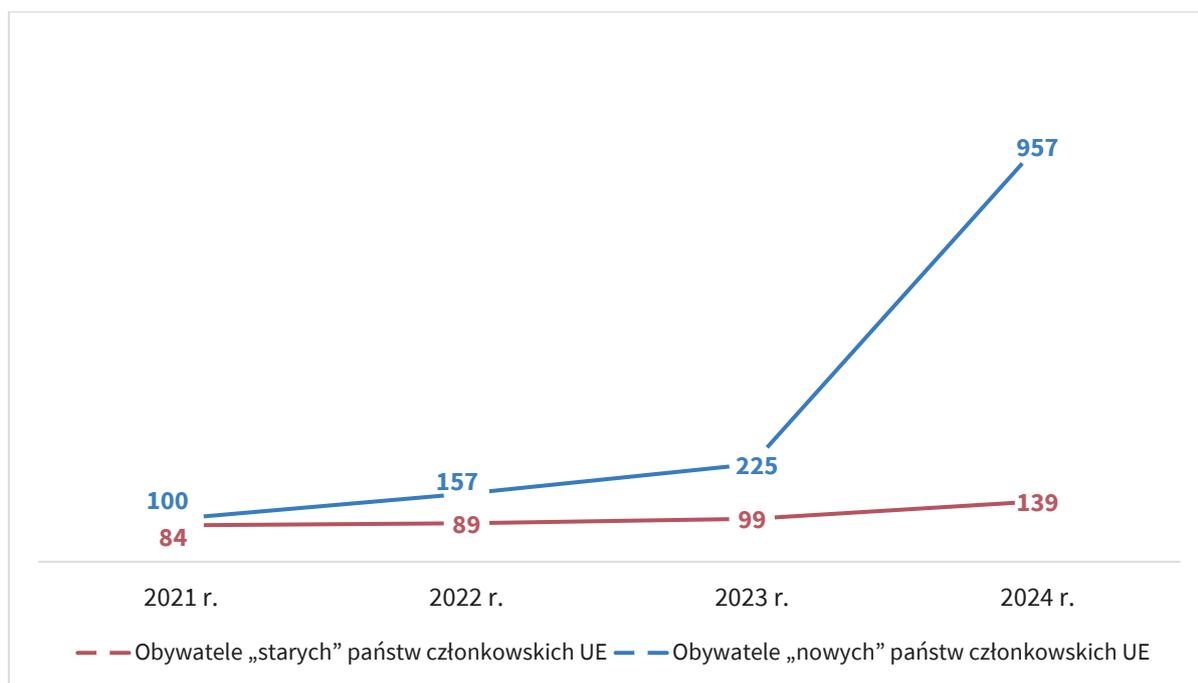
Citizens of the “old” EU Member States	Registered stay EU citizen	Permanent residence EU citizen	Total
Austria	614	166	780
Belgium	795	169	964
Denmark	494	154	648
Finland	636	45	681
France	3,928	442	4,370
Greece	1,122	237	1,359
Spain	4,211	309	4,520
Netherlands	1,578	418	1,996
Ireland	884	100	984
Luxembourg	7	0	7
Germany	12,271	1,313	13,584
Portugal	1,930	184	2,114
Sweden	1,347	195	1,542

Italy	6,512	1,208	7,720
Final	36,329	4,940	41,269
Citizens of the “new” EU Member States	Registered stay EU citizen	Permanent residence EU citizen	Total
Bulgaria	3,676	892	4,568
Croatia	647	82	729
Cyprus	95	6	101
Czech Republic	1,371	279	1,650
Estonia	307	19	326
Lithuania	1,586	542	2,128
Latvia	943	103	1,046
Malta	64	7	71
Romania	5,012	494	5,506
Slovakia	1,417	320	1,737
Slovenia	254	32	286
Hungary	1,439	228	1,667
Final	16,811	3,004	19,815

Source: own compilation based on data (UdSC, 2025b).

An additional statistical indicator that may confirm growing migration aspirations of settlement nature among citizens of the “new” EU Member States in Poland is represented by data on the use of family benefits in 2021-2024 (Figure 3). In this period, a marked increase in the number of beneficiaries from EU countries was noted, although its scale varies between groups of countries. Among citizens of the “old” EU Member States, the number of benefit recipients increased from 84 in 2021 to 139 in 2024, which means a moderate, gradual increase **of more than 65%**. On the other hand, a much more **dynamic trend** can be seen in the **case of citizens of the “new” EU countries**: the number of benefit recipients **increased** from 100 in 2021 to 957 in 2024, i.e. **almost 10 times** (MRPiPS, 2025).

Figure 3. Number of EU nationals receiving family benefits in the years 2021-2024.



Obywatele „starych” państw członkowskich UE	Citizens of the “old” EU Member States
Obywatele „nowych” państw członkowskich UE	Citizens of the “new” EU Member States

Source: own compilation based on data (MRPiPS, 2025).

Furthermore, in the light of nationwide data, in the structure of migrants in Poland coming from the “old” EU Member States, **France, Spain, Germany and Italy** have **the largest share**. On the other hand, the group of migrants coming from the “new” EU Member States is clearly **dominated by citizens of Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania** (GUS, 2024; UdSC, 2024; ZUS, 2025). As Table 1 shows, German nationals constitute one third of the total number of migrants from the “old” EU countries, while Romanians and Bulgarians jointly account for more than a half (51%) of the nationals of the “new” EU countries in Poland (UdSC, 2025b).

Institutions responsible for implementing the SPP

Free movement of workers within the EU requires **consistency in four main areas: access to the labour market, coordination of social security systems, protection of workers' rights and ensuring equal treatment**³. The implementation of these tasks in Poland is the responsibility of a number of institutions operating at different levels - from the central through the regional to the local level. Their activities include both the creation of a legal framework and practical support for citizens and nationals of other EU countries taking up work in Poland. In this section of the report, we briefly characterise the most important of these institutions.

The **Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (MRPiPS)** is the central administrative body responsible for labour market policy, employment, working conditions and coordination of social security, including ensuring the right to take up work of choice in Poland by persons with citizenship of other EU and EFTA countries. The following departments are active in the MRPiPS in this area:

Labour Market Department (DRP) coordinates employment issues, labour migration and the functioning of public employment services (PUP, WUP, EURES). In the context of free movement of workers, it is responsible for: implementation of EU rules on access of EU citizens to the labour market in Poland; coordination of the EURES network - a system of cooperation between employment services of EU/EFTA countries which facilitates workers' mobility and provides information on living and working conditions; development and implementation of regulations and strategies on labour migration; participation in the work of EU employment bodies and representation of Poland in the structures of the European Public Employment Service.

Labour Law Department of (DPP) deals with the harmonisation of Polish labour law with EU law and the protection of the rights of male and female workers, including mobile

³ See: Article 45 of the TFEU(<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12008E045:en:HTML>) and European Parliament Regulation; See: Article 45 TFEU(<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12008E045:en:HTML>) and Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union(<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011R0492>).

workers. In the context of the free movement of workers, it aligns the Labour Code and other legal acts with EU directives on employment conditions; participates in the work of EU bodies on labour mobility legislation; analyses the CJEU case law on employment rights; develops Poland's positions on draft EU legislation in the field of individual labour law; supports the implementation of EU principles of equal treatment and job security.

Department for the Coordination of Social Security Systems (DSZ) ensures the continuity of the social rights of people moving between EU countries - i.e. that a person who moves from one EU country to another does not lose rights to benefits (e.g. unemployment benefit, family benefits). In the context of the free movement of persons, the DSZ coordinates the application of EU provisions on the coordination of social security systems (Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009); acts as a liaison body between Poland and other EU countries in the area of unemployment, family and childcare benefits; supervises the implementation of EU law by ZUS, governors of voivodships and other institutions; takes part in work on the maintenance and modernisation of the European System for Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (ESSI) and in the work of the European Labour Office (ELA); analyses the case-law of the CJEU in the area of social security and prepares proposals for changes; analyses the case-law of the CJEU in the area of social security and prepares proposals for changes; acts as a contact point in the SOLVIT system - it helps to solve cross-border problems of EU citizens related to infringements of EU law.

Another institution at a central level, which also performs functions in the coordination of social security systems - and more specifically, pension benefits - is the **Social Insurance Institution (ZUS)**. ZUS exchanges information with insurance institutions in other countries in the EESSI system, also issues A1 forms (documents stating which social insurance system a person is subject to) and deals with the aggregation of insurance periods from different countries when determining the right to a pension or allowance; it also coordinates the payment of cross-border benefits. As regards the coordination of social security systems, it cooperates with the MRPiPS.

From the perspective of the MRPiPS, the main challenge in the area of coordination of social security systems is the failure to adapt the EU legal framework to contemporary realities. The existing regulations have not been revised for more than a dozen years, despite the fact that workers' mobility, the digitalisation of services and the structure of benefits have changed significantly. This creates difficulties in interpretation - both on the part of the institutions and the citizens themselves - and the uncertainty regarding the scope of the benefits subject to the coordination. In addition, diverging approaches among Member States make it difficult to reach

the consensus on issues such as the place of payment of the contributions are paid or the definition of an enterprise. At a national level, practical problems also emerge: frequent staff turnover in offices reduces the quality of service, while the subject of the coordination itself is very specialised and poorly understood outside specialised units. Despite the progress in digitalisation (e.g. implementation of the electronic A1 form), many procedures are still complex and institutional resources are limited. Cooperation between ZUS and the administrations of other EU countries works well.

Another important institution is **the State Labour Inspection (PIP)**, which supports the implementation of the right to free movement of workers in the EU by providing free legal advice to citizens and nationals of EU and EFTA countries and their families on employment, working conditions, pay or social benefits. Advice is provided in all PIP units in person, by telephone or in writing. Moreover, the PIP monitors the compliance with the principle of equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination against mobile persons through inspections and preventive measures. It also carries out information and education activities, promoting employment equality and anti-discrimination practices. EU citizens benefit from the same mechanisms for the protection of labour rights as Polish citizens. However, complaints to the PIP from mobile people are rare and mainly concern issues specific to senior positions - such as overtime accounting, regulatory bonuses or employee benefits in large companies - rather than basic labour law violations. In practice, the main inspection and information burden of the PIP is focused on the employment of third-country nationals.

In the context of free movement of persons within the EU, **the Commissioner for Human Rights (RPO)** also protects the rights of citizens and nationals of other EU countries residing in Poland by responding to reported cases of unequal treatment or discrimination. The notifications coming from the mobile group are not numerous and are usually of socio-cultural or organisational nature, less often strictly of legal nature. These include, for example, differences in communication standards, misunderstandings resulting from a different and unfamiliar work culture, national stereotypes, as well as language barriers in contacts with public authorities (e.g. expectations of a more flexible and direct approach by the administration) In the area of coordination of benefits, the RPO identifies recurring problems such as lengthy information exchange between EU countries and inconsistent communication, which leads to so-called “benefit gaps” - situations when mobile people temporarily do not receive benefits despite being eligible.

At a central level, the **SOLVIT** network helps citizens and businesses to solve problems arising from the misapplication of EU law by Member State administrations. The SOLVIT network point is located at the Ministry of Development and Technology (MRiT). In the area of SPP, the vast majority of SOLVIT activities concerns support for Polish citizens facing administrative problems in other EU countries. Cases when EU citizens report violations of their rights in Poland are rare - and if they do, they mainly relate to residence, administrative matters and social security coordination (e.g. A1 forms). These notifications more often arise from formal errors or incomplete knowledge of procedures than from actual irregularities on the part of the administration.

Voivodship and district labour offices play an important role. **The voivodship labour offices** implement the activities of the EURES network (EUROpean Employment Services)⁴, which helps EU citizens and nationals to take up employment in Poland or in other EU countries. The network provides information on living and working conditions in EU/EFTA countries, assists in finding employment and supports employers seeking workers from other Member States. As regards **district labour offices**, their main task is to present job offers available in the European EURES database and to provide information on employment opportunities in Poland and other EU/EEA countries. Citizens of EU countries can register with the PUP as jobseekers, and if they had previously worked in Poland for at least 365 days in the last 18 months - also as unemployed, gaining the same support as Polish citizens (e.g. access to offers, training or internships). In practice, the number of EU nationals registered with PUPs is low, as the interest of Polish employers in recruiting EU workers through the labour offices.

The Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP), implementing tasks in the scope of labour market and youth unemployment prevention, also play an important role in the mobility support system. OHPs provide job placement, career counselling and also cooperate within the EURES network in the exchange of information on job offers and employment conditions in EU/EFTA countries. However, OHPs primarily support the mobility of young people from Poland to other EU countries. In addition, **employment intermediaries** and **employment agencies** operate in the Polish market in accordance with the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions.

It should also be mentioned that anyone from the EU who stays in Poland for more than three months should register his or her stay. The application for registration of residence should

⁴ See: <https://eures.praca.gov.pl/strona-glowna>

be submitted to the relevant governor of the voivodship (at the voivodship office)⁵. Data on registrations is processed in the national database of registers, records and lists concerning foreigners, which is created and maintained in the ICT system by the Head of the Office for Foreigners (the so-called Residence (Polish: Pobyty) system). There are no sanctions for non-registration and certainly not all EU foreigners register their stay in Poland.

Table 2. Key institutions responsible for organising the SPP at the central, regional and local level

LEVEL	NAME	TASKS	
Central	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (MRPiPS)	Labour Market Department (DRP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour market • Coordination of the EURES network
		Labour Law Department of (DPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour law • Equal treatment
		Department for Coordination of Social Security Systems (DSZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of social security (family and unemployment benefits)
	Social Insurance Institution (ZUS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of social security (pensions and retirement benefits) 	
	State Labour Inspection (PIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal advice • Control and preventive activities • Information and education 	
	Commissioner for Human Rights (RPO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal treatment and counteracting discrimination 	
Regional and local	Voivodship Labour Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of the EURES network 	
	EURES network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance in taking up a job • Information on living and working conditions • Linking employers with workers from other EU Member States 	
	District labour offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of offers from the EURES database • Provision of labour market information • Registration of the unemployed 	

⁵See: <https://www.gov.pl/web/uw-lodzki/zasady-pobytu-obywateli-unii-europejskiej-na-terytorium-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej>

ZUS local branches

- Coordination of social security (pensions and retirement benefits)

PIP - District Labour Inspections

- Legal advice
 - Control and preventive activities
 - Information and education
-

Source: own study

Methodology

The study comprised two complementary parts - a quantitative part based on an online questionnaire survey and a qualitative one containing interviews with representatives of institutions and migrants. In this section, we discuss the research tools, the methods of recruiting the respondents and the data analysis process for each of these sections.

Questionnaire survey

The quantitative survey was carried out by **an online survey** method using the Internet survey technique. The study involved citizens and nationals of European Union countries living and working or recently working in Poland, regardless of the length of their stay and form of employment.

The selection of study participants was **targeted** and carried out using the “**volunteer recruitment**” method (Batorski & Olcoń-Kubicka, 2006, pp. 110–112) with the additional use of the “**snowball**” method, assuming maximum socio-demographic differentiation. This meant that mobile male and female workers - EU citizens with professional and residence experience in Poland, regardless of their country of origin, industry and sector of employment, level of qualification, form of employment, length of stay in Poland and migration plans - were invited to participate in the study.

Recruitment

The recruitment process included posting and disseminating information about the survey (in Polish and English) including a link to the online questionnaire survey through various channels. The main channels included **groups on social media platforms** gathering mobile workers from EU countries living in Poland. Moreover, information about the survey was distributed through **NGOs, employment agencies, embassies, consulates and employers** of EU citizens who have actual contact with mobile workers. In addition, the dissemination of information took place through respondents who participated in the qualitative part of the survey.

In total, the questionnaire was posted in almost **100 online venues** (groups, fora) and distributed to **more than 100 institutions**. The full list of the channels through which the questionnaire survey was distributed can be found in the annex. We also introduced a financial incentive - gift vouchers were distributed to respondents who completed the survey - and we used

the services of the largest online platform linking researchers with those willing to take part in online surveys (prolific.com). Despite such an extensive distribution of the survey, unfortunately the response rate (return rate), which is usually around 25% for online surveys, was extremely low. The total number of respondents was **N = 63**.

Research tool

The research tool was the online questionnaire designed to facilitate access to the survey, available in **six language versions**: Polish, English, Italian, French, Spanish and German. The questionnaire consisted of four thematic blocks:

- socio-demographic (respondent's particulars);
- migration and employment experience in Poland;
- integration and contact with institutions in Poland;
- plans for the future and general opinion on living and working in Poland.

The analysis of the data collected in the online survey was carried out using **descriptive statistics** methods, which enabled the streamlining and visualisation of information on respondents' work and life experience in Poland and the identification of key trends, distributions and differences between survey participants.

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

N = 63 mobile workers from different EU Member States who currently live and work in Poland participated in the survey. Most of them came from Western and Southern Europe - primarily France (22.4%), Italy (22.4%) and Germany (15.5%).

The majority of respondents were men (82.8%), while the share of women amounted to 17.2%. The group had a distinctly professional and mature character, with persons aged 35-44 and 25-34 as the most represented (37.9% and 31%, respectively). Respondents demonstrated a very high level of education: in total, more than 84% had a university degree, including 5.2% with a PhD. The majority of respondents were employed under the employment contract (77.6%) and 8.6% were sole proprietors. The industries where respondents worked were predominated by those requiring specialised skills - primarily technology and IT (32.8%) as well as engineering and manufacturing (15.5%). In terms of occupational groups, the number of specialists (31%) and managers (24.1%) was the highest. The level of remuneration of survey participants was relatively high. The ranges most frequently indicated were PLN 8,000–9,999 gross (22.4%) and PLN 6,000–7,999 gross (20.7%), with 20.7% of respondents earning PLN 15,000 gross or more.

All respondents currently live in Poland, with the vast majority staying in the country **for many years**: 65.5% - more than five years and 22.4% from three to five years, which confirms the sustainable nature of their mobility. Most respondents lived in the largest urban centres - primarily in Warsaw (43.1%), Kraków (22.4%), Łódź (6.9%) and Gdańsk (5.2%). The majority of respondents live in Poland with their family (72.4%).

Interviews

The qualitative part of the survey was based on **in-depth interviews (IDI)** with two main groups of respondents. A total of 43 in-depth interviews were conducted:

- **22 interviews with EU mobile workers** (different countries of origin, industries, forms of employment, length of stay in Poland),
- **21 interviews with representatives of public institutions** (e.g. labour market institutions, control institutions), **EURES network, social organisations and employment agencies** (hereinafter: stakeholders).

The selection of respondents was **targeted, supplemented with the use of the “snow-ball” method**. In the case of EU mobile workers, efforts were made to ensure that the experience was **as diversified as possible**, taking into account, in particular:

- country of origin,
- industry and employment sector,
- qualification level,
- form of employment,
- length of stay in Poland and migration plans.

Recruitment

Respondents of the first category were recruited, among others, through **social media** (see description of the recruitment of individuals for the quantitative part) and recommendations from people who had already taken part in the survey.

In the case of representatives of institutions and employers, the selection focused on entities:

- in the areas of competence comprising matters in the scope of work and residence of citizens of other EU Member States in Poland,
- who had a contact with mobile workers from the EU,
- representing diverse levels of activity (central, regional, local).

The list of the institutions whose representatives we interviewed for this survey, as well as an anonymised list of migrants who were interviewed, is included in the annex.

The tool

The interviews were conducted online using **semi-structured scenarios** developed separately for each of the two groups (scenarios available in the annex). The interviews took, on average, **45-60 minutes**. They were conducted mainly **in English or Polish**, depending on the preferences of the interviewee; in isolated cases, additional language support was used (the interview was carried out in Italian). With the consent of the respondents, the interviews were **recorded** (this step only applies to interviews with mobile people) and then **transcribed**, with anonymised analytical notes prepared based on these transcriptions.

