

POLICY BRIEF (POLAND)

The Bargaining for Working Conditions and Social Rights of Migrant Workers in Central East European Countries (BARMIG) project assesses the role of established industrial relations institutions in addressing the effects of migration on changing labour markets. The project also examines how trade unions and employer organizations in Czechia, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland respond to these changes.

The number of foreign workers in Poland is high - Covid-19 pandemic has no serious influence on this trend. The origin of foreign workers in Poland is mainly Ukraine and Belarus (together 80%) however since 2018 the percentage of Ukrainian migrants has been steadily declining in favor of workers from Moldova, Nepal, India, Georgia or Bangladesh. Foreigners are increasingly employed under a mandate contract (instead of employment contracts) and the largest portion of all employed foreigners work in the manufacturing and construction sectors, as well as in service administration and support service activities, and also in transport and storage.

Social assistance benefits as well as integration support in Poland are provided only for beneficiaries of international protection. Some employers (also work agencies) organize services for foreign workers, such as language courses or social assistance, but this is typical only of some sectors (automotive, metal industry). Main challenges in the labour market are related to simplified employment procedures for migrants employed but also to the precarity of the economic situation of migrant workers.

In Poland, the largest national social partners are not very active in the migrant labour market issues. Trade unions usually do not recognize specific problems of migrants because they perceive them only as temporary workers. Employers' organizations have more interest and knowledge about migrants, by taking single initiatives.

Our research showed the important and still growing role of intermediaries in creating and managing a transnational labour market. Employment agencies influence work and living conditions and initiate trends in issues regulating migrants' work. Agencies often mediate between the final employer and employees in many labour and social issues like assistance in searching for accommodation, bilingual coordinators, bringing migrants families to Poland, assistance during quarantine, etc. Main sectors of intermediaries' activities are construction, automotive and services. In the platform work, the unique feature of the Polish on-demand taxi or personal transport market is the operation of fleet partners, entities that act as intermediaries between the platform and the drivers. The role of intermediaries is limited in the healthcare sector, which results from high formal requirements for confirming the competences of employees.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- social partners (e.g. employer organizations) should cooperate more with CSOs, and build capacities to articulate the interests of different labour market actors;
- the best integration practices of work agencies (e.g. bilingual coordinators or languages courses) should be maintained and developed;
- cooperation between organizations representing the interests of employers in Poland and trade unions should be established on the occasion of different processes (e.g. during work agencies certification).

Number of different types of work permits issued in 2016-2020 in Poland

