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ADAPTIVE COURSE MATERIALS

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BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT POLAND

Poland is a rather lowland country with its natural borders - the Baltic Sea - to the north and - mountain ranges - to the south. Near the southern border of the country there is the highest mountain range – the Tatra Mountains. The main rivers in Poland include the Vistula, which is 1000 km long, the Oder, which flows along the western border and the Bug that flows mostly along the eastern border. In the southeast of the country there's Silesia, a mining and industrial area rich in natural resources such as hard coal, zinc, copper or lead. In the northeast, there's a land of forests and lakes – Warmia and Masuria that is a unique tourist attraction. In the land of a thousand lakes, there are Sniardwy and Mamry, which surface exceeds 100 km². More than half of Poland's territory consists of agricultural areas. The third part is covered by forests.

The weather in Poland changes with the seasons, but the climate is mostly moderate. Pure nature, unspoiled by humans – you can encounter it in many places in Poland such as national parks, which number comes to 23, or in more than 120 natural landscape parks.

There are more than 38 mln citizens living in Poland. 5 mln Poles live beyond the country's borders. Most of Polish citizens, around 2/3, lives in cities.

The biggest metropolitan areas are Warsaw (app. 1,7 mln) Lodz, Poznan, Wroclaw, Krakow and Katowice.

In terms of the administrative division, Poland is divided into 16 voivodeships, which somewhat reflect the historical regions of the country. In each of the voivodeship cities, a governor and the Voivodeship office have their headquarters. Voivodeships are divided into poviats (314 poviats and 66 cities with poviat rights). Poviats are divided into counties (gminy). The table below lists the voivodeship names and cities, in which voivodeship offices are located.

Voivodeship	Voivodeship city
Masovian	Warsaw
Greater Poland	Poznan
Lublin	Lublin
Warmian-Masurian	Olsztyn
West-Pomeranian	Szczecin
Podlaskie	Bialystok
Lodz	Lodz
Kuyavian-Pomeranian	Bydgoszcz
Subcarpathian	Rzeszow
Lesser Poland	Krakow
Lubusz	Gorzow Wielkopolski
Silesia	Katowice



Political system in Poland

The Republic of Poland is a republic with a parliamentary cabinet, multiparty system and trias politica principle. The legislative power is the parliament (Sejm – the lower chamber and Senate – the higher chamber). The executive power is in the hands of the Council of Ministers, whose chairman is the Prime Minister of Poland – currently Mateusz Morawiecki, and the President of Poland – currently Andrzej Duda. The judiciary power lies with independent courts and tribunals.

The government has its representatives in voivodeships, called governors. Public power in Poland is decentralized, meaning that some power belongs to local governments in counties, poviats, cities and voivodeships.

The President of Poland is elected following the general election held every five years. The parliamentary election, just like the local government election, is held every four years.

Administrative bodies of central and local authorities

National administrative bodies, due to their range of operation, can be divided into:

- Main authorities – President, Council of Ministers, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Ministers;
- central authorities (otherwise known as the central office) that operate on the basis of relevant acts and statutes given by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers following regulations and organizational regulations given by the head of a central office following a disposition.
- Branch offices of the national administration, e.g. governors.

Citizenship rights and responsibilities,

Citizenship responsibilities are written down in the second chapter of the Polish constitution (Freedom, rights and responsibilities of man and citizen). The most important ones include:

- Loyalty to the Republic of Poland and care about common good (art. 82)
- Abiding by the law of the Republic of Poland (art. 83)
- Incurring public charges and benefits, including taxes described in the act (art. 84)
- Defending the Homeland (art. 85 section 1)
- Caring about the condition of the environment and assuming responsibility for causing its degeneration (art. 86)

Currency

The Polish currency is zloty. As abbreviation zloty is commonly written as zł or as in bank writing PLN. Currently, Poland does not belong to the Euro zone. 1 zł = 100 groszy.

Religion

Most citizens of Poland are catholic belonging to the Roman-Catholic Church. Catholic signs and symbols are commonly present in public spaces. It is very often that you can come across crosses in schools or offices. An important area of the Church's operations is charity for the poor and those in need of help. Caritas Poland is the biggest institution of the Church in Poland.