Analysis

The data collected in these notes was analysed using the **thematic analysis**, a method of analysing qualitative data which involves **searching through a dataset to identify, analyse and present recurring patterns (topics)** (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis process was **collaborative**: key decisions concerning the structure of the topics and the interpretation of the results were taken at working meetings, during which the conclusions of individual researchers were confronted and verified against the empirical material. The qualitative analysis subsequently formed the basis for **deepening and interpreting the quantitative results** from the survey section.

Limitations of the survey

Due to the small size of the sample as well as the way of its selection, in this report we consider the results of the survey primarily in terms of **context** - as a descriptive background and reference for the qualitative material - rather than as a basis for statistical generalisation.

The reasons for the low response rate can be attributed to both the structure of the survey itself (the questionnaire was quite **an extensive tool** and we informed respondents that it would take 10–15 minutes to complete) and, more likely, to the situation of migrants from EU countries in Poland. One of the main incentives for participating in the social survey is often **the desire to draw attention to issues** that affect respondents. The relatively positive perception of Poland as a place to live and work, as well as the lack of problems that respondents would describe as very disturbing, did not encourage them to complete the survey and share their

experience with us. **The small size of the survey group** made it additionally difficult to obtain responses (e.g. the vast majority of panel portals did not have respondents eligible for the survey, while on prolific.com their number was only 20).

We did not reach a satisfactory share of **mobile EU workers who are difficult to recruit** through online channels and expat networks, including **trade and simple service** workers (e.g. some Romanian and Bulgarian citizens) and people **outside large urban centres**. As a consequence, the survey and, to some extent, the qualitative sample may be overrepresented by people who are better educated, work in an international environment (IT, BPO/SSC) and have a good command of English, and underrepresented by people with lower qualifications who work in sectors with higher turnover or for smaller employers.

Recruitment via the internet and social networks could have fostered the selection of individuals who are more digitally and socially integrated; moreover, some of the interviews were conducted in a language other than the interviewees' native language, and the citations were subsequently translated into Polish by the research team. Despite content verification, this may affect the **accuracy of linguistic details** in the testimonies.

For those reasons:

- the quantitative findings should be interpreted as **a description of trends in the available sample and as contextual information for our considerations**, rather than as an authoritative picture of the entire population of EU mobile workers in Poland;
- the qualitative findings - despite the depth and coherence of the themes - **are not representative**; their role is to capture mechanisms, patterns of experience and barriers, which we then confront with the literature, existing data and the legal context.

Work

In this section, we present the results in three complementary steps. We first synthesise **a view from the perspective of institutional stakeholders** - how public administrations, employers and intermediaries describe the profile of migration from the EU to Poland, the key employment sectors and the specific characteristics of this mobility. We subsequently turn to the **experience and working conditions** as seen through the eyes of the migrants themselves: first we present **the quantitative context** (survey results: reasons for arrival, job search channels, forms of support, length of stay, clarity of conditions and conformity of wages with contracts), followed by **a qualitative deepening** (entry paths, role of language skills, forms and stability of employment, elements of work culture). The third section deals with **barriers and obstacles**: we start again with the **quantitative perspective** (the scale and types of difficulties signalled in the survey) before moving on to the **qualitative analysis**, where we develop the issues of language and information barriers, procedural and social barriers, differences in treatment and practical constraints to the enforcement of rights.

Specific nature of EU migration to Poland: features, sectors and barriers as perceived by stakeholders

According to stakeholders, the migration of EU citizens and nationals to Poland is distinguished in terms of demographic characteristics and the professional profile, qualifications and competence of incoming migrants. The vast majority of this influx consists of **young people** - in the 20-40 age range - who most often do not have family commitments, which is conducive to a more relaxed search for work and life experience. **Men prevail** among incoming migrants. The predominant occupational group consists of **professionals and highly skilled people** taking up employment in occupations requiring linguistic, technical or analytical skills. In terms of employment sectors and industries, mobile persons most often work in: 1) **the BSS/SSC sector** (customer service in foreign languages, data analysis, accounting, etc.); 2) **highly specialised industries** such as artificial intelligence, programming, biotechnology, nuclear power or material engineering; 3) **education and culture** as language teachers, artists, cultural event organisers and scientists. Migrants from the EU therefore do not replenish structural shortages in

physical or service occupations - they do not usually take up jobs, for example as drivers, machine operators or production workers. This clearly distinguishes this group from third-country migrants, who tend to find employment in the lower segments of the labour market.

Most EU nationals who work in Poland find employment based on an **employment contract**. Civil law contracts are difficult for this group to understand and are associated with a lack of stability and security. The exception are professionals carrying out time-defined projects, such as technology implementation or restructuring who may prefer a B2B formula or management contracts.

The motivations of EU citizens and nationals to arrive and work in Poland are diverse and multidimensional. While **economic factors** (wage levels) **are not decisive**, stakeholders highlighted the increasing role of the improving wage/cost of living ratio in the country. Poland, especially in terms of working in higher-paid sectors (e.g. IT, where earnings of PLN 10-15,000 gross, with a relatively low cost of living, are already competitive), is gaining attractiveness not only as a place to work, but also to live. **Private and family relationships** are an important incentive for many visitors. In fact, a significant part of mobile persons are partners, spouses and family members of Polish citizens; people with Polish roots can also be found in this group. **Career development and the desire to gain work experience** are other important incentives. Poland is perceived by some young professionals as a milestone on an international career path (especially for design contracts, system implementation or technology transfer). **Living comfort, security and the international atmosphere of cities** - especially Kraków, Warsaw or Wrocław - are also important. Mobile people appreciate the urban infrastructure, the cleanliness of cities and the availability of public services. **Erasmus+ graduates** who, after completing their studies in Poland, decide to continue their professional lives or return to the country where they studied after some time, constitute a unique category. Finally, as stakeholders indicated, the choice of Poland as a place to work and live is also determined by chance and randomness – each person's story is different.

Initially, a large proportion of people - obviously with the exception of those who have already become linked with Poland through their studies - treat their stay here as rather temporary. The very decision to study often involves a decision to stay in Poland, since this experience is a kind of “demo version” of living here. After this “demo version” the moment of reflection comes: do I want to stay in Poland for longer, do I really feel comfortable here? If the decision to stay arises, it is usually a long-term one. (An employment agency representative)

Most male and female EU migrants treat their work and stay in Poland as **temporary** (1-3 years), often being open to extend their stay depending on professional and personal developments. A growing group, especially those who studied in Poland and those with family ties to Poland, decide to stay permanently. With regard to persons who studied in Poland, “**test**” stays to assess living and

working conditions before deciding on long-term relocation are noticeable.

The sources of the inflow from the EU to Poland are mainly **southern and western European countries** - such as Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Portugal or the Netherlands. In the case of **border regions**, cross-border partnerships and local economic cooperation are an additional factor supporting mobility - therefore, people from Germany, the Czech Republic or Slovakia are more likely to choose Silesia or Lower Silesia as their place of work in Poland. According to stakeholders, citizens from Romania, Bulgaria or the Baltic States are less likely to work in Poland, choosing other migration destinations within the EU. At the same time, according to the data presented in the chapter on “Statistics”, it is the citizens and nationals of these countries that constitute one of the most numerous groups of mobile persons from the “new” EU countries in Poland.

Mobile people are mainly concentrated in large urban areas - **Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław and Poznań** - where the activities of multinational companies, shared service centres as well as research and development institutions are concentrated. In addition, the importance of **the Tricity** is growing, especially in terms of the development of the IT and finance sectors, as well as **Katowice** and the **Upper Silesia**. Medium-sized cities such as **Lublin** and **Łódź** also attract foreign students, some of whom choose to stay in Poland, including in these cities.

According to stakeholders, migration from the EU to Poland faces **structural and image barriers** for Poland. These include: 1) relatively lower level of salaries compared to Western European countries; 2) Poland's poor visibility – the continuing poor promotion of job offers, lack of information available in foreign languages and insufficient image campaigns mean that many potential migrants from the EU do not consider Poland as a migration destination; 3)

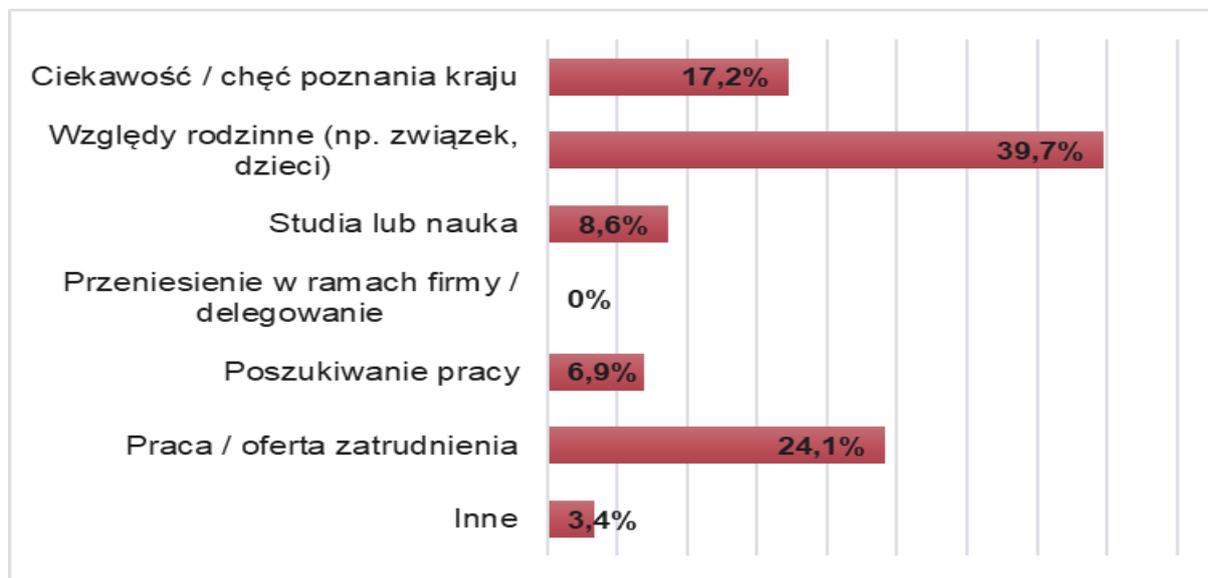
lack of universality of relocation policies in companies; 4) language and cultural barriers in SMEs and reluctant attitude of some employers.

Experience and working conditions

Quantitative assessment

Family matters were **the most popular reason for coming to Poland among mobile workers from EU countries participating in the survey (39.7%)** (Figure 4). This was followed by work (24.1%) and the desire to explore the country (17.2%). Less frequently, the respondents indicated learning or education (8.6%) and job search (6.9%).

Figure 4. What was the main reason for your coming to Poland?

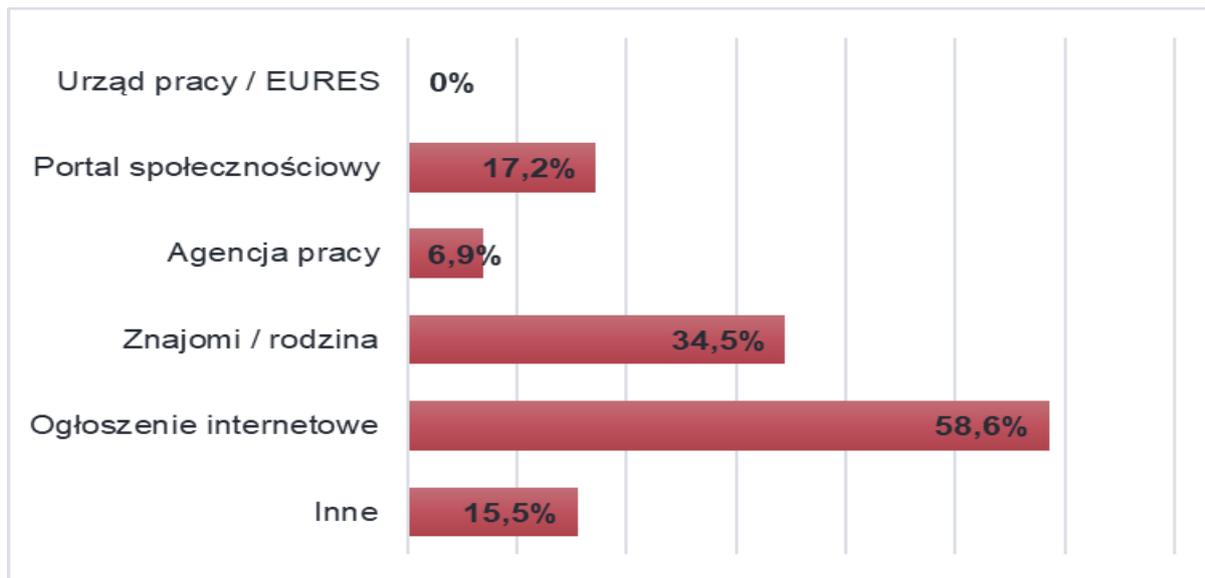


Ciekawość / chęć poznania kraju	Curiosity / desire to explore the country
Względy rodzinne (np. związek, dzieci)	Family considerations (e.g. relationship, children)
Studia lub nauka	Studying or learning
Przeniesienie w ramach firmy / delegowanie	Intra-company transfer / secondment
Poszukiwanie pracy	Job search
Praca / oferta zatrudnienia	Work / offer of employment
Inne	Other

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

Turning to the question concerning the search for job offers in Poland, the most popular sources of information among respondents included **advertisements on the Internet (58.6%)** (Figure 5). Knowledge acquired through personal contacts, including from friends and family, proved useful (34.5%). Social media were used less frequently (17.2%) and employment agencies even less frequently (6.9%). None of the respondents mentioned labour offices or the EURES network.

Figure 5. How did you learn about the possibility of working in Poland?



Urząd pracy / EURES	Labour office / EURES
Portal społecznościowy	Social network
Agencja pracy	Employment agency
Znajomi / rodzina	Friends / family
Ogłoszenie internetowe	Internet announcement
Inne	Other

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

At the time of the move, the participants in the survey had a diversified experience of taking up and searching for a job in Poland: 48.3% of respondents had job assurance due to a signed contract or a job offer, while 51.7% were searching for work while already in Poland or after returning there after some time.

As part of the question on length of stay, the following data was collected on the duration of work: the majority of participants (87.9%) had worked in Poland for more than two years, from one to two years (6.9%), while less than six months (5.2%).

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of places of employment during their stay in Poland. The majority of them changed their place of work three times or more (39.7%), some have done it twice (25.9%), while nearly a third of respondents have never changed their place of employment (34.5%).

Regarding employment conditions, the data takes the following form: in their first job in Poland, most respondents **rated the conditions as “fairly clear” or “very clear” (72.4%)**,

some as “moderately clear” (20.7%), and others as “rather unclear” (5.2%). At their current workplace, the percentage of “very clear” ratings increased (53.4%), with some choosing “rather clear” (13.8%), “moderately clear” (6.9%) and “rather unclear” (1.7%). Furthermore, in their first job, most respondents indicated that their remuneration was compliant with the contract (91.4%), while in their current workplace, this figure fell to (70.7%).

Qualitative refinement

Entering the labour market

The experience of the EU mobile workers surveyed shows that **there is no single typical path** to enter the Polish labour market. Some people came to Poland with a contract already signed or after advanced recruitment interviews, usually in large multinational corporations or EU-related institutions. In their case, the recruitment process took place remotely, based on telephone interviews, video calls and the exchange of documents via email. Other respondents came to Poland without assured employment and searched for a job upon arrival. Their testimonies show both very quick first job placements (sometimes within a few days) and several months of intensive job hunting and gradual exploration of the local labour market.

The predominant tools in the search for a job were **Internet portals** and self-application in response to advertisements - both in the case of those looking for a job before arrival and those who started their search already in Poland. Respondents indicated extensive use of popular job advertisement websites, recruitment forms on company websites and direct email contact with employers. These were complemented by **professional and private networks** - some respondents found jobs through referrals from friends, previous professional contacts or sometimes support from institutions such as embassies or chambers of commerce. Classical recruitment agencies appeared much less frequently in these narratives than is the case of workers coming from outside the EU. For some respondents, **EU mobility programmes** - such as Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci or European Voluntary Service - were also an important channel for entering the Polish labour market. They enabled a “soft landing”, i.e. gradual learning of the country, gaining first work experience and making contacts that later facilitated taking up a permanent job.

Family and partner relationships also played an important role in the labour market entry process. In many cases, the Polish partner was the key “interpreter of the system” - the person who helped in dealing with basic formalities (obtaining a PESEL number, opening a

bank account, contacting offices, schools, health centres). Although this support was not always directly related to the job search itself, in practice it was an important condition for a possibility of **stable employment and settlement**. Without such a background, some of the formal requirements of living in Poland would be much more difficult for respondents to meet, which could delay or complicate their entry into the labour market (see more in the section on “Life”).

Language and specialist competences appeared an important resource in the EU mobile workers surveyed. English language proficiency at a level that allows efficient communication at work has in practice been a prerequisite for entry into many recruitment processes, especially in the IT and BPO/SSC sectors, where English fulfils the role of the primary working language. The additional advantage were **niche languages** from the perspective of the Polish market - such as Hungarian or Dutch - which enabled employment in specialised teams operating specific national markets and built the employee's position as a person difficult to replace. Respondents who had previous experience working or studying in international environments found it relatively easy to settle into similar organisations in Poland and went through the recruitment process more quickly.

Stability

In the respondents' testimonies, it is clear that for persons employed in large multinational companies and shared service centres, **the prevailing form of employment was the employment contract**. A contract for indefinite period was often offered after a short probationary period

We decided that we would try in Poland and at the time I thought it would be a short episode because the economy was not in a good condition. When we arrived in Gdańsk, unemployment was around 24%. Meanwhile, we arrived on Thursday and by Tuesday I already had two job offers at schools as an English teacher. A few months later I found a job in my profession. (K119, Dutch)

which, from the respondents' perspective, was an important element of the sense of security and predictability. Alternative forms - such as **self-employment** - emerged primarily among those who consciously chose a more independent working model (e.g. freelancers, translators) rather than as forced solutions. At the same time, various forms of “**soft market entry**” played an important role in the respondents' career paths: internships, European voluntary service or first, hourly paid jobs (e.g. foreign language teacher). This experience had a transitional function - allowing them to learn the Polish context, gain initial contacts and references, and then move on to more stable employment.

However, the assessment of **employment stability** was ambivalent. On the one hand, respondents emphasised that they felt relatively safe in large, structured organisations, and that the design of HR contracts and processes as such promoted predictability. On the other hand, some interlocutors indicated that it was easier to terminate an employment contract in Poland than in their countries of origin, which reduced the sense of long-term security and increased the willingness to think of work in terms of a “temporary stage” in a career. In financial terms, the picture was clearer: **salaries in large companies were mostly paid on time and in accordance with the contract**, while payroll processes were seen as automated and immune to discretion. Problems, if any, related to understanding of the structure of benefits and perks rather than the payment of the salary itself.

The respondents' accounts also show **the strengths of the Polish work culture based on respect for labour law**. In large organisations, transparent, often bilingual contracts and predictable, automated HR and payroll processes were the standard, resulting in timely and contractually compliant payments, allowances (e.g. for night work) and time accounting. The

In Italy, there is a culture where the working hours specified in the contract are merely a suggestion. In Poland, what is your right is truly your right.

Moreover, over 50 weeks of parental leave that you can take – [when I talk about it] is always a shock. (KII7, Italy)

interlocutors emphasised that in Poland, working time standards and organisation were more consistently enforced than in parts of southern European countries, and that the lack of working overtime was not an obstacle to promotion. **Family benefits** also resonated strongly - more than 50 weeks of parental leave was seen as a

systemic asset, often surprising in international comparisons. Overall, this provides a picture of an environment in which basic standards (working hours, holidays, contractual remuneration) are clear and applied in practice, which promotes a sense of employment security. It is noteworthy, however, that this relationship referred, in particular, to jobs in corporate sectors (IT, BPO/SSC).

Equal treatment

In the testimonies of the mobile workers surveyed, problems related to the salary itself were relatively rare, while **information gaps regarding employee benefits** were a common issue. Difficulties were mainly related to understanding of the solutions specific to the Polish system, such as employee pension schemes (EPP/PPK), “multicafeteria” platforms or the structure of

private health insurance. Information about these benefits was often provided only in Polish or to a limited extent in English, while documentation was not always available in a version that non-Polish speakers could understand. As a consequence, some respondents declared that they simply did not use them at first, even though they could have been a real financial or social benefit.

Regarding **equal treatment at a workplace**, most interviewees employed in multinational corporations did not report direct experience of discrimination due to nationality. At the level of teams, day-to-day cooperation and contract construction, respondents generally felt that they were treated as their Polish colleagues. However, this picture of formal equality coexisted with observations of **the structural tensions**. Respondents emphasised that Poles were more frequently appointed to senior management positions, while foreigners were concentrated in roles related to servicing specific language markets. In some workplaces, people from other EU countries referred to a feeling that they were treated more as a “language carrier” or part of the company's “product” offering than as full members of the organisation with real influence on decisions.

The experience of “**positive discrimination**” among some Western European respondents was also an interesting issue. People from Germany, France or the Netherlands indicated that their origin was sometimes perceived as an asset - it attracted interest, facilitated networking and sometimes translated into the impression of better treatment than in the case of Polish workers.

The presence of both **formal and informal support** for career development in Poland was an important element of respondents' experience. On the employers' side, this support mainly included the use of **bilingual contracts (PL/EN)**, relatively transparent HR procedures and - in some companies - financing of **Polish language courses**. In large multinational organisations, automated recruitment and on-boarding processes were standard, which - despite the aforementioned language restrictions on benefits - made it easier for people from other EU countries to enter the company.

Grassroots migrant groups were also important - above all on social networks - where people from the national community exchanged information about employers, housing, doctors or administrative procedures. In practice, it was this mix of institutional and informal support that created basis for mobile EU workers that compensated for the deficiencies in official information channels and helped them navigate across the Polish labour market and institutional system.

Barriers and obstacles

Quantitative assessment

The most frequently mentioned difficulties faced by respondents after moving to Poland included: **lack of knowledge of the Polish language (63.8%)**, **problems related to understanding regulations and documents (51.7%)** and **lack of support from state institutions (36.2%)** (Figure 6). Other problems were related to difficulties with housing and formal matters (12.1%) and the experience of unfriendly treatment (17.2%). At the same time, 17.2% of respondents did not encounter any difficulties.

Figure 6. How did you learn about a possibility of working in Poland?



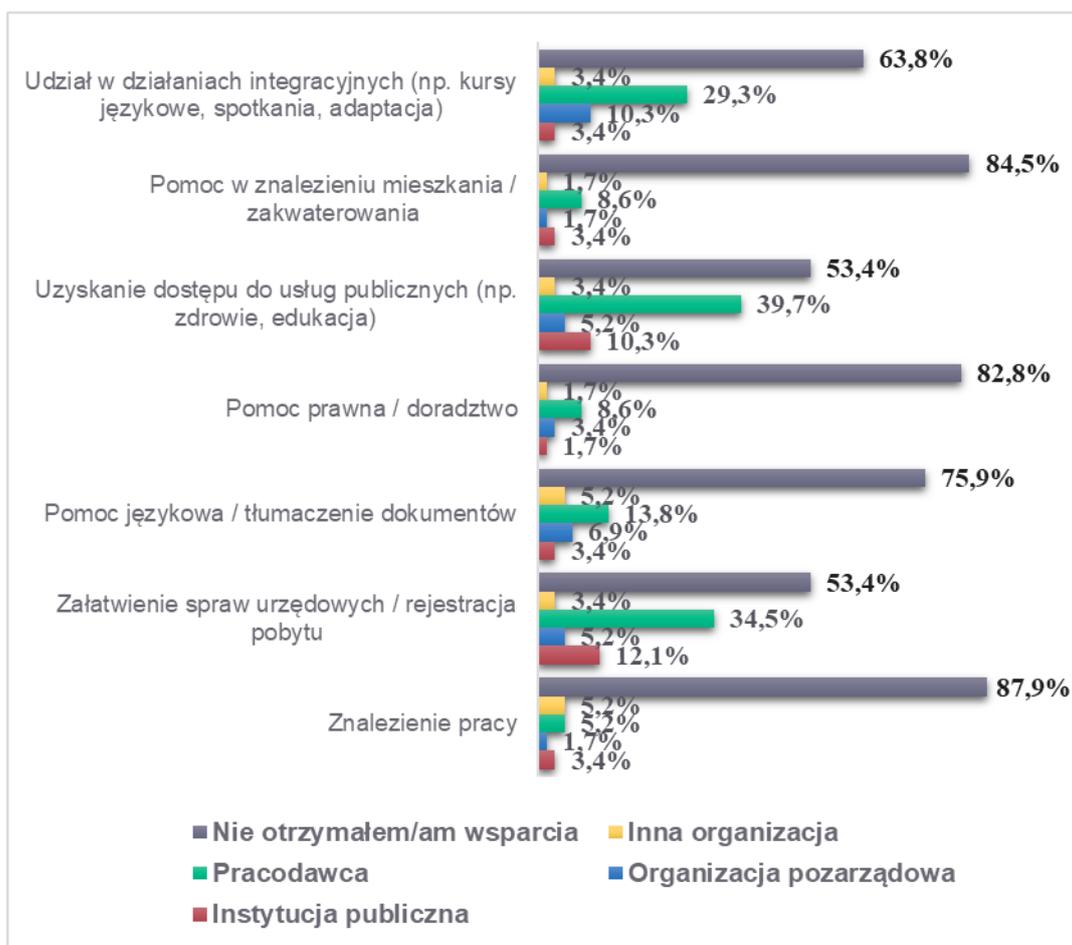
Nie napotkałem trudności	I have not encountered any difficulties
Doświadczylem nieprzyjaznego traktowania lub nierównego traktowania w powodu mojego obywatelstwa lub pochodzenia	I have experienced unfriendly treatment or unequal treatment because of my nationality or origin
Trudności z wynajęciem mieszkania, otwarciem konta bankowego lub spraw urzędowych	Difficulties with renting a flat, opening a bank account or official matters
Trudności w znalezieniu pracy zgodnej z moimi kwalifikacjami	Difficulty with finding a job that matches my qualifications
Problemy z uznaniem kwalifikacji lub doświadczenia zawodowego	Problems with recognition of qualifications or professional experience
Brak pomocy ze strony instytucji publicznych	Lack of assistance from public institutions
Trudności ze zrozumieniem przepisów, procedur lub dokumentów	Difficulty with understanding regulations, procedures or documents

Brak znajomości języka polskiego	Lack of knowledge of Polish
Inne	Other

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

Respondents were most likely to receive assistance in overcoming various barriers and difficulties from their employers: on issues of access to state services (39.7%), on formal matters and residence registration (34.5%) and on integration measures (29.3%) (Figure 7). The support from state organisations or NGOs was rare. The majority of respondents did not receive any assistance with, among others, job search (87.9%), housing (84.5%) or language support (75.9%). **Employers were therefore the main source of support in the adaptation process.**

Figure 7. Did you receive support in any of the following areas upon your arrival in Poland?



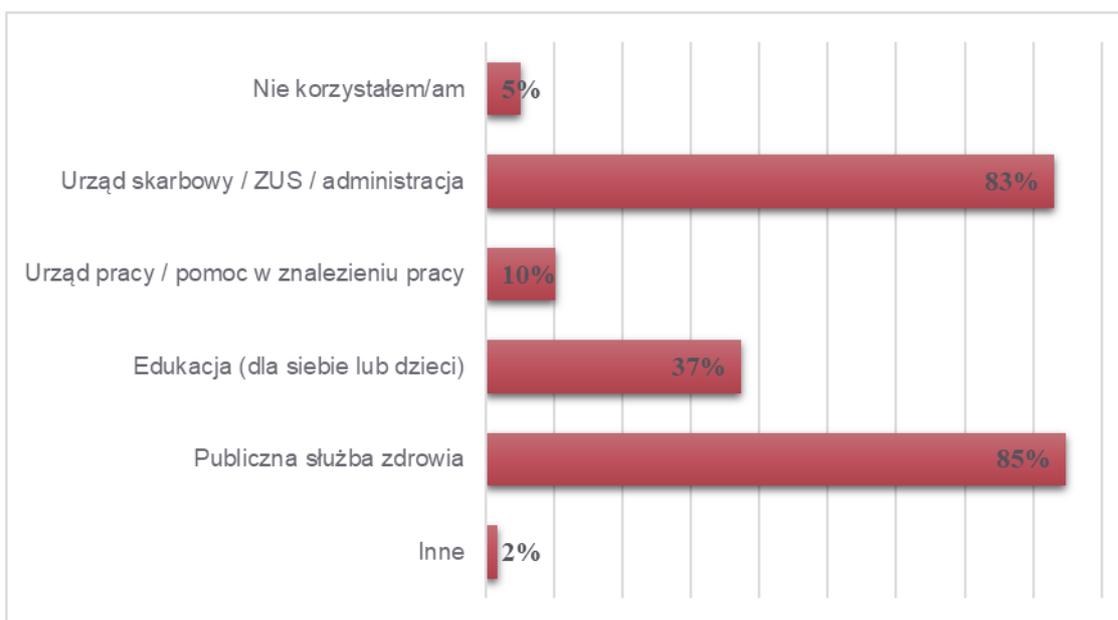
Udział w działaniach integracyjnych (np. kursy językowe, spotkania, adaptacja)	Participation in integration activities (e.g. language courses, meetings, adaptation)
Pomoc w znalezieniu mieszkania / zakwaterowania	Assistance with housing / accommodation
Uzyskanie dostępu do usług publicznych (np. zdrowie, edukacja)	Gaining access to public services (e.g. health, education)
Pomoc prawna / doradztwo	Legal assistance / advice
Pomoc językowa i tłumaczenie dokumentów	Language assistance and translation of documents
Załatwienie spraw urzędowych / rejestracja pobytu	Dealing with official matters / registration of residence
Znalezienie pracy	Finding a job
Nie otrzymałem wsparcia	I did not receive any support
Pracodawca	Employer

Instytucja publiczna	Public institution
Inna organizacja	Other organisation
Organizacja pozarządowa	Non-governmental organisation

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

The use of public services was dominated by the use of the health service (85%) and the tax administration and Social Security (83%). Education for oneself or one's children was used by 37% of respondents, while the job centre and job placement assistance was used by 10%. Public services were not used by 5% of respondents (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Have you used the following public services in Poland?

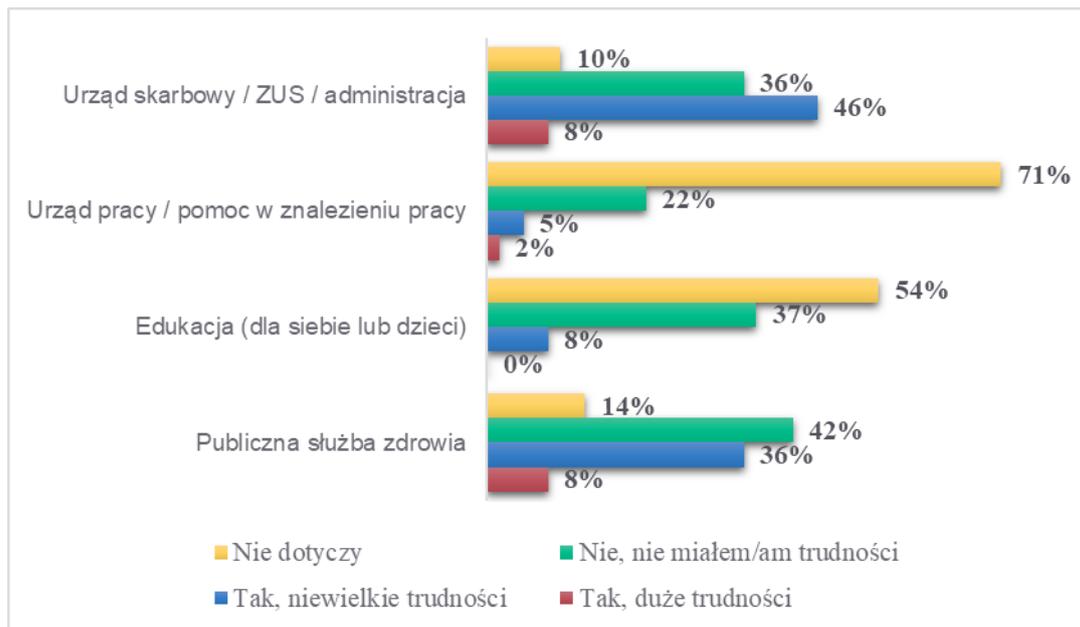


Nie korzystałem	I have not used
Urząd skarbowy / ZUS / administracja	Tax office / ZUS / administration
Urząd pracy / pomoc w znalezieniu pracy	Labour office / job search assistance
Edukacja (dla siebie lub dzieci)	Education (for oneself or for children)
Publiczna służba zdrowia	Public health service
Inne	Other

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

Respondents participating in the survey rated access to public services in Poland in different ways. **Most difficulties were encountered in the public health service and in dealing with the tax office, ZUS and the administration.** In the case of the health service, 8% of respondents indicated major difficulties, 36% referred to minor difficulties, 42% had no problems while 14% considered that the service was irrelevant for them. In the case of the tax office, ZUS and administration, 8% reported major difficulties, 46% reported minor difficulties, 36% encountered no problems and 10% recognised the service as insignificant. In relation to education for themselves or their children, respondents relatively rarely encountered difficulties - 54% indicated that the issue did not relate to their situation, 37% had no problems, 8% reported minor difficulties, while no one indicated major obstacles. Access to labour office services or assistance in finding a job was perceived as relatively easy: 71% of respondents said that the problem did not affect them, 22% did not encounter any difficulties, 5% indicated minor difficulties and 2% indicated major difficulties (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Have you encountered any difficulties in accessing the following services?

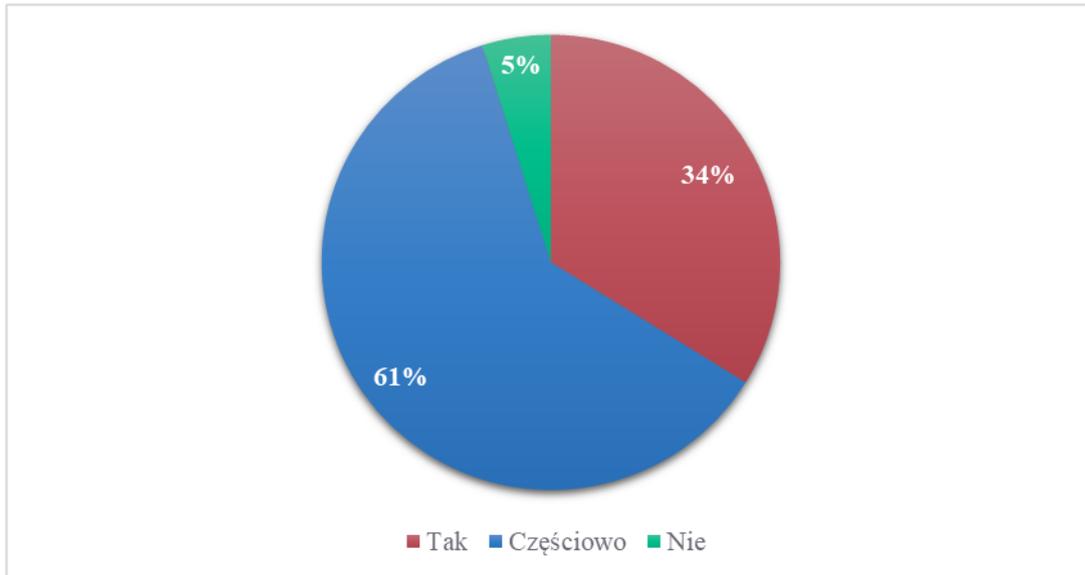


Urząd skarbowy / ZUS / administracja	Tax office / ZUS / administration
Urząd pracy / pomoc w znalezieniu pracy	Labour office / job search assistance
Edukacja (dla siebie lub dzieci)	Education (for oneself or for children)
Publiczna służba zdrowia	Public health service
Nie dotyczy	Not applicable
Nie, nie miałem trudności	No, I did not have any difficulties
Tak, niewielkie trudności	Yes. Minor difficulties
Tak, duże trudności	Yes. Great difficulties

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

In terms of awareness of available sources of support, **42% of survey participants knew where to search for help** at work or in contacts with the authorities, 20% were not aware of such sources and 37% were unsure. Regarding knowledge of labour rights, 34% of respondents felt fully informed, 61% partially informed and 5% not informed at all (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Do you feel informed about your rights as an employee in Poland?



Tak	Yes
Częściowo	Partially
Nie	No

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

In work-related problematic situations (e.g. no contract, delayed pay, ill treatment), **the vast majority of respondents (87%) had no need to report the matter**. A few of them reported the problem to their employer (5%), to a public institution (2%) or did not know where to report (3%). No one used the assistance of an NGO.

Qualitative refinement

Information

One of the strongest resonating issues in the interviews was the **language and information barrier**, particularly evident outside the immediate working environment. Although many respondents operated professionally in English, on many occasions, in practice they had to deal with key formal matters - related to employment, residence, housing or health - in Polish. This

I remember signing a lot of documents. Everything was written in Polish. You do not know what you are signing. (KII8, a Spanish man)

included contacts with authorities, banks, notaries and the public health care service. In situations with serious legal or financial consequences, the lack of access to information in an

understandable language placed mobile EU workers in a position of heavy dependence on Polish partners, friends or sworn interpreters. For many, this meant that they could formally exercise

their rights realistically only if someone close to them was prepared to take on the role of intermediary.

The issue of **documents and contracts only available in Polish** was particularly problematic. Respondents described situations when they had signed numerous documents

- when hiring, changing terms and conditions, terminating a contract or in a relationship with a bank - without fully understanding their content. In some cases, this ended only in a sense of discomfort and lack of control over the situation, but there were also situations where it had **specific negative consequences**, such as losing a part of the leave due or accepting unfavourable terms of separation from the employer. From the respondents' perspective, the problem was not just the language barrier as such, but the fact that the institutional system in practice assumes full knowledge of Polish and does not provide standard, safe solutions for those who do not have this knowledge.

The vagueness and limited availability of information about benefits and rights was also an important element of respondents' experience. They drew attention to the complicated, technical language of correspondence with institutions such as ZUS or the tax office and the lack of translations of key information - including on specific Polish labour market institutions such as PPK - into languages other than Polish. Even people who were doing well professionally and knew basic Polish had difficulty in understanding exactly what rights they were entitled to, what obligations they had to fulfil and what consequences particular decisions (e.g. regarding the form of settlement, insurance or family benefits) had. In practice, this led to a situation where some mobile EU staff **did not use the available benefits** or made decisions intuitively, relying on the help of a partner, friends or an accountant, instead of clear and understandable messages from the institutions.

Procedures

Another area of difficulty was related to the **administrative procedures involved in organising the stay**. Obtaining a PESEL number, fulfilling the registration obligation or sorting out the residence status proved to be complicated and time-consuming processes in practice, despite the fact that respondents had the status of EU citizens. Respondents reported having to arrange

My contract was not renewed after one year. I had to sign documents and deal with everything without knowing the language, it was quite hard. I was told that I still had 20 days of leave to use this year. I signed because I did not know the regulations. And then that year I didn't have any more holidays.
(K1112, a French man)

multiple visits to different offices, ambiguous information on the documents required and discrepancies in the interpretation of regulations between different administrative units. In several cases, regulating basic issues (PESEL, residence registration, "arranging the papers") extended over several years and the formal stabilisation of the living situation occurred with a clear delay in relation to the actual stay and work in Poland.