Besides the community of Catholics, there are also many other Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities as well as groups of Indians and Buddhists.

Equality in the light of the law

All residents of Poland are equal in the light of the law and no one can be discriminated due to his or her home country, culture, worldviews, religion, gender or political views. Everyone has the freedom of expression, but it's important to bear in mind that the condition of personal freedom is respect towards others and their freedom. That's why it's important not to offend or cause harm to anyone by saying or showing something, because it can bring legal consequences.

A particular example of courteousness in Poland is showing exceptional respect and helping those really vulnerable, that is the elderly, women, especially pregnant ones, and those with small children or the disabled.

It is expressed by, for instance, freeing seats on buses or trains for those people.

Care about the ecosystem

The ecosystem is everyone's wealth. Caring about clean water, surroundings without rubbish or clean air is in the hands of us all. This awareness is expressed by increasing assumption of responsibility for the ecosystem and it's starting to be prevalent in the law. More and more attention is paid to saving water, respecting the no littering signs as well as throwing out rubbish only in designated places, limiting the amount of waste and recycling them or avoiding burning rubbish in furnaces. It's also important to remember about that to avoid getting a fine.

Care about health

Care about health lies in the interest of every man, his family, the community, and the country that finances health care. That's why it's commonly expected from everyone to care about his or her health as well as health of others. More and more attention is being paid to a healthy lifestyle and avoidance of harmful and risky behaviours. Therefore, for instance in public places such as stations, airports or shops, there's a cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption ban in places other than the designated ones. There's also a total ban on possession and consumption of narcotics.

Mobile phone networks in Poland

There are many mobile phone networks available in Poland. When choosing a network for yourself, it's worth using the provider's website or going to its retail shop to get familiar with conditions and costs of using its services. It's also worth keeping in mind costs of international calls and the Internet offer to limit costs of contacting relatives in your home country. These are the most popular mobile phone networks:

- **Play:** www.play.pl
- **Orange Poland:** www.orange.pl
- **T-Mobile Poland:** www.t-mobile.pl
- **Plus:** www.plus.pl
- **Lycamobile:** www.lycamobile.pl/
- **Nju Mobile:** www.njumobile.pl
- **Heyah:** www.heyah.pl/

By purchasing a phone and the provider's services we can also purchase access to the Internet. On the other hand, there are many places in every city such as shopping malls, universities, stations, offices etc. with free Wi-Fi access to the Internet. All you have to do to access the Internet is to turn on Wi-Fi on your device and connect to the free Internet network, and if it requires a password, it can surely be made available by an employee of a given place.

Emergency numbers in Poland

Public services can help us in emergency situations that pose a threat to our health and life. You can contact them using the emergency numbers. By calling the provided number, you have to give your full name, briefly describe the event and give the address or try to describe the place as precise as possible. Among emergency numbers in Poland these are the ones worth remembering:

112 – Emergency Communication Centre– it's a uniform European emergency number;

999 – Emergency Medical Services;

998 – National Fire Service;

997 – Police;

996 – Antiterrorist Centre–Internal Security Agency;

995 – Chief Police Officer –the Child Alert system;

985 – Marine and Mountain Rescue Services (WOPR, GOPR and TOPR);

984 – River Emergency Services;

981 – Road Emergency Services.

Dates of the most important holidays and days off work

1 January – New Year

6 January – Epiphany (The Day of Kings)

Resurrection Sunday (Resurrection of Jesus Christ) – it's a movable feast and always occurs on the first Sunday after the first spring full moon (in March or April)

Easter Monday – The Second day of Easter (movable feast)

1 May – Labour Holiday

3 May – holiday of the first Polish Constitution enacted in 1791.

Pentecost – falls on a Sunday, 49 days after Easter

Corpus Christi– movable feast – 9th Thursday after Easter

15 August – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Armed Forces Day

1 November – All Saints' Day

11 November – The Independence Day – anniversary of regaining the Polish independence in 1918.

25 December –Christmas Day

26 December– Boxing Day.

The above-mentioned holidays are work-free days so offices, most factories and shops are closed.