At the same time, the current **perception is that failing to meet certain obligations or postponing them for many years does not result in a greater risk.** The presence of people from other EU countries was considered natural - both by themselves and by those they came into contact with.

Such experience was reinforced by the general image of a **bureaucratic and unfriendly institutional environment.** Particularly in the first years of Poland's membership of the EU, respondents indicated almost total lack of opportunities to deal with official matters in a language other than Polish and the limited willingness of officials to explain procedures to foreigners. Some respondents noted that the situation had gradually improved over time - individual information materials in English appeared and officials were more open to help - but the impression of an essentially Polish-speaking and inflexible system persisted. As a consequence, even well-established professionals felt like "children" when dealing with the administration who, despite formal freedom of movement for workers, still have to find their way through the maze of local procedures.

I told him: "You can't just stay in Poland indefinitely without telling anyone."

And he said: "Well, you know... Basically it's ok, even if it's not quite legal, because nobody asks for it." "If you are from the EU, everyone assumes you can be here." (KIII7, a Spanish woman)

Relationships at a workplace

The **instrumental treatment of foreigners** in certain segments of the labour market, above all in call centres and companies with a lower organisational culture, also emerged in the inter-

views. In these environments, mobile EU workers were often seen primarily as "**language carriers**" - people hired primarily to serve the lines in a particular national language, rather than as full-fledged team members with potential for development and promotion. This translated into limited opportunities to negotiate working conditions, poor influence on the design of responsibilities and difficulties in moving beyond a narrowly defined role. Some interlocutors described this type of workplace as a space of high turnover, where foreigners are easily replaceable and their relationship with the employer is clearly transactional - as long as they "provide the language", they are needed, but a long-term career path is rarely built for them.

Barriers of social nature also appeared in the respondents' statements, which did not always take the form of open discrimination, but significantly affected the feeling of inclusion in Poland. Most interlocutors - largely white Europeans from EU countries - declared that they had not experienced outright hostile behaviour or overtly discriminatory comments. At the same time, some of them described a sense of **social isolation** and clear **national conflicts in their workplaces**. Teams, especially in large companies, tended to be divided into groups according to language and origin, which made it difficult to build deeper relationships with Polish colleagues and fostered remaining in the “expat bubbles”. There were also observations in the respondents' testimonies about the situation of their black friends or people of a different than “typically European” appearance - it was these people who were more likely to have problems renting a flat, experience distrust in everyday contacts or feel less safe in public spaces. This shows that formal citizenship status in practice overlaps with **ethnic and racial hierarchies** that diversify the experience of individual groups.

Some respondents also paid attention to **the deterioration of the social climate in recent years**. They described more suspicion towards foreigners, more frequent confusion with other migrant groups (e.g. from Ukraine) and growing tensions in public space. These changes were linked to the political situation, the polarisation of public debate and the consequences of the war in Ukraine. Although this experience did not always take the form of direct attacks or conflicts, they did constitute the feeling that being an “outsider” had become more visible in Poland and carried a greater risk of unpleasant situations than just a few years earlier. For some respondents, this was an additional factor limiting their willingness to link their long-term future to Poland.

Infringements and assertion of rights

Violations of workers' rights in selected companies should also be mentioned. Although it was not the experience of the majority of respondents, it indeed shows how a language and information barrier can reinforce the asymmetry between an employee and an employer. The testimonies included examples of insufficient rest periods between shifts, chaotic work schedules, pressure to work overtime, and attempts to force employees to sign unfavourable documents when changing their terms of employment or terminating their contracts. Where the employee knew his or her rights and was able to reach out to institutions such as the State Labour

Inspection, intervention proved effective and led to correction of the employer's practices. However, this required a **high degree of pro-activity, determination and language competence**, leaving some EU mobile workers less protected in practice than the formal provisions on freedom of movement and equal treatment would suggest.

Against the background of many of the experiences described, **limited knowledge and use of formal support institutions** was evident. The majority of respondents emphasised

that they coped with their daily challenges - both work and life - primarily with the help of partners, family and informal networks, including migrant groups on social media. It was there that information was sought on procedures, reliable employers, doctors, schools or how to deal with administration. Institutions such as the State Labour Inspection were only used in situations of clear crisis, when labour law violations were already difficult to ignore. Those who chose to do so reported that support was sometimes effective, but often required a good understanding of the system, the ability to formulate a complaint and the determination to bring the matter to the conclusion. On the other hand, in the respondents' testimonies there were virtually no examples of **proactive, local institutional support** - from local governments, NGOs or information points for foreigners. The potential of such solutions remained largely untapped, with the burden of navigating through the system relying mainly on the employees themselves and their immediate environment.

The company was taking a large contract and building an IT department from scratch. They severely underestimated the workload, there was a lot of work. I had afternoon shifts until 10 pm and they told me to come back at 8 am. So I stayed in the office overnight. I reported comments but they were received with total incomprehension. So I wrote an email to the State Labour Inspection - with the help of an online translator. I received an official letter with a stamp; I showed it to the team leader. They were not happy, but after that the working time violations stopped. The company also made mess with payments - I wasn't actually affected by this, my colleagues had worse experience. I told them: "Report to PIP. It seems to be working." (KIII10, a Hungarian man)

Life

In this section, we present the results on life outside work in three related subsections. First, we summarise **the view from the perspective of institutional stakeholders** - what challenges (language, housing, health, education) they perceive for mobile EU citizens in their daily functioning. We then move on to the subsection on **“Daily life and integration”** in which we first show **the quantitative context** (most common difficulties, sources of support, extent of use of public services) and then offer **a qualitative refinement** (coping strategies, role of partners/”buddies”, expat networks, housing and health experiences, impact of the language barrier on social relationships). The chapter closes with a subsection on **“Plans and mobility”** - again arranged in a **quantitative context** (declarations of length of stay, job changes, willingness to relocate) and **qualitative refinement** (motivations for staying or leaving, boundary conditions for stabilisation in Poland, risk factors and “conditional mobility”).

Life outside work: key challenges of mobile people as perceived by stakeholders

As indicated in the previous chapter, mobile people most often end up in a working environment that is characterised by openness, stability and good organisation. In everyday life, the ability to communicate in English is increasing in large cities, facilitating a career start and social adaptation. According to the stakeholders, integration at work proceeds efficiently, but life outside the office presents significant **difficulties** - mainly **language**.

The lack of knowledge of the Polish language is one of the main **obstacles in dealing with public administration**. In large cities, it is increasingly possible to communicate in English at information points, via hotlines or directly when visiting the offices. Some institutions also operate **websites in several languages**

Many companies operating in Poland already have employees from different EU countries in their teams, which fosters openness and a positive attitude towards foreigners. Poles generally welcome the presence of people from other countries and are keen to make contact. For many migrants, this openness and friendliness was one of the key reasons for staying in Poland – the feeling that someone wants to talk, meet and appreciate the experience of a person from another country. (Employment agency representative)

and use **digital translators** (also during direct on-site service). In smaller towns, situation is different, which can lead to information exclusion and increased dependence on Polish-speaking partners, friends or acquaintances, which has also already been mentioned. Such persons, fluent in Polish, often accompany EU citizens when dealing with official matters or during medical appointments, acting as interpreters – regardless of the size of the town or place of residence of the EU citizen.

According to stakeholders, one particularly acute challenge for female and male foreigners - including EU citizens - is to find housing. The problem does not only refer to costs (although these are high), but also of **communication barriers and landlord prejudice**. People from outside Poland are perceived by some landlords as less reliable tenants, especially if they do not speak Polish. Some landlords do not want to communicate in English or are afraid that a foreign tenant will “disappear” overnight. In response to these difficulties, some companies introduce relocation packages, including support in finding accommodation, accommodation subsidies or the use of specialised *relocation services*. Sometimes the companies also cope with the negotiations with the owners or cover the brokerage costs. However, such a support is generally provided by top-level specialists.

In terms of access to the **public health system**, the language barrier is still sometimes a major obstacle - especially at the first line of contact (registration, nurses, paramedics). In emergency cases, such as ambulance intervention, the inability to communicate in English can be a critical issue. On the other hand, **private clinics** - to which employers provide access as part of the benefits scheme - usually offer service in foreign languages.

Regarding access to the education system, according to stakeholders, it is not a source of major difficulties. Relocation of the whole family most often involves managers. In such cases, children are placed in international schools or institutions with bilingual teaching - but outside the largest urban centres, their offer is limited.

Some companies employing citizens and nationals of other EU countries offer various forms of assistance aimed at **adjustment and cultural adaptation** - in large multinational corporations, relocation programmes are often extensive and include elements of the so-called **socio-cultural onboarding**. New recruits are supported not only in their induction but also in their daily life. In many companies, the so-called “buddy” (mentor) operates who helps the new employee find his or her way not only in the organisation but also in social life. The role of such a person goes beyond professional issues - he or she is also expected to introduce the new person to local customs, encourage participation in social life and in shared activities after work.

The aim of such measures is to facilitate integration and reduce the sense of isolation that foreign women and men may feel upon arrival in a new country.

Stakeholders indicated that although public institutions and other actors are taking measures to better serve foreigners, **there is no single, coherent source of information about life in Poland**. Information is dispersed and reaches migrants through multiple communication channels. In this context, stakeholders indicated the need for an integrated compendium of knowledge about life in Poland, which would also contain practical materials such as instructions, forms, contact details of institutions, etc. - in multiple languages. Such a set of information should accompany every visitor right from the beginning and, according to some interviewees, as early as the decision to leave.

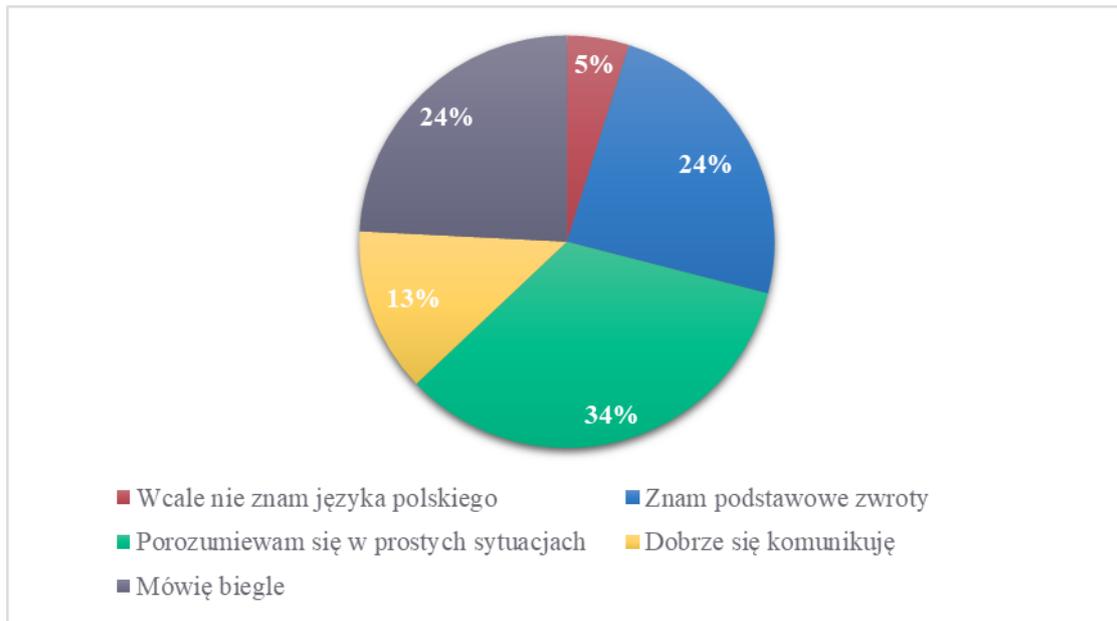
Some also emphasised the need to make **the e-government service "obywatel.gov.pl"** available in English, which would make it easier for people from other EU countries to deal with official matters and use public services without speaking Polish. The importance of **a wider range of Polish language courses** and **the more widespread use of digital translators**, e.g. in medical care when performing routine tasks in front of nursing staff, was also highlighted.

Daily life and integration

Quantitative assessment

Most of the foreigners participating in the survey declared **a moderate or good knowledge of Polish** (Figure 11). 34% of respondents communicated in simple situations, 24% spoke fluently, 13% communicated well, 24% knew basic phrases and 5% did not know the language at all.

Figure 11. How would you rate your knowledge of the Polish language?



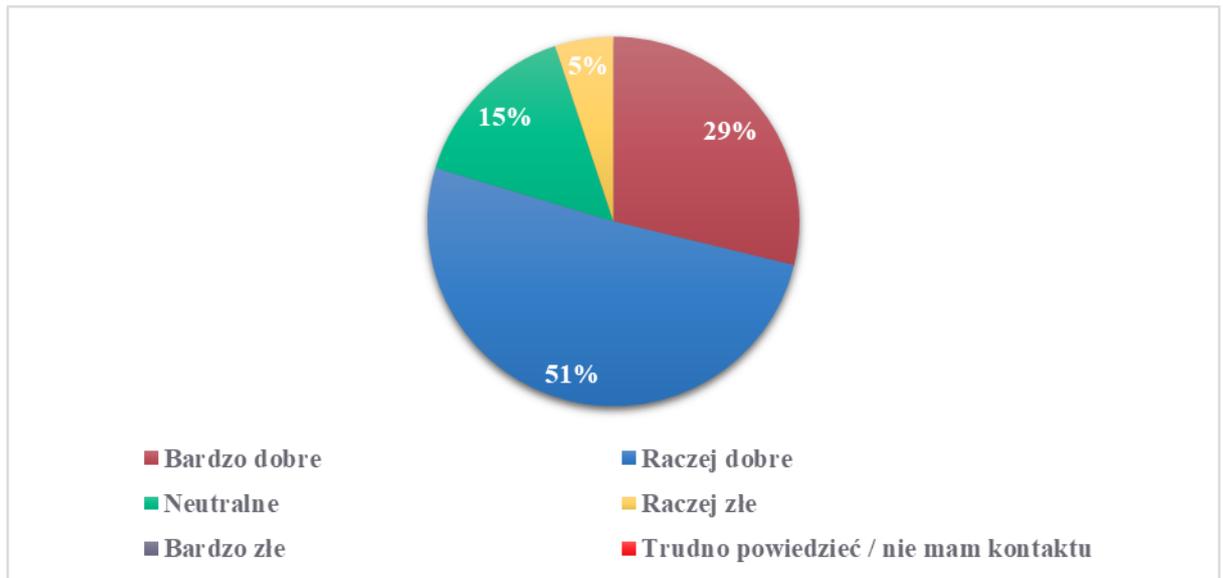
Wcale nie znam języka polskiego	I don't speak Polish at all
Znam podstawowe zwroty	I know the basic phrases
Porozumiewam się w prostych sytuacjach	I can communicate in simple situations
Dobrze się komunikuję	I communicate well
Mówię biegle	I speak fluently

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

In terms of ways of learning the Polish language, **daily contacts at work or in private life** were most frequently cited (53%). Self-study (40%), language courses paid for by an individual or one's family (32%) and employer-funded courses (27%) also played a significant role. Learning at school or at a university was indicated by 13% of respondents, and owing to the family, friends or a partner, 34% of respondents learned the language. Free courses organised by public institutions (2%) or NGOs (3%) were used less frequently, while 5% of respondents did not know the language at all.

When evaluating relationships with Poles, the majority of survey participants declared **positive experience**: 29% described them as very good and 51% as rather good (Figure 12). Neutral relations were indicated by 15%, while rather poor relations were indicated by 5%. No one reported a very bad relationship or lack of contact. Additionally, referring to social contacts, it is worth noting that the majority of respondents know other people from EU countries working in Poland - 61.3% have many such friends and 32.3% know several people. Only 6.5% do not know any person from these countries working in Poland.

Figure 12. How do you assess your relations with Poles?

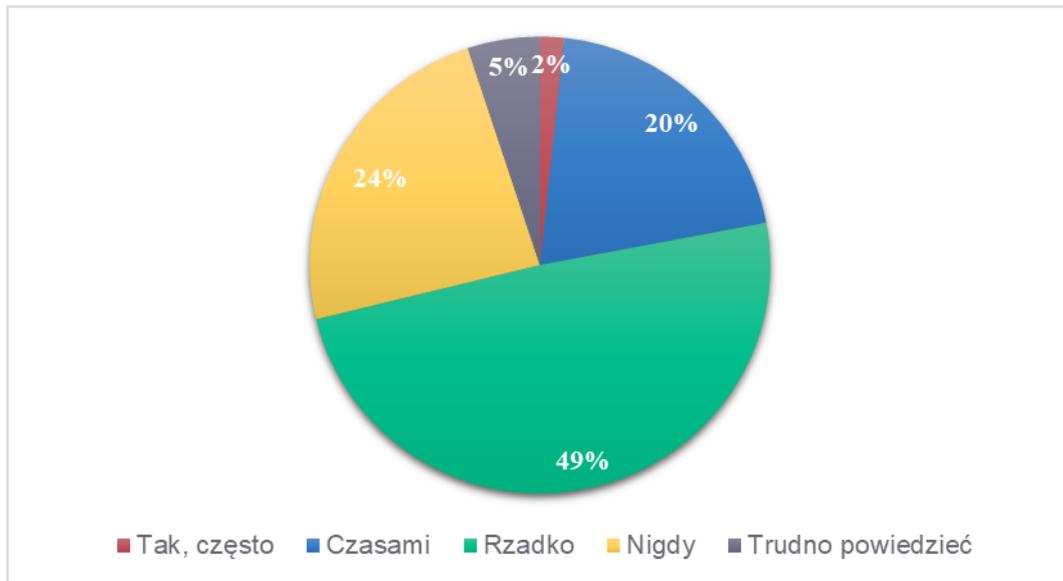


Bardzo dobre	Very good
Raczej dobre	Rather good
Neutralne	Neutral
Raczej zle	Rather poor
Bardzo zle	Very bad
Trudno powiedziec / nie mam kontaktu	Difficult to say / I do not have contacts

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

With regard to experience of unequal treatment in Poland, 49% of respondents admitted that it happened rarely, 20% - sometimes, 2% - often, 24% - never and 5% could not assess the situation (Figure 13). Most often, respondents indicated that they had experienced unequal treatment in the following situations or areas of social life: in public offices and institutions (36%), in public transport (22%), in social contacts (20%), in shops and restaurants (17%) and at a workplace (15%). Other areas indicated included places of residence (9%) as well as the internet and social media (9%). At the same time, 24% of respondents did not experience any situations of unequal treatment and 12% indicated other circumstances.

Figure 13. As a foreigner, have you experienced unequal treatment in Poland?



Tak, często	Yes, often
Czasami	Sometimes
Rzadko	Seldom
Nigdy	Never
Trudno powiedzieć	Hard to say

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

Moving to the question on the impact of various aspects of living in Poland, the greatest positive impact was indicated by respondents in terms of **the sense of security (80%), opportunities for professional development (50%) and experience of contact with people in Poland (50%)**. The level of remuneration was assessed positively by 41% of participants and the availability of stable employment by 40%. Knowledge of the Polish language was a positive factor for 42.9% of respondents, while contacts with public institutions and integration support were more often assessed negatively or as neutral (30% and 20% of responses, respectively). Other aspects, such as the cost of living, the housing situation or equal treatment, were perceived in a mixed way, with a predominantly neutral or no impact rating.

Qualitative refinement

Many respondents found it difficult to assess whether they were integrated with Polish society.

Outside my circle of friends, I don't have a particularly strong connection to Polish society in general. (KIII, French)

Although the answer to this question was usually “rather yes”, with some reservations. In doing so, they indicated **a lack of a sense of**

strong connection to society, which was most often linked to the language barrier. Consequently, many interlocutors spoke of “living in their bubble”, i.e. surrounded by a group of friends and acquaintances who do not necessarily come from Poland, but rather from other countries, and it was on this community that they focused their attention. At the same time, many respondents said that they felt that Polish society was open to them and that the decision on refraining from getting involved in social issues was their own. Therefore, they usually did not feel that they would be excluded by society. In addition, they often had more positive impressions in terms of relations with the local community and neighbours, as in this area they were more willing to establish contact with Poles, even if they admitted that these tended to be superficial relationships, which prevented the building of a genuine bond and sense of belonging. **The respondents usually did not use the support of public institutions or NGOs⁶, in order to be better integrated into society.** Most often, **employers play a key role in the first weeks and months after arrival.** If the company where someone starts working provides bilingual standards (e.g. the contract and other documents are available in English), offers support from a mentor and the HR department in handling the formalities of staying and starting work, or offers Polish language courses, the entry into society is easier and the integration progresses more smoothly. Some people also pointed to the important support of their countries' embassies in obtaining certain information and organising certain matters, such as marriage.

At the same time, it is worth noting that some of the respondents indicated **the important role of partners** who come from Poland. It is the Polish partners or friends who become the aforementioned “translators of the system”. Being in a relationship with a Polish woman or man also significantly helped in learning more about Polish culture and establishing broader contacts - even through relationships with the partner's family and friends. In this context, the role of language schools was also pointed out which, in addition to learning the language, provide information about life and culture in Poland. For some of the respondents, even after leaving the premises of the university, the past experience of studying in Poland was also helpful in coping with many daily life issues and in maintaining contacts - especially at the initial stages of their stay in Poland.

⁶ The exception are NGOs, where some respondents were doing voluntary work that brought them to Poland. Like employers, they played a key role at the first stage of the residency.

Respondents most often cited a lack of serious difficulties in day-to-day affairs and arranging their lives in Poland, although some raised the problem of **access to housing and financing the purchase of real estate**. Respondents indicated that the specific nature of Polish legal solutions - especially

Generally speaking, you have to think: "OK, I have to go to the bank. Which bank can I go to so that someone speaks English?" But after all, that's what you agreed to when you came to a country whose language you don't speak, isn't it? The same applies if you went to Portugal. So I don't think this is something negative because it is normal. The negative aspect is simply how people sometimes treat you. (KIII1, a Portuguese woman)

occasional tenancy, where the tenant is expected to indicate the specific address to move to in the event of eviction - are particularly difficult for newcomers without an extensive network of contacts in Poland. For mobile EU workers who had no family or close friends locally, finding someone willing to share their address formally was often not feasible, narrowing the available rental market. Furthermore, one respondent pointed out that some landlords explicitly state that they do not want to rent their dwellings to foreigners. Similarly, in the case of mortgage loans, respondents described **stricter conditions for foreigners**: the requirement of a few or several months' history of salary inflows to the Polish account, the reluctance of banks to grant loans in euro and less favourable offers than for Polish citizens. In practice, this meant that even those who were well integrated professionally had limited opportunities to become permanently linked with Poland through the purchase of a dwelling.

Many areas of daily life are affected by the aforementioned language barrier, which is the biggest challenge for the majority of respondents. The inability to communicate in English in certain situations often means incurring additional costs (e.g. certified translation), an increased uncertainty and more time expenditure. **Respondents emphasised that knowledge of Polish - even at a basic level - can be helpful in many situations and makes daily matters much easier and contact with people nicer.** When they do not speak the language themselves, they must instead rely on the help of a partner who speaks the language or on Polish acquaintances. In the case of respondents who were learning the Polish language, sometimes the language course was provided and partly financed by the employer. However, it is not a standard, so some respondents also talked about learning the language on their own - from mobile apps on their phone, browser auto-translators or tools using artificial intelligence. Some respondents also mentioned that they learned the language through conversations with Polish friends; in many cases these are also people who are related to a person of Polish origin.

According to some of the respondents, it is the desire to communicate with a family from Poland or with children raised together in Poland that prompts them to invest in language learning.

Some respondents admitted that they did not learn Polish because they did not have time, it was too demanding or they were simply not convinced that they would stay in Poland for the long term. These respondents have also pointed out that if someone lives in large Polish cities, such as Warsaw or Wrocław, there are no major problems to communicate in English in daily life. However, as already mentioned, this is usually not possible in offices and then they have to rely on the help of friends who speak Polish (they are not always Polish). This problem also emerged in the context of issues related to medical appointments as well as banking and credit for housing - also in that case, respondents often spoke of having to rely on the support of Polish speakers.

Respondents often declared **general satisfaction with the quality of daily life in Poland**. They highlighted the work and life balance and a high level of quality in public

How much can you feel like a child when you go to the doctor and can't explain what hurts you? (K112, a French man)

services (especially public transport). **They also praised the wide access to a range of online services and the use of digital innovations** in dealing with authorities, which consequently partly helped to overcome the language barrier, as some websites are available in English, and when this is not the case, they were able to use online tools to translate the content of websites and documents.

Different, **more negative impressions were mainly related to access to medical and health care services**, mainly due to the language barrier and the same difficulties faced by everyone in Poland (also difficulties in finding a place for a child in a crèche). Many respondents chose to use private medical establishments, which they often have access to as part of the packages that are offered to them at work. **Contacts with the health care system**, especially public, were a significant source of uncertainty. Lack of sufficient knowledge of the Polish language and limited recognition of the rules of the system translated into a feeling of helplessness and dependence on others. There were examples in the testimonies of ignored injuries or situations where reported complaints were not treated with due seriousness and the patient did not have the tools to effectively demand an explanation. Some respondents described the experience as being "like a child who can't explain what hurts it" - fully dependent on the good will of staff and the support of third parties. This sense of lack of control over such a fundamental area as health further undermined the subjective sense of security associated with living and

working in Poland. **This negative perception of life in Poland is also exacerbated by the increasingly difficult situation in recent years regarding the availability of housing, a labour market that is perceived as less attractive (particularly when it comes to job offers where knowledge of a foreign language is the main criterion for selecting candidates), rising living costs, low wages and uncertainty related to the war in Ukraine.**

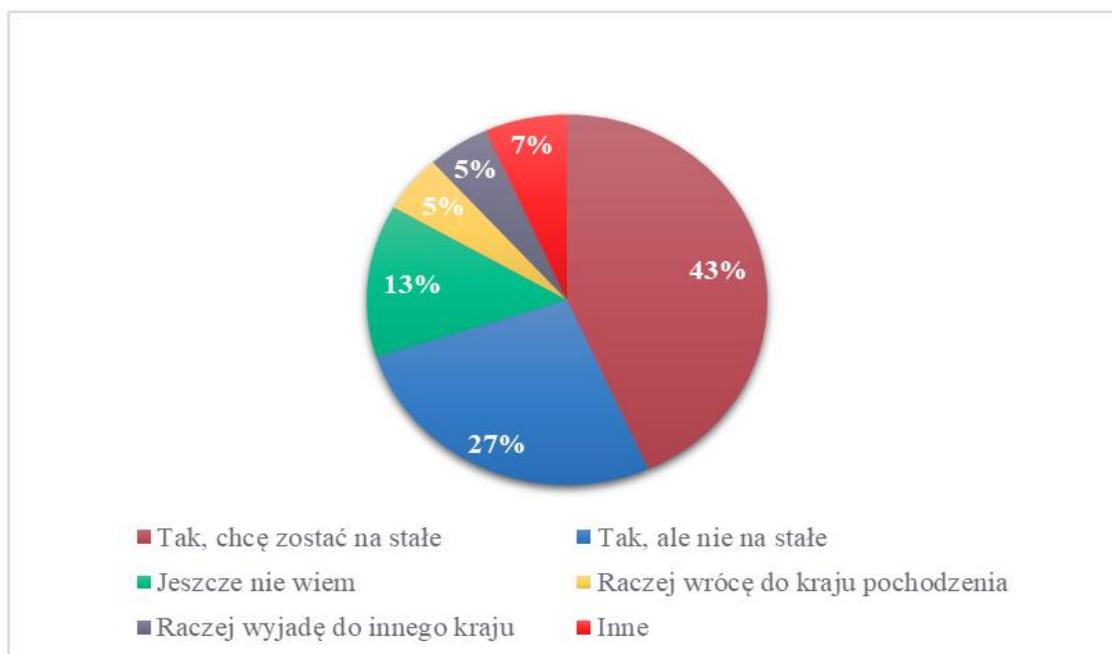
Overall, **the respondents reported that they did not feel discriminated against in their everyday life in Poland on grounds related to their origin.** They mentioned very rare experience with xenophobia that had affected them. However, some of them indicated that the reluctance may be greater for other nationalities or because of religion or skin colour. In other words, although they themselves have not experienced too many unpleasant situations, they may have witnessed or heard of their friends being treated in this way. This, on the other hand, may mean that **even if these situations do not affect them directly, they may affect their overall perception of how foreigners are treated in Poland.** Besides, several of the respondents also mentioned that they were not able to donate blood even though they wanted to do so, and that, according to them, this was because they were foreigners. One respondent also raised the problem of not being able to use diacritical marks from their language when filling in forms in offices.

Plans and mobility

Quantitative assessment

Among the mobile workers from the EU countries participating in the **survey, 41.9% of respondents declared their intention to stay in Poland permanently**, 25.8% plan to stay temporarily and 12.9% have not taken their decision yet (Figure 14). A small part of respondents intend to return to their country of origin (4.8%) or to move to another country (4.8%), while 6.5% indicated other options. Considering the other responses, some respondents declare they want to stay, although they are not sure if it will be permanently. Some emphasise the need to return to the country for emotional, social or family reasons, which also involves a change of job. Others would like to stay, but make their decision contingent on a possibility of further employment. There are also statements indicating that the decision to stay depends on family plans, including the desire to move to a warmer country after retirement.

Figure 14. Do you plan to stay in Poland?

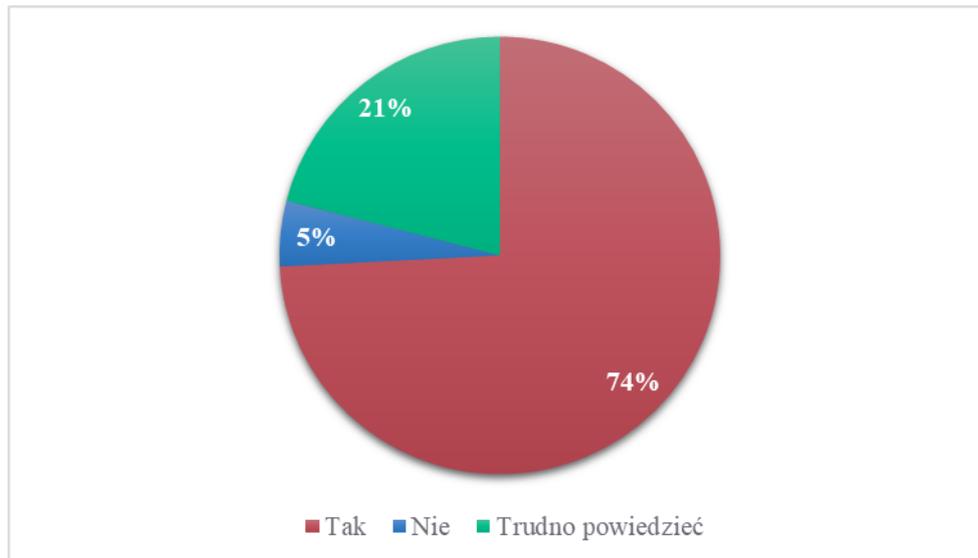


Tak, chcę zostać na stałe	Yes, I want to stay permanently
Tak, ale nie na stałe	Yes, but not permanently
Jeszcze nie wiem	I do not know yet
Raczej wrócę do kraju pochodzenia	I would rather return to my country of origin
Raczej wyjadę do innego kraju	I would rather go to another country
Inne	Other

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

While evaluating the overall experience of living in Poland, the majority of participants expressed a positive opinion - 41.9% definitely positive and 50% rather positive. A similar trend occurred for work-related experience: 46.8% strongly positive and 41.9% rather positive. With regard to recommending a job in Poland to friends, 74.2% of respondents declared that they would recommend a job in Poland, 4.8% answered negatively and 21% indicated that it was difficult to say (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Would you recommend working in Poland to your friends?



Tak	Yes
Nie	No
Trudno powiedzieć	Hard to say

Source: own compilation based on data, N = 63 respondents.

Additional comments of respondents indicate both positive experience and challenges of living in Poland. Respondents highlighted the benefits of professional development and the opportunity to acquire real estate, while also indicating problems related to bureaucracy, housing availability and limited assistance of state institutions. Several people emphasised that knowledge of the Polish language significantly facilitated daily life and contact with authorities, while the lack of centralised information for foreigners made their adaptation difficult. Some participants also indicated challenges arising from the cost of living and the specific nature of the local housing market, as well as difficulties in accessing language or educational support.

Qualitative refinement

Overall, I feel really good in Poland. I think it's possible to achieve a great work and life balance in Warsaw. Due to my work, I would have to live in one of the big cities or capitals of the European Union. Say in Paris, Madrid, Lisbon or wherever. But I think in terms of cost of living, safety and public transport - and I travel quite often for business, so I go to Belgium, Brussels and so on - I can say it's really good. I am very happy with my life in Poland. So, I see myself here for the long term. (KII5, a French man)

Respondents tended to find it difficult to talk about their long-term intentions. However, when asked about their plans for the future, they often said that **they did not intend to leave Poland in the short to medium term**. At the same time, they indicated various reasons behind this decision, such as a good job (their own, but also that of their

partner), relatively good, stable employment conditions, family situation (e.g. their partner comes from Poland and has a family here; children attending school in Poland), or the purchase of a house or flat. These reasons were therefore usually related to having a good job and settlement in Poland. Some respondents also paid attention to the lack of prospects for a good job and a decent life in their home country and that working conditions there are still not as favourable as in Poland, e.g. In terms of job stability. Several people also pointed to other reasons that discourage them from returning to their country, such as the deteriorating social and political situation there.

When inquired about their decision to stay longer, we also asked them to compare the quality of life and working conditions in Poland with those in the respondents' countries of origin. According to many of them, **Poland compares favourably**, e.g. In terms of the ease of finding a job, work and life balance, stability of employment, sense of security, cost of living or quality of public services. Even if, in many interviews, the interlocutors stated that the quality of life and working conditions in Poland have been deteriorating over the recent years (mainly due to the increasing cost of living and the increasingly difficult situation on the labour market in their perception), they also note that the situation is similar in their home country, where they do not perceive any changes for the better. Consequently, **most of respondents did not consider returning to their homeland at present**, and if they did think about leaving Poland, it was usually in the distant future and to a country other than their country of origin.

It is important to note **the openness of the respondents to mobility and the relative lack of roots**, taking into account that the statements of some of them do not indicate a strong connection to Poland as a country, but rather to their place of work. Many have already had the

experience of moving abroad in previous years and consequently admit the possibility that they could do it again, although this is usually dependent on life and work circumstances. For those respondents who said they were considering moving out of Poland, this decision was explained by their curiosity about the world, a desire to see new places, better weather in other countries or a desire to return to the home country. **However, it was usually not indicated that one lives or earns better in other countries, while the reason to leave Poland could rather be the loss of a job and the inability to find a new one.** One of the respondents who has been living in Poland for more than a dozen years, estimated that most of the foreigners he knows who moved out of Poland did so precisely because they lost their jobs or changed their conditions to those unacceptable to them. Another person also mentioned that after three years of living in Poland, she did not see any compelling personal or professional reasons to stay - apart from the salary, the relative value of which was falling anyway, which further undermines her motivation to stay. Some respondents also raised issues such as the uncertainty surrounding the war in Ukraine, as well as the problem of increasing resentment towards migrants. **Even though the vast majority of respondents said that they generally did not feel any discrimination in Poland because of their origin, many noted that this kind of treatment could be experienced by other foreigners - especially those from non-EU countries.** The noticeable decline in the friendliness of Polish society does not therefore translate into discrimination at work, but it can reduce the comfort of life and act as a driver to consider alternatives.

The balance of migration from the EU to Poland as perceived by the stakeholders

The following section presents **the balance of migration from the EU to Poland exclusively from a stakeholder perspective** - without the addition of survey data or administrative analyses. We first synthesise **the effects of mobility** in three dimensions: the economy (replenishing competence, technology and know-how transfer), work culture (impact on management standards and multilingual communication) and urban social life (visibility of diversity, daily practices). At the same time, we highlight the tensions: the limited scale of the phenomenon, the risks of using stereotypes and the gap in consistent public messages. In the second part, we discuss **the importance of freedom of movement for workers (SPP)**: its current “qualitative” nature with a small scale of inflows, the information gaps and the lack of systematic data on the contribution of this group, as well as the image and structural barriers limiting the dynamics of the process. The third segment streamlines the picture of **mobility from the “old” and “new” EU** - the differences in profiles, motivation and employment sectors - and proposes a more useful distribution criterion based on the relationship between wages and the cost of living and the condition of labour markets in each country.

Effects of mobility from the EU

According to stakeholders, the impact of migration from other EU countries to Poland is still **limited but increasingly noticeable**. The key features distinguishing it include **quality** - strongly linked to the qualifications, competence and experience “brought” to Poland by mobile people - and the **potential for long-term impact**. In this context, this type of migration cannot be disregarded in terms of **its impact on the economy, work culture and society**.

Due to their qualifications and competence, the importance of the presence of mobile people on the Polish labour market is particularly significant for the **development of the IT sector, finance or shared service centres**. Moreover, the presence of these individuals enables companies to **accelerate technology and know-how transfer**, particularly in those areas of

competence that the Polish education system is not yet able to produce on its own (e.g. nuclear energy). Employing people with experience gained in other EU Member States also contributes to **the professionalisation of economic activity**. Stakeholders indicated that the “local insight” and knowledge of markets other than Polish make it possible to avoid costly mistakes and better adapt products and services to the needs of foreign customers.

In terms of **organisational culture**, the presence of EU professionals is a driver for the transformation of working and management styles. These employees often act as unofficial “mentors”, introducing practices known from other countries to companies, such as modern project management methodologies, interpersonal and inter-team communication standards, reporting and quality assessment standards or practices related to working in a multilingual environment. Use of English as a working language, openness to diversity and a greater emphasis on horizontal communication is becoming, as the interviewees stressed, “not the exception but an everyday standard” in an increasing number of companies. Consequently, mobile people from the EU are modelling the working environment, adapting it to the realities of global markets.

People who come to us bring a part of themselves with them - their culture, language and experience. This is of great value to us. This cultural and linguistic exchange gives us the stimulus to try something new, to see the world from a different perspective. In Poland, we have our own tested path - school, studies, work - yet these people show us another aspect of reality, they teach us openness and inspire us to grow. (Representative of the District Labour Office)

The presence of mobile people also generates specific **social impacts**, noticeable, above all, in larger urban centres. According to the interlocutors, the visibility of other cultures is increasing in public spaces, manifested, among other things, by the number of languages used in daily interactions, and this in turn leads to

an increased openness of male and female residents to diversity. This phenomenon reinforces the normalisation of intercultural contacts and translates into a greater willingness of local communities to cooperate and live with people from abroad as neighbours. Stakeholders also indicate that the presence of foreigners in Poland, including from EU countries, encourages language learning and the development of soft skills needed for work and life in an international environment. Mobile people are also not confined to the role of employees - some of them actively participate in the social and cultural life of cities, while bringing new lifestyle patterns to Poland. For a part of the population, they may be a source of inspiration and practices observed on a daily basis may become more popular over time (e.g. commuting by bicycle to work, jogging).

Stakeholders also draw attention to the **potential negative effects** of the increasing visibility of foreigners in a still relatively homogeneous Polish society. The extent of migration from the EU is not massive, but mobile people are perceived from the wider perspective of migration to Poland, including from third countries. Fears and stereotypes emerge, including but not limited to narratives of “jobs being taken away”, even though there is no evidence. It was indicated that there is a lack of coherent communication in the public space explaining who mobile people from the EU are, why they find employment in Poland and what value they bring to the economy and to the local communities. In this context, stakeholders highlighted the need for action in the following areas:

- information (public awareness campaigns),
- education (schools, media),
- institutional (development of competence of officials and career counsellors),
- organisation at a company level (internal strategies communicating the legitimacy of employing mobile people).