The most important historical dates

966 – Baptism of Poland – it's a traditional name corresponding to the baptism of Mieszko I, the ruler of Poles, and the beginning of Christianisation of Polish lands. This year is a symbolic date of the creation of Poland and the establishment of the Catholic Church in Poland.

1364 – foundation of the Academy of Cracow, one of the first higher education institutions in Europe, which transformed itself into the Jagiellonian University over the centuries – today it's the oldest university in Poland and one of the oldest in the world.

XVI century, the Golden Age– century ruled by the last rulers of the Jagiellonian dynasty (kings Sigismund I the Old and Sigismund Augustus). At that time, Poland was one of the most powerful countries in Europe.

1569 – the Union of Lublin, which resulted in the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the union of Poland and Lithuania). In fact it was the country of three big nations– Poles, Lithuanians and Rus as well as many minor nations– Jews, Tatars, Germans, Armenians, and even Circassians, Persians and many others. In modern times, many historians believe that the union of Lublin was the archetype of the European Union.

1597 – the capital of Poland was moved from Cracow to Warsaw by king Sigismund III Vasa.

1772 – the first out of three partitions of Poland took place. Following the act of cession, Poland lost some of its lands to Prussia, the Habsburg Empire (later known as Austria) and the Russian Empire.

1791 – the Constitution of 3 May was enacted at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the first constitution in Europe and the second in the world. It regulated the legal system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth so that it removed flaws of the political system.

1793 – II partition of Poland. That year, further parts of Poland were seized by Prussia and Russia.

1795 – III partition of Poland, which meant a complete liquidation of the Republic of Poland. Poland lost its national subjectivity and disappeared from the map of countries until it got its independence back in 1918. The period of 123 years until the return of independence witnessed many uprisings, fights for independence and initiatives initiated by Polish citizens to preserve the language, catholic religion and Polish culture.

1815 – creation of the Kingdom of Poland by virtue of the Congress of Vienna (1815–1832), a Congress Kingdom, a country completely dependent on the Russian Empire.

1914–1918 – the First World War.

11 November 1918 – Poland regained its independence. The defeat of the Polish partitioners in the First World War as well as revolutionary movements in Germany and Russian created political opportunities that favoured the rebirth of Poland as an independent state. On the 11th November, the Regency Council entrusted military power and supreme command of the Polish military to Josef Pilsudski. This date is accepted as a symbolic day of regaining independence. In truth, it was a long and tiring process of great organizational work to make the country operational in areas, which were under different administrative, legal, social, political and economic systems for several generations.

15 August 1920 – Battle of Warsaw (Miracle at the Vistula) – on that day, Polish military forces secured a key victory over the Bolshevik army outside Warsaw. The victory ensured Polish independence and stopped Bolshevik plans to popularize communism in Western Europe. The Battle of Warsaw is listed among the most deciding battles in the history of the world.

1 September 1939 – Nazi Germany attacked Poland and started the Second World War which was destructive for Poland.

17 September 1939 – The Soviet Union attacked Poland from the eastern border.

1 August 1944 – The Uprising of Warsaw began and aimed at pushing out the withdrawing German forces from the Polish capital and freeing Warsaw.

8 May 1945 – The end of the Second World War in Europe.

19 I 1947 – Communist parties took over the government in Poland following electoral fraud. With the participation of the Soviet Union, the process of imposing communism in Poland began.

16 October 1978 – the archbishop of Cracow, cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected pope and took the name John Paul II. This event was very important in terms of social and political changes occurring in Poland and Eastern Europe, which in the following years led to the collapse of the communist system.

August 1980 – strikes broke out in many labour places in big Polish cities, including the Gdansk Shipyard. They were organized to oppose the socialistic authorities, communism, repressions and the regressing economic situation of the country. The opposing movement, Solidarity, was created, which was not only a union movement, but also a mass social and political movement. Lech Walesa was the leader.

13 December 1981 r. – the communist authorities impose the Martial Law. It was imposed to oppose Solidarity, it slowed down and transformed the processes of social, political and economic changes in Poland in the next years.

6 February 1989 – The Round Table talks began, in which representatives of the authorities entered into an agreement with representatives of the social party – Solidarity. This event was the beginning of democratic changes in Poland.

4 June 1989 – the first post Second World War partial free parliamentary election in Poland.

12 March 1999 – Poland joined NATO.

1 May 2004 – Poland became the member of the European Union.

More interesting facts about Poland can be found here: <http://www.poland.gov.pl>

Polish tradition and culture

Poland is a country with a long Christian tradition, that's why many standards and customs come from that religion. Some of them became a permanent part of the existing legal system, others are patterns of the desired social behaviours. Many rules also result from respecting democracy and human rights.

Equality and prohibition of discrimination

Every Polish citizen is equal in the light of the law. The Polish law guarantees freedom of expressing worldviews, religion and political preferences – no one can be discriminated for that reason. One also has to respect views and preferences of others, that's why it's important to not offend or insult anyone through words and behaviour, because such actions may bring legal consequences. Examples of good manners include respect towards the elderly, that's why in public communication young people should give their seats to the elderly. Women have the same rights as men.

Punctuality

Although Poles are not famous for their punctuality, being late, especially in work matters, is regarded as inappropriate, and sometimes even as an example of bad manners. If a person is late to an office or hospital for a scheduled appointment, he or she may not be admitted and will have to reschedule.

At work, there are admonitions for being late, and in serious cases also salary cuts. Being constantly late may result in being laid off from work. Punctuality is also important in private life, because according to a popular Polish proverb "time is money."

Free time

Poles are considered a nation that likes to celebrate, is very attached to tradition and likes to maintain old customs. Holidays are spent at home with family, however, nowadays Poles take advantage of short holiday periods more often and spend some time out with their families. In Poland, work-free days include all weekends and holidays, all offices are closed at that time.

Greetings

While greeting, Poles usually use the word „CZEŚĆ”, which is almost impossible to pronounce by a foreigner. Obviously it can be replaced by others, which are equally common, „HEJ” or „WITAJ”. In Poland, there's a custom between men to shake hands. If there's a woman present, this gesture does not concern her. Some time ago it was considered good manners to kiss the woman's hand, but today it's a long forgotten custom, however some men still do it.

Can we address each other by first names?

A foreigner coming to Poland should be careful when it comes to using the personal pronoun “TY”. In Poland, it's customary to regard unknown or elder people by Mister (Mr.) or Mistress (Mrs.). In some cases, we can be reprimanded that we are being impolite. It's more polite when the proposition to address each other by first names is made by the person who is higher in the hierarchy, a woman to a man, the elder person to the younger.

WORK IN POLAND – HOW TO FIND IT?

Assistance offered by the labour offices

In each poviast, there's a Poviast Labour Office, where you can register as an unemployed or seeking work, get help in finding a job, consider available job offers and get many other forms of support.

The following can register as unemployed:

- Foreigners with a permanent residence permit;
- Foreigners with a long term European Union residence permit;
- Foreigners with a temporary residence permit, which have been allowed a temporary stay to perform work in a profession that requires high qualifications or to conduct scientific research;
- Foreigners with residence permit due to humanitarian reasons or tolerated residence permit;
- Foreigners with work permit, on condition that they had been employed in Poland for the continuous period of at least 6 months directly before the registration as an unemployed person;
- Foreigners with work visas on condition that they had been employed in Poland for the continuous period of at least 6 months directly before the registration as an unemployed person;
- foreigners – family members of Polish citizens who got a temporary residence permit in Poland or who reside in Poland, after applying for a temporary or a permanent residence permit or a long term EU resident permit, on the basis of a stamp in their passports that confirms submission of the application on time without missing information, of they had had a temporary residence permit directly before submission of their application.

All foreigners, who have the right to register as unemployed, can register as a job seeking person. Additionally, they include:

- foreigners with a temporary residence permit granted to perform work;
- foreigners with visas for work in Poland;
- foreigners with a temporary residence permit to study on bachelor's degree studies, master's degree studies, uniform master's studies, third degree studies or to connect with their families;
- foreigners – family members of Polish citizens looking for employment, other gainful employment or other form of assistance provided for in the act;
- foreigners with work visas to perform work on the basis of a seasonal work permit;
- foreigners with a temporary residence permit due to seasonal work.