Importance of the inflow of EU workers

The inflow of workers from other EU countries is still of **limited but its importance for Poland is gradually increasing**. Currently, it is still Polish nationals who are more willing to travel to other EU countries, while the inflow of people from other EU countries to Poland remains low. Labour market shortages in Poland are mainly replenished by migration from third countries.

It should be emphasised that there is a lack of consistent and systematically collected data to estimate the contribution of mobile people from the EU to the Polish economy. Despite its small scale, this type of migration is of “qualitative” importance for Poland: workers from other Member States fill gaps in highly specialised occupations where the supply of human resources is limited.

According to stakeholders, **the importance of the free movement of workers to Poland may increase, but it will not be a dynamic growth**. Despite the absence of formal or administrative obstacles to employing EU nationals, there are structural and image-related barriers to Poland that affect the level of interest in taking up employment in Poland (see Recommendation 1).

Mobility from the “old” and “new” Union

As already indicated in this report, **mobile people from the “old” EU countries**, such as Italy, Spain, France or Germany, currently represent **the most numerous group** among EU citizens and nationals arriving in Poland. They are usually young and well-educated. In terms of reasons for coming, private issues (family or partner relationships) and professional issues (offer of a well-paid job, desire to gain international experience) prevail. People in this group rarely do physical, seasonal or low-paid work.

On the other hand, **people from the “new” EU** who are interested in temporary work and fast earnings (the motivation for leaving is mostly purely economic), are **less likely to choose Poland as a migration destination**. They go to Western European countries (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands), which offer much higher wages even for seasonal or low-skilled work. Obviously, people from the “new” EU countries also work in Poland in specialist positions, but these are not numerous cases. Sometimes nationals of certain countries of the “new” EU doing low-skilled work form consolidated and closed communities (e.g. one respondent identified a group of Bulgarian nationals from the Radom area who are involved in market trading).

According to stakeholders, in the context of migration from the EU to Poland, **it makes more sense in economic terms to stay in the medium or long term**, rather than staying for a short period of time - both for mobile people from the “old” and “new” EU countries. The relationship between living costs and income plays a key role, which - despite relatively lower wages in Poland compared to Western European countries - can be more favourable for mobile people than in their country of origin. For people in lower income groups from countries such as Italy or Spain coping with a high cost of living, high youth unemployment and limited access to stable employment, Poland can be an attractive alternative. For this reason, for some stakeholders, the simplified division between “old” and “new” EU countries - while it may have an organising value in a historical and institutional context - is not adequate in the context of discussing the real mechanisms of labour migration and mobility decisions. According to them, **a breakdown based on the state of labour markets and the relationship between wages and the cost of living in individual EU countries** is more functional.

Recommendations

This final part of the report, presents **a set of recommendations** grouped according to a uniform logic: **(a) problem area** → **(b) proposed measures** → **(c) brief summary**. This approach allows for a concise diagnosis of the sources of difficulties disclosed in the study, followed by the identification of specific feasible steps with institutional responsibility assigned, and finally a summary of the expected outcomes and conditions for success.

- **Recommendation 1** focuses on the **image of Poland** as a place for living and working. We diagnose low recognition and outdated stereotypes, and in the “Measures” section we propose, among others, information campaigns and partnerships (public, academic, industry) based on the existing infrastructure and channels. The summary highlights the effect of increasing the “inflow pipeline” of candidates from the EU.
- **Recommendation 2** refers to the **simplification and harmonisation of communication** with EU citizens. The starting point is a language and information gap, while the measures include: a minimum standard of service in English in key offices, simple materials on labour and social security law instruments and **one central step-by-step service/application**. The summary emphasises the principle of **simple language** (in Polish and English) as a prerequisite for effectiveness.
- **Recommendation 3** addresses **the practices and attitudes of employers**: it shows the “invisibility” of EU citizens in HR strategies, and proposes training, case studies, relocation support and cooperation with local authorities (language courses, *buddy programmes*) as measures. The summary indicates the expected outcome: a shift from caution to proactive inclusion of EU mobile workers.
- **Recommendation 4** refers to **social climate and narratives**: in the problem area we describe the risk of polarisation and its “spill-over” impact on the perception of all migrants, while in terms of measures - work on narratives and intercultural contact (at local, educational, media levels). The summary emphasises reducing the social costs of integration and strengthening trust.

The entire package of recommendations includes principles for **the use of existing resources**, precise **assignment of responsibilities** (government–local authorities–central institutions–employers–NGOs), **cooperation with embassies and industry networks**, and **monitoring of implementation**. Each block concludes with a brief summary that synthesises the sense of the proposed measures and identifies the most important conditions for success. This allows the recipient to quickly see **what needs to be done and why**, and **who specifically** should be responsible for it.

Recommendation 1: building the brand of Poland as an attractive place for living and working

Problem area

Our survey shows that **Poland is often not treated as a place worth considering as an emigration destination**. This is related to Poland's image abroad. **The majority of respondents mentioned that they had almost no knowledge or idea of living and working conditions before coming to Poland**. It also happens that the image of a poor and grey country, with nothing special to offer, still persists. Even if our interlocutors themselves did not share this perception of Poland, they noted that people who had never visited Poland before may still think about Poland through stereotypes or be driven by information about it that has long been outdated. This means that **Poland probably still does not have a good brand abroad**, although this is gradually improving. This, on the other hand, may translate into interest in Poland as an attractive country for economic emigration. Therefore, it is worth considering measures that could contribute to improving its image and, as a result, encourage foreigners to consider Poland when searching for a job in other EU countries.

Measure 1.1: launch of promotion and information initiatives

Many of the people we interviewed for the needs of this survey indicated that **they initially came to Poland as part of a student exchange or as volunteers**. It was only when, through this experience, they learnt Poland better and realised the opportunities they could find there, that they decided to stay longer or come to Poland again at a later date. **Hence, one of the proposed measures is the promotion of websites dedicated not only to job offers, but also to the quality of daily life, science and culture in Poland on portals related to job search in other EU countries and opportunities to study or volunteer abroad**. This task could be

carried out by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Polish Investment and Trade Agency and the Polish Tourist Organisation. Leading employee recruitment portals, as well as universities and NGOs, could also be invited to such cooperation. This measure would require the **preparation of a single website** (available in English or in several different languages), which would comprehensively and attractively present the reality of the quality of life and working conditions in Poland. This website could be part of a single, official entry point with information for EU citizens working or planning to work in Poland (see more in Recommendation 2).

Such a portal would **not only provide the basic information, but also present Poland as an attractive place for living and career development**. In this regard, we believe that it could highlight advantages such as, for example, relatively long maternity leave, job stability thanks to a relatively easy-to-obtain permanent contract, a relatively favourable cost of living compared to other European cities, or the private health care often offered by employers. It could link this with a broader promotion of the attractive aspects of culture, tourism, quality of life, achievements in science and technology and the country's dynamic economic development. The portal could also offer guides on how to organise moving to Poland and how to deal with basic formalities. At the same time, presenting the stories of selected migrants could be considered, showing from their experience how they coped with taking up employment and living in Poland. Some of these functions are already fulfilled by such sources of information as the website "CareersinPoland.com", the website of the government "Seeking employment"⁷, or the relevant sections on the Public Employment Service Vortal. However, few of the respondents mentioned that they had used these or similar websites as sources of information - either before arriving in Poland or during their stay. Both this fact and the aforementioned lack of knowledge about living and working in Poland before coming to Poland may indicate that a broad promotional initiative is needed in other channels than those used so far to reach the relevant target groups. Existing and new partnerships could be used for this purpose.

Measure 1.2: using existing and establishing new partnerships

Using existing and establishing new partnerships with organisations dedicated to connecting employers (foreign, but also Polish or branches of companies in Poland) with potential employees, interns or volunteers could contribute to reaching a wider group of potential EU mobile

⁷ See <https://www.gov.pl/web/your-europe/seeking-employment>.

workers more effectively. In doing so, it is worth considering **drawing inspiration from the experience of other countries** that try to encourage migrant workers to come to their country. An example of an organisation that benefits from this kind of cooperation is the French government agency BusinessFrance, which not only promotes exports and investment, but also runs the *Volontariat international en entreprise* (V.I.E; the programme - despite its name - is not a voluntary service, but rather a kind of mission in a French company establishment abroad addressed exclusively to young people). Another interesting example is the “MiCenter”, a one-stop-shop portal run by the International Organisation for Migration office in Lithuania in cooperation with a number of stakeholders (including the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour), which provides practical information about life and work in the country for potential and already arrived migrants. **Establishing cooperation in the scope of promoting Poland** as an attractive destination for emigration with different types of organisations and as part of similar programmes could be beneficial in strengthening its image in this respect.

Sometimes initiatives to promote a country as an attractive migration destination are carried out by organisations specialising in specific sectors. An example of this is the promotional campaign of the agency “Luxembourg for Finance”⁸ on one of the leading international social networks, which focuses on facilitating users' professional and business contacts. This measure aims to encourage foreigners with experience and skills in the financial sector to work in Luxembourg through promotion focusing not only on career opportunities, but also highlighting the high quality of life in the country. It can serve as an inspiration on how public and private partnerships - in this case, established between the government administration and the Luxembourg federation of the financial industry - can enable people to join forces to achieve a common goal, while promoting the country as an attractive place to live and work.

Summary

Poland is rarely considered as an emigration destination in other EU countries which may be partly due to well-established stereotypes, insufficient and outdated knowledge, and often a complete lack of understanding of the living and working conditions in the country. Activities in the area of promoting Poland as an attractive destination carried out by public institutions should aim to achieve the effect of increasing the “inflow pipeline” of EU candidates. This means the necessity to work on improving its image as a modern, open and attractive country. Therefore, what will be needed is the **cooperation within existing and new partnerships**,

⁸ See more on the agency's website, www.luxembourgforfinance.com.

effective use of available resources and adaptation of communication channels to reach the target group more effectively. In this context, it would be helpful to centralise sources of information on living and working in Poland, as discussed in more detail in the next recommendation.

Recommendation 2: simplification and harmonisation of communication with EU citizens.

Problem area

The results of our research indicate that **the regulations are not the key barrier for mobile workers from the EU in Poland, but rather language and access to information.** From the formal point of view, it is relatively easy for citizens of other EU countries to take up employment in Poland, while it proves much more difficult to operate independently in the institutional and legal environment. Problems arise at several stages: when dealing with authorities (obtaining a PESEL number, residence registration, tax issues, ZUS), when using public services (health care, education, social benefits), when trying to understand labour market and social security instruments specific to Poland (PPK, PPE, family benefits, insurance rules), as well as in situations requiring signing of contracts and other documents with legal effects (employment contracts, termination notices, annexes, bank documents).

Analysing this experience, **two main levels of the language problem** can be distinguished:

1. **Lack of service and information in foreign languages** - when migrants have no real possibility to deal with matters in English, and even more in another EU language; forms, instructions and specimen letters are only available in Polish, while the assistance in a foreign language depends on the good will of individual employees rather than on accepted standards.
2. **The form of the Polish language used** - where information was formally available, it was often presented in a complicated, legal and official register, difficult to understand not only for learners of Polish, but also often for Poles themselves.

Consequently, **the formal equality of rights** guaranteed by the principle of freedom of movement for workers has not translated into **real equality in the access to information and**

services. Mobile workers from the EU were in practice forced to rely on the assistance of partners, family, friends or paid interpreters, while a possibility of dealing with the Polish system on their own in an informed manner was mostly limited.

Measure 2.1: Introduction of a service standard in English

This recommendation does not assume the creation of entirely new institutions, but **the strengthening and standardisation of solutions that already partly operate in Poland.** Many larger cities have in place information points for foreigners, multicultural centres, municipal portals in English, and some central institutions already offer fragmentary materials in foreign languages. The problem, however, is the lack of **the consistent standard** and the **varying levels of availability** of such services depending on the city, the authority and the good will of individual employees.

Therefore, **at the central level** (Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Ministry of Finance - using the Inter-Ministerial Team on Migration), in agreement with both local governments and institutions such as ZUS, KAS or voivodship offices, it is recommended to:

- develop **national guidelines** concerning a minimum standard of service in English in key institutions for EU mobile workers,
- prepare a set of **bilingual templates of basic forms and letters** (PL/EN),
- supplement already existing websites with **clear paths in English** addressed to workers from other EU countries.

At the **local** level, we do not recommend the creation of separate services exclusively for EU mobile workers, but rather the development of **universal support points for foreigners** with a clear information module **specific to EU citizens** (different legal status, different procedures than for third-country nationals). This means using the city's existing information centres, multicultural centres and NGOs as **a point of contact** - with the task of providing information also in English and referring further to the relevant institutions. At the same time, encouraging local governments (e.g. through grant programmes, good practice competitions) to **develop or formalise** such points in cities where the number of foreigners - including EU citizens - is the highest should be considered.

It is worth remembering that in this approach, the information points and support channels are **common to all foreigners**, but include a clearly marked path or section “for citizens of the European Union”. This avoids duplication of structures, while taking into account the

specific nature of EU workers' rights. The failure to perceive them as a distinct group was a recurring issue throughout the survey, raised by many of the migrants we spoke to.

Measure 2.2: preparation of structured and understandable information on labour and social security instruments

We also recommend the preparation of **a coherent set of simple information materials** on the Polish labour market and social security system, addressed primarily to mobile workers from the EU, but also useful for other foreigners and Poles themselves. **The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy**, in cooperation with, among others, **ZUS or the State Labour Inspection**, should be primarily responsible for the coordination of this task.

They should explain in simple terms, among others: the principles of PPK and PPE, the basic rules of social insurance, the catalogue and conditions for the use of the most important benefits (e.g. parental leave, sickness and family benefits) and the minimum standards of labour law (working time, overtime, termination of the contract, the right to holiday leave).

In this context, it would be important to **include these materials in the standard communication channels** of state institutions (PIP, ZUS and others) - websites, hotlines, service points - **to make them available to employers and to ensure that they are updated**. It is important that the information is organised in such a way that the EU mobile worker can easily understand not only “what he or she is entitled to”, but also **how to use the instrument in practice**: what steps should be taken, which office to apply to, which documents to prepare and when.

Measure 2.3: creating a single website and/or application as a central source of information

As already mentioned in Recommendation 1 with regard to encouraging EU citizens to come to Poland, we also recommend creating **a single, official point of entry with information for EU citizens working in Poland** in order to improve the situation of people already residing there. We believe that it should be a single source addressed both to the group of people considering moving to Poland and those already staying in the country - with information tailored to the specific nature of the group.

As we have already mentioned in case of measure 1.1, this should be a website (with the option to extend it by a simple application), embedded in the existing government ecosystem - e.g. as a clearly labelled subpage within the **gov.pl** portal. Its preparation and maintenance

could be the responsibility of **the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy** as the leading institution in the area of the labour market and freedom of movement for workers, in close cooperation with, among others, **the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, ZUS, KAS, PIP, the Ministry of Health, voivodship offices** and selected local governments of large cities.

The website should serve as a **central “step-by-step” compendium**, including information on arrival and first formalities (PESEL, registration of residence, insurance registration), rules on taking up employment, basic tax and insurance obligations, employee rights in Poland and available paths of assistance in case of problems (State Labour Inspection, free legal advice, NGOs, municipal support points). It is important that the content is grouped **according to life scenarios**, rather than just according to the structure of the institution - e.g. “first month in Poland”, “I have a problem with my employer”, “illness and healthcare”, “I am looking for a flat / thinking about a loan”.

The website should be available at least in **Polish and English**, with a possibility of gradually adding further language versions (e.g. German, French, Spanish, Italian), particularly where the groups concerned are more numerous. The preparation and updating of the content would be the substantive responsibility of the relevant institutions (e.g. ZUS for insurance, KAS for taxation, PIP for employment rights), while the **MRPIPS** would act as a coordinator, ensuring consistency, simplicity of language and usefulness of information. It is also worth involving **NGOs and representatives of the foreign community** in the process of developing and testing the website to ensure that the solution meets the real needs of the users.

Summary

Positive inspiration for informing mobile workers can be found in other EU Member States. **A good point of reference is the Estonian “Work in Estonia” website** with the embedded International House of Estonia (IHE). The central portal offers English-language, practical “step-by-step” guides for EU citizens (e.g. address registration, ID-code, taxation, health), and the IHE acts as a viable “one-stop shop”: in one place and in English, one can book an appointment and arrange personal ID-code, address registration in Tallinn (including a 2-in-1 package), consult on labour market issues, language learning or mobility - services are free and available in English as a standard. Such an integrated, coordinated and continuously updated information and service infrastructure could be a direct inspiration for Poland's “single gateway” for EU citizens.

Germany runs the official “**Make it in Germany**” website - a central compendium for those willing to live and work in Germany (including modules on employment rights and taxation). Denmark has a “**New to Denmark**” portal that organises paths for working and studying, with clear sections according to the user's situation. Sweden offers “**Informationsverige.se**”, a state-owned, multilingual information centre for settlers, with practical instructions and addresses for local support. The Lithuanian portal, **micenter.lt**, is run by the IOM.

Finally, it is also worth emphasising that all the above measures will be more effective with the introduction of the principle of the **simple language** as a standard for communication with EU citizens - in both Polish and English. This means abandoning, where possible, a complicated, legal and official style in favour of a clear structure of information, avoiding jargon and explaining necessary concepts by means of examples. In practice, this would require the development - preferably by the central administration - of simple language guidelines (e.g. in the form of a short guide for institutions working with foreigners), followed by a gradual implementation in institutions such as ZUS, KAS, labour offices, voivodship offices, local governments and - as far as possible - with large employers employing EU citizens.

Summing up, the proposed solutions do not require a change in the basic legal framework of the freedom of movement for workers, but rather **adapting of the way institutions operate to the realities of intra-EU mobility**. Introducing a minimum standard of service in English, organising and simplifying information on employment rights and social security as well as creating a single, clear point of entry with information for EU citizens could significantly reduce the gap between formal and real equality. From the perspective of the respondents we spoke to, it is not about additional privileges, but about being able to exercise already existing rights in an independent, understandable and predictable way - without having to constantly rely on informal interpreters and intermediaries.

Recommendation 3: building openness of employers to people from the EU

Problem area

Many Polish employers still do not perceive citizens and nationals of other EU countries as an important group of potential employees. These people are often not treated as “foreigners in need of support”, but are also not seen as part of the common labour market, which

in practice leads to their **systemic invisibility**. Employers, especially in smaller towns, are often reluctant to hire people from other EU countries, referring to language, formal or organisational barriers. Meanwhile, as our survey indicates, this is a group with high potential - usually well-educated and able to adapt quickly in their careers - that can realistically replenish staff shortages in many industries (and where we can compete with the ratio of wages to cost of living). We recommend that **educational and promotional measures** are taken to help employers “see” EU citizens as a group of workers, understand their needs and potential and involve them in integration activities carried out at a workplace and at local level.

Measure 3.1: Information campaigns and training for employers

Voivodship and district labour offices, local governments, chambers of commerce and employers' organisations, which have contact with businesses and are able to reach companies of very different profiles and scales of operation, should play a key role in information and training activities.

The proposed information activities should **present an accurate picture of mobile persons from the EU** - their competence, qualifications, experience and motivation to work in Poland. It is also crucial to dispel the most common stereotypes, which relate to, among other things, language problems, and which are not confirmed by the experience of companies already employing people from the EU. An important element of these activities should include **showing the benefits of diversity in teams**: easier access to foreign markets, greater innovation or raising working standards. As labour markets in Poland differ from one part of the country to another, we recommend that such activities be carried out at voivodship or district level, so as to tailor the message to the recipients as much as possible. Communication channels such as local media (e.g. sponsored material in press, on web portals) or dedicated information meetings can be used in the activities.