Not everyone seeking employment can register as unemployed. The Status of an Unemployed grants some benefits, for example, the right to the unemployment benefit (after meeting specified conditions). An unemployed cannot work or get other income. A working person can be registered as a job-seeking person. A job-seeking person is not registered for social insurance and health contributions are not paid for him or her as in the case of a person registered as unemployed. Moreover, those

statuses differ in rights and responsibilities. Rights and responsibilities of the unemployed can be found here: <http://psz.praca.gov.pl/-/13823-prawa-i-obowiazki-osoby-bezrobotnej> and rights of a job-seeking person here:

<http://psz.praca.gov.pl/-/13833-prawa-i-obowiazki-osoby-poszukujacej-pracy>

A job-seeking person has the right to use the services of a job agency and a career counselling. Counsellors may also instruct a foreigner to take part in courses.

The person, who's entered into the Labour Office register, also has certain responsibilities. The first one is cooperation with employees of the office, including reporting for scheduled meetings, delivering all necessary documents, which may be required by a career counsellor or a job agent. After getting the unemployment benefit, the unemployed person has to report for meetings scheduled by an employee of the labour office. If a person finds a job, it has to be reported to the labour office within 7 days.

More information can be found on the Green Line website: <http://zielonalinia.gov.pl/-/rejestracja-cudzoziemca-w-urzedzie-pracy-41584>. It's an online system of labour offices, where you can find precise information about forms of support offered by labour offices and other procedures, including registration at the office. Availability of English and Russian versions of the website facilitates its use.

Foreigners may also look for help in the Information and Career Planning Centre at the Voivodeship Labour Office without formal registration. All adult foreigners, without any conditions, are permitted to use the help of that office.

Finding the Poviast Labour Office or the Voivodeship Labour Office is the best way to start looking for employment in Poland. Poviast Labour Offices provide services to anyone who registers as a job-seeking person or an unemployed. Acceptance of a job offer is voluntary. All job offers are made available to the registered.

Labour Offices in Greater Poland Voivodeship

A good way to start is to find a labour office in the poviast, in which you are registered for permanent residence or in one, which is your current place of residence. In Kalisz, it's the Poviast Labour Office on **Staszica 47a**, in which people residing in Kalisz and residents of the Kalisz Poviast register. In the case of the city of Poznan, residents can register at the Poviast Labour Office in Poznan on **Czarnieckiego 9**.

In the Greater Poland voivodeship, there are labour offices in the following cities: Chodziej, Czarnków, Gniezno, Gostyn, Grodzisk Wlkp., Jarocin, Kalisz, Kepno, Kolo, Konin, Koscian, Krotoszyn, Leszno, Miedzychód, Nowy Tomysl, Oborniki, Ostrów Wlkp., Ostrzeszów, Pila, Pleszew, Poznan, Rawicz, Slupca, Szamotuly, Sroda Wlkp., Srem, Turek, Wagrowiec, Wolsztyn, Wrzesnia, Zlotów.

What documents are required while visiting the Labour Office?

While registering at the Poviast Labour Office, you need to have an ID, documents about your residence permit and documents that may be helpful in getting to know the situation of the registering person. Those may include:

- temporary or permanent residence card as well as the residence registration card and in the case of the temporary residence card you also need to have the governor's decision, and in the case of marriage with Polish citizens – the marriage certificate,
- passport or other (European) identity document,
- diplomas and school certificates,
- job certificates or other documents confirming period of employment.

Where else to look for employment?

There are many places in Poland where you can look for job offers. At the Poviast Labour Office – on the job offer notice board and on the website of the Poviast Labour Office (<http://wupolsztyn.praca.gov.pl/oferty-pracy>).

You can also look for a job using private employment agencies, which will assist in finding a job for free. Contact details of working employment agencies can be found here:

<http://stor.praca.gov.pl/portal/#/kraz/wyszukiwarka>

The central database of job offers in Poland can be found here: <http://oferty.praca.gov.pl/portal/index.cbop#/listaOfert>.

Job seeking can also be started by creating your own profile at one of the professional social portals, for example Goldenline <https://www.goldenline.pl/> or <https://pl.linkedin.com/>. There, you can create your job profile, establish a network of business contacts and use a job search engine.