In addition to information activities, it seems necessary to **develop a training offer** addressed to employers (especially small and medium-sized ones) and their HR departments. These training activities should clarify in an accessible way all formal and legal doubts related to employment of EU nationals (if they still arise), as well as **present practical solutions applied in companies that already have experience in working with international teams**. Examples of good practice are of particular importance in this case: relocation packages including adaptation support (with a “minimum package” addressed to small and medium-sized companies), “buddy” programmes that help newcomers find their way in the company as well as in social life, or elements of socio-cultural on-boarding, which are found in large corporations but

can also be implemented in smaller companies - often at a low cost. In addition, in order to effectively support employers in managing diverse teams and strengthen the integration of mobile workers, it is worth considering the **development of intercultural competence training guidelines** for managers and teams working in an international environment.

Measure 3.2: Strengthening cooperation between local authorities and employers

In many cities and regions in Poland, the employment of citizens of other EU countries is becoming more and more visible, but **cooperation between local authorities and employers in integrating these people is still developing in a fragmented way and often remains uncoordinated**. We recommend developing and deepening of this cooperation. Local governments have the resources, knowledge and institutional infrastructure to effectively support the integration process, while employers have direct contact with mobile people and know their daily needs well. The combination of these two perspectives makes it possible to create tailor-made solutions that respond to the specific nature of local communities and economic sectors.

One of the key areas of cooperation should be the **organisation of Polish language courses**. In practice, this means partnerships between local authorities and companies: providing training rooms or financing classes in a mixed model. The second important component involves **intercultural and integration initiatives** - joint events, meetings, workshops or festivals that not only help newcomers in building social relations, but also allow residents to better understand the presence of people from other EU countries (and also third countries) in their surroundings. **Developing access to information for mobile people at a local level** should also be an important part of the cooperation. Residents' service centres should be able to provide reliable information to these people, while employers could actively contribute to creation of such points, e.g. by consulting on the scope of information needs.

Measure 3.3: Dissemination of positive examples and success stories

In the discussion on the employment of citizens and nationals of other EU countries in Poland, there is still a lack of visible, concrete and convincing examples showing that their employment can be a real asset for companies. The dissemination of good practices is crucial to overcome mental barriers and show that the presence of male and female workers from other EU countries is not a challenge but an opportunity. Therefore, we recommend creating **a project to promote**

companies that effectively support the integration of mobile workers and derive tangible benefits from such approach. This could include both media campaigns and cooperation with employers' organisations, which could identify companies that distinguish in terms of the quality of their integration measures. An important element of this would also be the **publication of material in the form of case studies, reports, short articles or interviews with company representatives and EU individuals themselves**. It is crucial that the content is based on authentic experience of companies - including smaller ones - and presents their real successes and the benefits of cultural diversity in teams.

This measure should be carried out at national level, as well as to complement and reinforce Measure 3.1. It seems that the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy (Polish Agency for Enterprise Development), the Ministry of Development and Technology, MRPiPS, PAIH, as well as employers' organisations should play an important role.

Summary

The aim of the measures presented is to change the perception of EU citizens among Polish employers - from an “invisible” group to the group of valuable employees, and to develop practices that support their integration and decision to stay in Poland for a longer period of time. It means gradual building of the culture of openness, diversity and intercultural cooperation at a workplace, as well as strengthening the image of Poland as a friendly and attractive country for EU citizens (see Recommendation 1). In the long term, the proposed measures can contribute to increasing companies' readiness to employ people mobile, improving workplace integration conditions and creating a more open and competitive business environment.

Recommendation 4: building a favourable social climate around mobility

Problem area

The results of our survey indicate that mobile workers from EU countries do not experience clear attitudes of resentment, negative stereotypes or prejudice from members of the host society towards themselves or towards EU citizens in general.

At the same time, it is important to note that after the migration crisis in Europe in 2015, as well as in the context of the ongoing Polish-Belarusian border crisis and general global in-

stability related to numerous conflicts, the issue of migration remains, to a large extent, emotionally and politically sensitive. This, in turn, contributes to increasing social and political polarisation in many countries of the European Union.

Such polarisation exacerbates tensions and contrasts in public sentiment in the host society, potentially shaping a sense of a general climate of resentment towards migrants among mobile workers from EU countries. Such perceptions may then create obstacles to further professional development in the country of residence, increase feelings of insecurity and threat, and contribute to a distorted perception of social reality as seen through the lens of the negative experience of some individuals who have experienced discrimination, even if such cases are rare and isolated.

Preventing or reversing the climate of resentment towards migrants, in order to reduce the potential negative effects associated with it, requires effective work on host society attitudes and narrative flows. Based on the issues described, we propose recommendations comprising concrete actions (practices) that would foster a favourable climate based on mutual respect, trust, open dialogue and readiness for cultural exchange between migrants and the host society. This, on the other hand, will contribute to countering the spread of attitudes of resentment towards migrants. It is important to stress that the proposed recommendations are universal and applicable to all groups of migrants, bridging the gap between migrants from EU countries and migrants from third countries.

Our recommendations are not revolutionary - they are based on already existing successful practices both inside and outside the country. Nevertheless, the value of implementing them in a more consolidated and systemic format in a socially and politically polarised environment has increased significantly.

Measure 4.1: Promoting a positive image of mobile workers in society

This measure aims to reinforce positive messages about mobile workers in the public space, with the aim of shaping a balanced, fact-based perception of labour mobility within the EU and countering misinformation and emotional messages that reinforce resentment towards migrants.

At a national and local level, isolated information campaigns or awareness-raising activities have already taken place, especially in large cities. However, they mainly relate to migrants from third countries, while their forms and quality vary considerably.

It is therefore proposed that at a national and local level - in cooperation with central institutions, local authorities, NGOs and social partners - social campaigns should be developed in traditional and digital media, presenting worker mobility as a natural part of the modern European way of life. The **creation of narrative and visual materials based on the real stories of mobile workers** who support the development of local communities through innovation, entrepreneurship or social action is particularly valuable. These materials should be promoted both in traditional media (press, radio, TV) and in digital and social media (online portals, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram). The coordination and implementation of such campaigns may be the responsibility of: Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Education, voivodship offices, local labour offices, non-governmental organisations active in the field of migration and the labour market, and social partners, including trade unions and chambers of commerce.

At the same time, it is recommended to develop **preventive measures in response to disinformation and manipulative, anti-immigrant communication**. It is crucial to introduce mechanisms for rapid fact-checking, including the publication of corrigenda, expert commentaries, discussions on migration issues as well as analytical material refuting false theses. These activities can be carried out by the Government Security Centre, voivodship offices, fact-checking organisations (e.g. Demagog, FakeHunter) as well as local and regional media. It is also necessary to provide coordination tools between institutions to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure a coordinated and effective response to the waves of disinformation.

At a local level, it is important to **strengthen initiatives that foster a positive image of diversity**. These include integration activities, diversity days, international job fairs and cooperation with educational institutions. Involving schools and universities in projects and youth exchanges fosters attitudes of openness, European cooperation and intercultural interaction. Local governments, schools and universities, cultural centres, NGOs and local chambers of commerce may be responsible for implementing such activities.

Including social issues in media messages, communication or the education system is grassroots work. I often give an example of how TV series used to feature plots related to important social issues. Today, this does not quite work anymore, as TV series do not have the same impact as they once did - except perhaps on streaming platforms. Sometimes, with a bit of a smile, I think to myself that Netflix today does more for social inclusion and understanding of cultural differences - both in the professional and social space - than many other initiatives that have been created for this very purpose. (Representative of an international employment agency)

It is important to emphasise that, while the recommended measures and practices are addressed to the broad public, they should directly take into account the participation of mobile workers and their contribution as an integral part of the host society, in order to reflect their actual experience and relevance to local communities.

Measure 4.2: Supporting the social and civic integration of mobile workers

The measures we recommend do not involve the creation of new institutions or community initiatives. Their aim is to reinforce and streamline existing practices promoting the social and civic integration of mobile workers, carried out both at national and local level - especially in large cities that attract workers from different EU and non-EU countries. In recent years, as part of various integration initiatives, cultural, educational and social projects have been developed, as well as activities aimed at revitalising cooperation between migrants and the host community. Despite their value, however, there is still no coherent strategy and insufficient mechanisms to systemically involve mobile workers in the life of local communities.

If I were approached by the city authorities I would be happy to volunteer my time for this [for the foreigners' support group]. (KII9, a Dutch man)

We therefore recognise that it is necessary to **consolidate the efforts of government institutions, non-governmental organisations, local government bodies and cultural institutions**, which - in a coordinated manner - should support the process of developing and implementing local integration programmes.

At a national level, a leading role could be played by: Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and Ministry of Education. They would be responsible for setting the strategic framework for action, providing financial support and making programme tools available to local authorities. On the other hand, at a regional and local level, a key role should be played by marshal offices, municipal offices and city halls, municipal welfare centres, cultural centres, schools and universities, as well as NGOs implementing integration and education projects.

Integration programmes **should comprise cultural and educational initiatives that enable direct contacts between members of the host community and mobile workers**. These can be cyclical integration events, workshops and thematic meetings organised by cultural centres, libraries and local organisations, as well as animation activities in the public space

- such as neighbourhood picnics, joint social actions or intercultural projects at schools and kindergartens.

It is also **particularly important to actively involve mobile employees in civic initiatives**, such as volunteering projects coordinated by local volunteer centres, participation in social consultations organised by local authorities, joint neighbourhood activities or environmental initiatives carried out by local informal groups. This type of activity creates a real space for interaction, dialogue and the exchange of experiences, while building a sense of shared responsibility for the local community.

Another important element of the recommended actions is the **promotion of mobility within the EU as a value as such**. This can be done through educational campaigns, seminars organised by universities, transnational youth projects run by NGOs and cultural initiatives carried out in cooperation with European partners. It is also worth reinforcing incentives for transnational programmes such as Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps or professional partnership exchanges, which foster international relations and intercultural competence.

In order to facilitate the integration of mobile workers, **it is also recommended to develop educational activities including teaching of Polish as a foreign language, as well as classes on Polish culture, customs and traditions**. They should be provided by education centres, public schools and community organisations. Such activities form an important part of daily life, facilitating orientation to social and professional realities and enabling more informed participation in the life of local communities.

Summary

It should be emphasised that the implementation of our proposed set of measures should combine social, educational and civic aspects, thus creating sustainable links between mobile workers and the host society. Such an approach will enable to counteract the social isolation of mobile workers, strengthen social trust and reduce intercultural tensions, which is particularly important amid the increasing polarisation and sensitivity of the topic of migration.

Summary of the recommendations

The foregoing recommendations are presented below in the form of a table that clearly indicates the target groups, the rationale, the proposed steps and the stakeholders who should take responsibility for them.

	TARGET GROUP	RATIONALE	PROPOSED STEPS	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED
<i>Measure 1.1.</i>	Jobseekers residing in EU Member States	Poland is often not considered as a place worth considering as an emigration destination. This is related to Poland's image abroad.	Creation of a web portal as part of the central source of information, promoting Poland as an attractive place to live and develop a professional career.	MRPiPS, MSZ, MKiDN, PAIH, POT
<i>Measure 1.2.</i>	Jobseekers residing in EU Member States	Effectively reaching candidates requires the use of existing recruitment networks and reliable intermediaries who already have access to the relevant groups of recipients.	Use existing partnerships and entering into new partnerships to promote Poland as an attractive place to live and develop a career	Organisations connecting employers (foreign but also Polish or branches of companies in Poland) with potential employees, interns or volunteers; public-private partnerships
<i>Measure 2.1.</i>	Migrants from EU countries residing in Poland	Lack of service standards in English translates into real inequality in access to services and makes it difficult to deal with matters independently.	Development of administrative service standards in English.	MRPiPS, MSWiA, MF, Interministerial Team on Migration, local governments
<i>Measure 2.2.</i>	Migrants from EU countries residing in Poland	Inconsistent and linguistically difficult information about PPK/PPE, insurance and benefits discourages people from exercising their rights.	Development of information on labour and social security law instruments	MRPiPS, ZUS, PIP
<i>Measure 2.3.</i>	Migrants from EU countries residing in Poland	Scattered channels create information chaos and increase time costs on the part of users.	Creation of the central information source	MRPiPS, MZ, ZUS, PIP, KAS

<i>Measure 3.1.</i>	Employers (especially small and medium-sized)	Low awareness of the potential of EU workers; concerns about language, paperwork and work organisation; systemic invisibility of the group.	Information campaigns concerning the competence of mobile workers, training, development of training guidelines on intercultural competence.	WUPs, PEOs, local governments, chambers of commerce, employers' organisations, self-governments
<i>Measure 3.2.</i>	Employers (especially small and medium-sized)	There is a need of support for the acceptance and integration of mobile people on the part of employers, and language support on the part of employees.	Organisation of Polish language courses; organisation of integration events and creation of local integration points.	Local authorities, employers, NGOs, PUPs.
<i>Measure 3.3.</i>	Employers	The need to reinforce positive narratives related to the presence of EU persons in Poland.	Campaigns promoting good practice, publishing content about success stories.	Ministries, PAIH, employers' organisations.
<i>Measure 4.2.</i>	Society	Growing misinformation and lack of the positive narrative about labour mobility make it difficult to build trust and inclusion.	Media campaigns to promote mobility as part of life in the EU; material based on real stories of mobile workers; mechanisms for rapid fact-checking and publication of corrigenda; coordination of activities between institutions.	MRPiPS, MEN, voivodship and labour offices, NGOs, social partners, RCB, fact-checking organisations, local media.
<i>Measure 4.3.</i>	Society	Existing integration activities are scattered and uncoordinated; there is no coherent strategy and ongoing integration of mobile workers into local life.	Consolidation of actions undertaken by the government, local governments and NGOs; local integration programmes (events, workshops, cultural projects); involvement of mobile workers in civic initiatives and volunteering; support for the European mobility (projects, seminars); Polish language and culture classes.	MRPiPS, MKiDN, MEN, local governments, MOPS, cultural centres, schools, NGOs, volunteer centres.

The recommendations presented form a **coherent, systemic package** - their strength is based on their complementarity. They can be implemented in stages, it is not an “all-or-nothing”

logic, but **the selective implementation of individual measures requires careful consideration** of the links and compensation for missing elements. For example: a service standard in English without a parallel arrangement of plain language content and without a central compendium of information will work in a fragmentary way; on the other hand, image campaigns without real institutional facilitation will raise expectations, but will not remove barriers at the stage of handling the matters.

The relationships between the recommendations are functional: (1) image and information attract migrants, (2) service standards and simple tools keep them in Poland, (3) support from employers and local governments enable integration, and (4) working on social narratives stabilises the conditions for long-term integration. **Abandoning any of the links undermines the entire chain.**

The effectiveness of the package also depends on **horizontal policies** not directly targeting EU mobile workers: housing, health, education, digital transformation.

Finally, the experience of EU citizens in Poland is significantly affected by **the social climate and the debate on migration in general**. The measures and narratives regarding non-EU nationals “spill over” to all foreigners. Therefore, the recommendations addressed to EU mobile workers should be **synchronised with policies and communication targeted at other migrant groups** in order to reinforce a consistent message: Poland is a predictable, understandable and friendly place - in practice, not just in declarations.

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Annex

A1 List of institutions

Below is a list of institutions - public and private - whose representatives we spoke to for the purpose of this study. Sometimes interviews were conducted with more than one person from a particular institution.

- Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy
- State Labour Inspection
- District Labour Office in Gdynia
- District Labour Office in Katowice
- Municipal Labour Office in Kraków
- District Labour Office in Poznań
- Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
- Voivodship Labour Office in Wrocław
- Voivodship Labour Office in Białystok
- Voivodship Labour Office in Kraków
- Voivodship Labour Office in Warsaw /Radom Branch Office
- Voivodship Labour Office in Warsaw
- Voivodship Labour Office in Katowice
- European Labour Mobility Institute (ELMI)
- Solvit Centre Poland
- Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
- OPZZ
- Polish HR Forum
- Ahoy Career
- Randstad Poland
- HRK
- Otto Work Force

A2. Anonymised list of migrants

The following list has been anonymised and stripped of details that might enable or facilitate the identification of our interlocutors.

CODE	NATIONAL-ITY	GEN- DER	PROFESSION/INDUS- TRY	YEAR OF ARRIVAL	CITY
KII1	French man	H	BSS/SSC	2015	Warsaw
KII2	French man	H	BSS/SSC	2017	Warsaw
KII3	French man	H	Real property	2015	Warsaw
KII4	French man	H	BSS/SSC	2019	Wrocław
KII5	French man	H	Legal/IT advice	2022	Warsaw
KII6	Italian woman	F	EU institutions	2022	Warsaw
KII7	Italian man	H	BSS/SSC	2015	Kraków
KII8	Spanish man	H	IT	2018	Kraków
KII9	Dutchman	H	IT	2002	Kraków
KII10	Hungarian man	H	IT	2009	Kraków
KII11	PORTUGAL	F	BSS/SSC	2020	Wrocław
KII12	French man	H	Customer service	2009	Pruszków
KII13	German man	H	Higher education	2005	Wrocław
KII14	Italian man	H	Education	2008	Warsaw
KII15	German woman	F	Higher education	2005	Wrocław
KII16	Greek woman	F	Education	2024	Warsaw
KII17	Spanish woman	F	BSS/SSC	2021	Warsaw/Łódź
KII18	German man	H	Customer service	2020	Warsaw
KII19	France	H	Customer service	2022	Olsztyn

KII20	Germany	H	Translation	2010	Warsaw
KII21	Germany	H	Business Consultancy	2014	Warsaw
KII22	Germany	H	Travel Agency	2020	Warsaw

A3 Interview scenario with institutional stakeholders

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCENARIO (IDI) WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTIONS AND EMPLOYERS

Purpose of the interview

Gaining in-depth knowledge of the barriers faced by mobile EU workers in Poland, with a particular focus on the experience of public institutions and employers who come into contact with this group.

Group of respondents

- representatives of institutions responsible for the implementation of the SPP rules (e.g. MRPiPS, EURES, PIP, ZUS, labour offices),
- representatives of employers of EU citizens,
- representatives of employment or HR agencies.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

- The interview is in-depth and semi-structured - questions can be modified depending on the context of the interviewee's statements.
- Encourage sharing of examples and specific situations.
- If the respondent has no knowledge of the issue, skip the question and move on.
- Interview duration: approximately 60 minutes.
- Before starting the interview, ensure that the respondent has consented to participate and (if applicable) accepted the recording of the interview.

RESPONDENT'S PARTICULARS (to be completed by the interviewer)

1. Type of institution/type of employer:
2. Position:

MAIN QUESTIONS

1. General introduction

- What experience does/does/does the interviewee / institution / company have with EU citizens working in Poland?
- [Category 3] How would you rate the knowledge and application of EU and national legislation related to freedom of movement of workers in the practice of your institution/company?

2. Who is coming to Poland and in what role?

- From your perspective, what are the main trends in labour migration from other EU countries to Poland?
- Which countries do EU citizens most often come from to work in Poland?
- In which industries, professions, sectors are they most often employed?
- What is the level of their qualifications and salaries? Are they highly skilled or rather working in lower level positions?

3. Working conditions and integration

- What are the predominant legal forms of employment for EU nationals (contract of employment, contract of mandate, self-employment, posting)?
- [category 3] Do you face difficulties related to language or cultural differences? How do they affect employment and integration?
- What is the experience related to integrating mobile EU workers into local communities or work teams?
- Do EU workers use public services in Poland (health, education, housing)? How do you assess their availability and quality?
- Do you know of any information on the length of stay of such persons in Poland? Do they plan to stay for a longer period of time or do they treat working in Poland as temporary?

4. Effects of economic migration

- From your perspective, what are the social and economic effects of the presence of EU nationals on the Polish labour market?
- How does the migration of workers from Poland to other EU countries compare with reverse migration (from the EU to Poland)?
- Do you notice differences in the experience of workers coming from the so-called “old” and “new” EU? If yes, what kind?
- Are you aware of good practices from other EU countries in facilitating the use of SPP?