You can find many job search engines online, which may also be a source of valuable advice about the job market and the development of your professional career. The following are some of the popular search engines:

www.Pracuj.pl;

www.Praca.pl;

www.Jobs.pl;

www.InfoPraca.pl;

www.MonsterPolska.pl;

www.MediaCv.pl;

www.Gumtree.pl/s-oferty-pracy/v1c8p1

Job offers can also be found on newspaper websites and in printed versions of newspapers. You can ask about newspapers with job offers at any press outlets.

Curriculum Vitae

While seeking a job it's important to have your own CV. It's a short description of your professional career, which contains personal details, contact details, information about education and current professional experience as well as predispositions and skills that can be used at work. In that document, you have to put information about known foreign languages, computer literacy, driving license and additional certificates. It's also important to include the clause about consent to process personal details. Without this clause, the employer won't be able to use details included in your CV during the recruitment process.

Competencies resulting from employment on the basis of the Labour Code

When starting work in Poland, you need to sign an employment agreement with your employer. It should be entered into on the first day of work in writing in two identical copies – one for the employer and the second one for the employee. By having an employment agreement, the employee is protected by regulations of the Labour Code. Benefits resulting from an employment agreement include:

- protection of employee rights – with an employment agreement, even if the employer turns out to be unfair, you can still pursue your rights in court;
- greater assurance of getting remuneration at the set amount and within the statutory period;
- insurance package;
- increasing job seniority, which is connected with some employee benefits, for example longer holiday entitlement;
- possibility of registering at the labour office as an unemployed, the unemployment benefit;
- accident insurance – in the case of an unfortunate accident, an employee with an employment agreement gets compensation if the accident is connected to the employment.

Employment agreement – but which one?

An employment agreement should include all basic information about work, for instance:

- details of the parties – employer and employee;
- defined nature of the agreement;
- date of entering into the agreement;
- conditions of performed work and remuneration amount;
- place of employment;

- type of employment;
- working hours;
- date of work commencement.

The first employment agreement can be entered into for a trial period. It cannot be longer than three months. After that, it's possible to enter into an agreement for a set period of time. This type of agreement can be entered into twice. The third agreement has to be entered into for an unspecified period of time.

Instead of an employment agreement, the employer can offer to enter into a contract of mandate or a specific task contract. As part of such agreement, the employee undertakes to perform a specific job or task. However, those types of agreements are not subject to the Labour Code, but the Civil Code, which states that the employee acts on his or her own authority and at his or her own risk, but is entitled to the remuneration specified in the agreement for the performed job or completed task.

REMEMBER!

- While entering into an agreement, you have to understand it completely. The employer has the right to provide the employee with an agreement in the language that's known to the employee.
- In case of any ambiguities, the employer is obliged to explain all doubtful matters connected with the agreement.
- While using the services of an employment agency it's worth checking out if a given agent is present in the list of agencies on the following website [internetowej www.kraz.praca.gov.pl](http://internetowej.www.kraz.praca.gov.pl). During the conversation we can ask about specific details and address of an agent.
- While verifying the credibility of the employer or an agent, it's worth checking out if he or she has his or her business activity registered, since when he or she has been active on the market and if he or she has an office. Those details can be obtained from the Register of Entrepreneurs (<https://prod.ceidg.gov.pl/ceidg/ceidg.public.ui/search.aspx>) or from the National Court Register (<https://ems.ms.gov.pl/krs/wyszukiwaniepodmiotu>).

Work permit

Work permit is a document that authorizes a foreigner to start legal employment in Poland on condition that he or she has a visa or a temporary residence permit that enables work in Poland. The permit indicated the authority that entrusted the foreigner with work and the job position or type of work that the foreigner is going to performing. Work is considered legal only in the case when it's the one indicated in the permit.