5. Barriers and recommendations

- According to your knowledge, what specific barriers, obstacles or unjustified restrictions do EU citizens face when working in Poland? (please provide examples)
- What measures do you think could improve the situation of EU citizens on the labour market in Poland?

- What legal or institutional solutions would be worth introducing to increase the presence of EU citizens in Poland as employees?
- What are your predictions or scenarios on the future of labour migration from the EU to Poland?

Conclusion

- In your opinion, what is the relevance of freedom of movement for workers (SPP) in the context of the labour market in Poland?
- Is there anything else you think is worth including in our research?
- Can you recommend other people or institutions that would be worth inviting to participate in this study?

A4 Interview scenario with migrants

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI) SCENARIO WITH EU MOBILE WORKERS

Purpose of the interview

Gathering in-depth information on the experience of female and male EU citizens working in Poland, with a focus on their labour market situation, barriers encountered, relations with institutions and settlement plans.

Group of respondents

Individuals with citizenship of an EU country (or EEA/Switzerland) who are currently working or have recently worked in Poland, regardless of the form of employment and sector.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

- The interview is in-depth and semi-structured - adapt the questions to the situation of the interlocutor.
- Encourage free statements, examples, personal stories.
- Avoid administrative and legal jargon - use plain language.
- Duration: approx. 75-90 minutes.
- Ensure that the interlocutor has consented to participate and potential recording.

RESPONDENT'S PARTICULARS (for the interlocutor)

1. Country of origin:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Education:
5. Industry/profession performed in Poland:
6. Form of employment (employment contract, contract of mandate, business, other):
7. Date of arrival in Poland:
8. Does he/she live alone, with family, with roommates?
9. Main reasons for coming to Poland:

MAIN QUESTIONS

1. General introduction - migration and first steps

- Can you tell us how you arrived at the decision to come to Poland?
- Before your arrival, did you have any knowledge of work and life in Poland?
- What were the first weeks/months like upon arrival? What was the most difficult part?

2. Working in Poland - experience and conditions

- How did you find your current job? Have you used any intermediaries (agencies, portals, friends)?
- What were the formalities of employment? Were there any difficulties?
- What is your form of employment? Is it stable? Are you paid in accordance with your contract?
- Do you feel you are treated equally to Polish workers?

3. Barriers and obstacles

- Have you encountered any difficulties arising from being a citizen of another EU country?
- Was there anything that seemed unclear, complicated, unfair?
- Have you ever felt discriminated against (e.g. on grounds of nationality, language)?
- What institutions or organisations have supported you in your employment or integration process?

4. Daily life and integration

- Do you live in Poland alone, with your family, partner/partner?
- What is your relationship with Polish society? Do you feel a part of the local community?
- Do you speak Polish? If so, how did you learn it?
- Do you use public services in Poland (clinics, schools, employment office)? Have you encountered any difficulties?

5. Plans and mobility

- How long do you plan to stay in Poland?

- Are you considering moving to another country or returning to your country of origin?
- Are you thinking of settling in Poland permanently (e.g. buying a flat, bringing your family, starting a business)?

6. Comparisons and broader perspective

- Have you previously worked in another EU country? What were the differences compared to Poland?
- Do you have contact with other EU nationals working in Poland? Is their experience similar?

7. Recommendations and suggestions

- What should change to make it easier for workers like you to work and live in Poland?
- In your opinion, what could encourage more citizens of the European Union to take up employment in Poland?
- If you had to advice to an EU person who wants to work in Poland - what would it be?
- Is there anything you would like to add - something you think should be included in our report?

Conclusion

- Thank you for the conversation. May we contact you again if we have further questions?
- Do you know any other people who could take part in such an interview?

A5 Questionnaire Survey

Below is a version of the survey in Polish. In the study, versions in English, Spanish, Italian, French and German were also used - translated from the original Polish version.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EU CITIZENS WORKING IN POLAND

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE RESPONDENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire survey is part of the study carried out by CASE - Centre for Social and Economic Analysis for the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. The aim of the survey is to gain a better understanding of the experience of EU nationals working in Poland, including any barriers and difficulties they may face in the labour market and in their daily lives.

Participation in the survey is **totally anonymous and voluntary**. The responses collected will be used for scientific and statistical purposes only - they will not be linked to a specific individual in any way.

It will take you about **10-15 minutes** to complete the questionnaire survey.

Thank you for your time and commitment!

Project Team

PART I - PARTICULARS

1. Country of citizenship:

drop-down list

2. Gender:

Female

Male

Other answer: _____

I prefer not to answer

3. Age:

under 25

25-34

35-44

45-54

55+

4. Education:

Primary or lower secondary school

Secondary or post-secondary school

University degree (bachelor's/engineer's degree)

Higher education (Master's degree or equivalent)

Doctorate or higher

Other: _____

I prefer not to answer

5. Do you currently live in Poland?

Yes

No (please complete the survey - thank you for your participation)

6. How many years/months have you been living in Poland?

less than 6 months

6-12 months

1-2 years

3-5 years

more than 5 years

7. In which voivodship do you currently live?

list of provinces

8. In which city do you currently live?

Open field

9. With whom do you live in Poland:

- Alone
- With family (partner, children)
- With roommates/acquaintances
- Other: _____

10. What is your current professional status in Poland?

- Employed under an employment contract
- Employed under a contract of mandate / contract for specific work
- Self-employed (own business)
- Seconded from another country
- Searching for a job / temporarily unemployed
- I am working informally (without a contract)
- Other: _____

11. In which industry do you currently work (or have you recently worked)?

Open field

12. What professional group do you belong to (or have you recently belonged to)?

- Managers
- Specialists
- Technicians and associate professionals
- Clerical staff
- Service and sales workers
- Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers
- Craftsmen and skilled workers
- Plant and machine operators and assemblers
- Employees performing simple tasks

Armed forces

13. What is (or was) your monthly salary "net" (i.e. after taxes and contributions) from your last job in Poland?

Less than 3,000 zł

3 000 - 3 999 zł

4 000-5 999 zł

6 000-7 999 zł

8000-9 999 zł

10 000-14 999 zł

15 000 zł or more

Difficult to say / cannot remember

I prefer not to answer

PART II - MIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE IN POLAND

14. What was the main reason for your coming to Poland?

Job / employment offer

Job search

Intra-company transfers / secondment

Studying or learning

Family considerations (e.g. relationship, children)

Curiosity / desire to explore the country

Other: _____

15. How did you learn about a possibility of working in Poland? (more than one answer can be selected)

- Internet announcement
- Friends / family
- Employment agency
- Social network
- Job centre / EURES
- Other: _____

16. Did you sign a contract or receive a job offer before coming to Poland?

- Yes No

17. What were the main difficulties you encountered upon your arrival in Poland - in finding a job or organising your daily life? (more than one answer can be selected)

- Lack of knowledge of the Polish language
- Difficulty with understanding regulations, procedures or documents
- Lack of assistance or information from public institutions
- Problems with recognition of qualifications or professional experience
- Difficulty with finding a job that matches my qualifications
- Difficulties with renting a flat, opening a bank account or official matters
- I have experienced unfriendly treatment or unequal treatment because of my nationality or origin
- Other: _____
- I have not encountered any difficulties

18. Did you receive support in any of the following areas upon your arrival in Poland? If yes, please indicate who provided this support. (You can check more than one answer per line)

	Public institution	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	Employer	Other organisation	I did not receive any support
Finding a job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with official matters / registration of residence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Language assistance / translation of documents	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Legal assistance / advice	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Gaining access to public services (e.g. health, education)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Assistance with housing / accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Participation in integration activities (e.g. language courses, meetings, adaptation)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

19. Considering your entire stay, how long have you been working in Poland?

- less than 3 months
- 3-6 months
- 7-12 years
- 1-2 years
- more than 2 years

20. How many jobs did you have in Poland (in total)?

- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

21. How would you rate the clarity of the presentation of the terms and conditions of employment before you started your first job in Poland and your current job? (in the case of work in Poland for one employer only, in the field current/last work in Poland, check "not applicable")

Very unclear
 Rather unclear
 Moderately clear
 Rather clear
 Very clear
 Not applicable

First job in Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>					
---------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Current/last job in Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>					
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22. Do you receive (or have you received) remuneration compliant with your contract or arrangements? (in the case of work in Poland for one employer only, in the field current/last work in Poland, check "not applicable")

Compliant Partially compliant Non-compliant Not applicable

First job in Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current/last job in Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PART III - INTEGRATION AND CONTACT WITH INSTITUTIONS IN POLAND

23. How would you rate your knowledge of the Polish language?

- I don't speak Polish at all
- I know basic phrases
- I can communicate in simple situations
- I can communicate well
- I am fluent

24. Where do you know Polish from? Where and how did you learn it?

You may choose more than one response.

- Language course paid for by the employer
- Language course paid for by yourself (or family)
- Free course organised by a public institution (e.g. employment office, municipality)
- Free course organised by a non-governmental organisation
- Language learning at school or university (in Poland or abroad)

Independent language learning (e.g. from books, apps, Internet)

Learning through daily contact in work or private life

I speak Polish through family, friends or partner/partner

Other (specify): _____

I do not speak Polish

25. How do you assess your relations with Poles?

Very good

Rather good

Neutral

Rather bad

Very bad

Difficult to say / I have no contact

26. As a foreigner, have you experienced unequal treatment in Poland?

Yes, often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Difficult to say

27. If, as a foreigner, you have ever felt that you were treated unequally, in which situations or areas of social life has this occurred? *You may choose more than one response.*

At a workplace

In public offices or institutions

At school or university

At a place of residence (e.g. neighbourhood, housing estate)

In public transport means

In shops, restaurants or other service areas

On the Internet or in social media

In social contacts (e.g. neighbours, acquaintances, strangers)

I have not experienced such situations

Other: _____

28. Have you used the following public services in Poland? (*more than one answer can be selected*)

Public health service

Education (for yourself or your children)

Job centre / job search assistance

Tax office / ZUS / administration

Other (specify): _____

I have not used

29. Have you encountered any difficulties in accessing the following services? (*Please check one answer per line*)

	Yes. Great difficulties	Yes. Minor difficulties	No, I did not have difficulties	Not applicable
Public health service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education (for oneself or for children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Labour office / job search assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tax office / ZUS / administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

30. Do you know where to search for help or information if you encounter problems at work or with the authorities?

Yes

No

I am not sure

31. Do you feel informed about your rights as an employee in Poland?

Yes

Partially

Not

32. Did you make a complaint or seek help if you had any problems related to your work (e.g. no contract, delayed payment of wages, poor treatment)? *(More than one answer can be chosen)*

- Yes - with the employer
- Yes - at a public institution (e.g. PIP, employment office)
- Yes - in a non-governmental organisation / community organisation
- No - I did not know where to apply
- No - I did not want to report
- I have not had any such problems

PART IV - PLANS FOR THE FUTURE AND GENERAL OPINIONS ON LIVING AND WORKING IN POLAND

33. Do you plan to stay in Poland?

- Yes, I want to stay permanently
- Yes, but not permanently
- Not sure yet
- I would rather go back to my country of origin
- I would rather go to another country
- Other answer: _____

34. How do you assess the impact of the following factors on your life in Poland?

(Please check one answer per line)

	Positive impact	Neutral / no impact	Negative impact	Hard to say
Wage levels in Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost of living in Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of stable employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sense of security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Experience of contacts with people in Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proficiency in the Polish language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience in dealing with public institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience with recognition of qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of integration support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience of equal or unequal treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance from country of origin / ease of travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

35. Do you know any other EU nationals working in Poland?

- Yes, I have many such friends
- Yes, I know several such people
- No

36. Overall, how would you rate your experience of living in Poland?

- Definitely positive
- Rather positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Rather negative
- Definitely negative

37. Overall, how would you rate your experience of working in Poland?

- Definitely positive
- Rather positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Rather negative

Definitely negative

38. Would you recommend working in Poland to your friends?

Yes No Difficult to say

39. Would you like to add something from yourself - an opinion, a comment, a suggestion?

Open field

CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking part in the survey!

If you would like to receive a summary of the survey results or take part in the second part of the survey and talk to us about your experience of living and working in Poland, please provide your email address:

Email address (optional): _____

A6 Distribution of the questionnaire

Below are the channels - online spaces and institutions - through which the survey was distributed.

Facebook groups

1. Professionals in Krakow- The international community in Krakow
2. Expats in Warsaw, Poland
3. Foreigners in Poland PL
4. Foreigners in Poland PL
5. Foreigners living in Kraków
6. Espanoles en varsovia
7. Expats foreigners in Poland warsaw cracow gdansk sopot poznań zakopane
8. Expats in Warsaw, Poland
9. Italiani a varsavia
10. ITALIANI A CRACOVIA
11. Expats in Warsaw, Poland (other)
12. Expats in Krakow
13. Italiani in Polonia
14. Foreigner in Warsaw Poland
15. LUBLIN ANNOUNCEMENTS
16. Foreigners in Łódź
17. Łódź for foreigners
18. I love the Czech Republic group
19. Jobs in Kraków - job offers in Kraków
20. Foreigners in Bydgoszcz
21. Tri-City Poland Expats Gdynia Sopot Gdansk
22. Foreigners in Lodz
23. Slovaci v Polsku
24. Lublin Expats
25. Foreigners in Lublin
26. Rzeszów
27. KATOWICE EXPATS, FOREIGNERS & GLOBAL MINDS
28. Language Exchange Club Gdansk (Trojmiasto)
29. Cesi prace v Polsku - Czechs working in Poland
30. foreigners.gdynia
31. Lublin!!
32. Spotted: Gdańsk (Group)
33. Slovenci na Poljskem
34. Croatian - Zajdenica Hrvata u Poljskoj
35. Foreigners in Katowice, Poland
36. Spotted: Lublin (Group)
37. Language Exchange Club Warsaw
38. Slovak/Czech - job in Kraków/Job with Slovak/Czech in Krakow
39. Croatian - work in Krk
40. Slovaci, praca v Polsku - Slovaks working in Poland
41. Language Exchange Club Krakow
42. Language Exchange Krakow
43. Language Exchange Club Wrocław
44. Polish for English speakers
45. Expat Social Networking Małopolska
46. The Real Krakow Expats

47. Българи в Полша
48. Romani in Polonia / Romanians in Poland / Poland
49. Romani in Polonia
50. Greeks in Poland / Έλληνες στην Πολωνία
51. Language Jobs Poland
52. Expats & Foreigners in Poland PL
53. Katowice Internationals Community
54. Expats Poland PL
55. Work in Poland!
56. Job Hiring in Poland
57. Work in Poland for Foreigners
- 70.

Other online spaces

1. Reddit (r/askPoland)
2. Reddit (r/Polish)
3. Reddit (r/warsaw)
4. Reddit (r/learnpolish)
5. Reddit (r/krakow)
6. Reddit (r/gdansk)

Consulates and embassies

1. Austrian Embassy
2. Austrian Consulate in Kraków
3. Belgian Embassy
4. Bulgarian Consulate in Warsaw
5. Bulgarian Embassy in Warsaw
6. Bulgarian Consulate in Kraków
7. Croatian Embassy in Warsaw
8. Croatian Consulate in Kraków
9. Croatian Consulate in Poznan

58. Work in PolandPL | Foreigners in Poland | Job Offers 2025 | Job Search Hub
59. Foreigner in Warsaw Poland
60. Migrant Workers in Poland
61. La French Zone en Pologne (fb)
62. Italiani in Polonia (fb)
63. Français à Varsovie
64. International Poznan friends
65. Expats & Foreigners in Poland PL
66. Españoles y Latinoamericanos en Polonia
67. Profesores de español en Polonia
68. Expats in Poland (Private Group)
69. Deutsche in Polen

7. Reddit (r/expats)
8. Reddit (r/poland)
9. expat.com (Poland forum)
10. justlanded.com (classifieds thread)
11. justlanded.com (Poland forum)

10. Croatian Consulate in Białystok
11. Croatian Consulate in Bydgoszcz
12. Croatian Consulate in Opole
13. Cypriot Embassy in Warsaw
14. Cypriot Centre for the Promotion of Trade in Warsaw
15. Consulate of Czechia in Warsaw
16. Czech Embassy in Warsaw
17. Danish Embassy in Warsaw

18. Danish Consulate in Kraków
19. Estonian Embassy in Warsaw
20. Estonian Consulate in Kraków
21. Finnish Consulate in Kraków
22. Finnish Embassy in Warsaw
23. French Embassy in Warsaw
24. French Consulate in Kraków
25. German Embassy in Warsaw
26. German Consulate in Kraków
27. German Consulate in Wrocław
28. German Consulate in Gdańsk
29. German Consulate in Opole
30. German Consulate in Olsztyn
31. German Consulate in Bydgoszcz
32. German Consulate in Gliwice
33. German Consulate in Kielce
34. German Consulate in Lublin
35. German Consulate in Poznań
36. German Consulate in Rzeszów
37. Greek Consulate in Warsaw
38. Greek Embassy in Warsaw
39. Hungarian Embassy in Warsaw
40. Hungarian Consulate in Kraków
41. Irish Consulate
42. Italian Embassy in Warsaw
43. Italian Consulate in Kraków
44. Latvian Embassy in Warsaw
45. Latvian Consulate in Kraków
46. Lithuanian Embassy in Warsaw
47. Lithuanian Consulate in Kraków
48. Luxembourg Embassy in Warsaw
49. Luxembourg Consulate in Kraków
50. Maltese Embassy in Warsaw
51. Maltese Consulate in Kraków
52. Maltese Consulate in Wrocław
53. Maltese Consulate in Gdynia
54. Maltese Consulate in Białystok
55. Dutch Embassy in Warsaw
56. Dutch Consulate in Kraków
57. Portuguese Embassy in Warsaw
58. Romanian Embassy in Warsaw
59. Romanian Consulate in Kraków
60. Slovakian Embassy in Warsaw
61. Slovakian Consulate in Poland (various cities)
62. Slovakian Consulate in Wrocław
63. Slovenian Embassy in Warsaw
64. Spanish Embassy in Warsaw
65. Spanish Consulate in Kraków
66. Swedish Embassy in Warsaw
67. Swedish Consulate in Kraków
68. Swedish Consulate in Gdańsk
69. Swedish Consulate in Wrocław
70. Swedish Consulate in Szczecin
71. Icelandic Embassy in Warsaw
72. Norwegian Embassy in Warsaw
73. Norwegian Consulate in Szczecin
74. Norwegian Consulate in Kraków
75. Swiss Embassy in Warsaw

Other institutions

1. "Salvation" Foundation
2. Association for Legal Intervention
3. Caritas Polska
4. Polish Migration Forum Foundation
5. Migrant Info Point
6. Patchwork

7. "Polish Hospitality" Foundation
8. Institute of Migrant Rights
9. Accent Language School
10. Glossa Language School
11. Varia Language School
12. Klub Dialogu Language School
13. EUROPE DIRECT Kraków
14. EUROPE DIRECT Warsaw
15. EUROPE DIRECT Gdańsk
16. EUROPE DIRECT Poznań
17. EUROPE DIRECT Wrocław
18. EUROPE DIRECT Łódź
19. EUROPE DIRECT Katowice
20. EUROPE DIRECT Szczecin
21. EUROPE DIRECT Podlaskie
22. EUROPE DIRECT Lublin
23. EUROPE DIRECT Bydgoszcz
24. EUROPE DIRECT Toruń
25. French Institute (Kraków)
26. French Institute (Warsaw)
27. Cervantes Institute
28. Goethe Institut (Kraków)
29. Goethe Institut (Warsaw)
30. International Relations Office UJ
31. Center for International Cooperation at UJ
32. Department for International Students AGH
33. International Relations Office UW
34. International Organisation for Migration
35. Nomada
36. European Labour Mobility Institute