The permit has a defined validity period and is required in the case of starting employment on the basis of both employment agreements and civil legal agreements. Work permit is granted by the governor relevant due to the place of residence or the employer's headquarters. It is the employer who submits an application for a foreigner work permit. Original copies of the documents listed in the application should be submitted along with the application or the validity of their copies should be confirmed by the office (except for ID and passport). Documents in the foreign language should be

translated into Polish by a certified translator. Work permit is an administrative decision and is granted in three copies – one stays in the office, two are handed to the employer, one of which the employer is obliged to give to the employee, who has obtained the permit. Work permit is a decision of the relevant authority authorizing the foreigner, who is legally residing in Poland, to perform work on conditions specified in the permit. It means that if the foreigner wants to change his or her job (i.e. the employer or/and the job position and/or industry, in which he or she is employed), he or she has to apply for a new permit.

Who needs work permit in Poland

In order to start employment, a non-EU foreigner residing in Poland on legal terms is obliged to obtain a work permit, if he or she is residing in Poland on the basis of:

1. visa (except for a tourist visa, being part of proceedings to grant asylum, using temporary protection, arrival due to humanitarian reasons, due the interest of the government or an international obligation, when the foreigner cannot perform work in Poland. Such foreigners, following general terms, can apply for a temporary residence permit and a work permit or get a work permit and visa to perform work),
2. visa issued by a country other than a Schengen country or a residency document issued by a country other than a Schengen country,
3. a temporary residence permit (with exceptions)¹;
4. visa-free movement (in terms of the visa-free movement the foreigner can stay in Schengen countries for 90 days in any period of 180 days, e.g. in the case of citizens of Ukraine of Georgia exemption from the obligation to have a visa concerns holders of biometric passports)

¹ The requirement of having a work permit for foreigners residing in Poland on the basis of a temporary residence permit does not concern people who:

- Have a temporary residence permit in Poland granted due to entering into marriage with a Polish citizen or foreigner with a refugee status, subsidiary protection, a permanent residence permit or a long term EU resident permit, tolerated permit or temporary protection granted to him or her in Poland;
- are students of full-time courses (bachelor's or master's degree or uniform master's as well as third degree) as well as those studying and residing in Poland on the basis of a temporary residence permit issued due to studies lasting for the whole period of the residence permit validity.

Who can work in Poland without work permit

According to art. 87 of the act of 20 April 2004 on employment promotion and labour market institutions (Journal of Laws 2018 item 1265) a foreigner is permitted to work in the Republic of Poland if he or she:

1. has a refugee status granted in Poland,
2. has subsidiary protection in Poland,
3. has a permanent residence permit,
4. has a long term EU resident permit in Poland,
5. has consent to reside due to humanitarian reasons,
6. has consent for tolerated residence in Poland (holds a document known as „Consent for tolerated residence”),
7. uses temporary protection in Poland,
8. is a citizen of:
 - a. EU member state or
 - b. EEA country, non-EU country or
 - c. A country that's not a party in the EEA agreement, whose citizens may use the freedom of movement on the basis of an agreement entered into by this country with the European Union and its member states,
 - d. Or is a member of the foreigner's family mentioned in sections a-c and accompanies him or her in Poland.
9. has a temporary residence permit in Poland granted due to marriage with a Polish citizen or a foreigner with a refugee status, subsidiary protection, a permanent residence permit or long term EU resident permit, tolerated permit or temporary protection granted in Poland;
10. is a full-time student in Poland, studying in Poland on the basis of the obtained visa;
11. is a full-time student (bachelor's or master's studies or uniform master's studies or the third degree studies) who studies and resides in Poland on the basis of a temporary residence permit issued due to studies lasting for the whole period of the residence permit validity;
12. resides in Poland on the basis of a stamp in his or her travelling document that confirms the submission of an application for the long term EU resident permit, if he or she was not required to have a work permit directly before submitting the application,
13. has a valid Polish Card, i.e. a document confirming belonging to the Polish nation (however, that does not mean the foreigner is a Polish citizen, has the right to a temporary or permanent residence in Poland nor the right to cross Polish borders without a visa);
14. is a victim of human trafficking, if he or she meets specific conditions;
15. fell victim to his or her difficult life situation – such as, for instance, death of the spouse who was a Polish citizen, divorce with or separation from a Polish citizen– but has the right to reside in Poland.

The group of people not required to get a work permit also includes the citizens of Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Moldavia, who (in the range not covered by regulations about seasonal work permit) take advantage of the facilitated access to the Polish labour market. It means that for the period of 6 months during the following 12 months they can perform work without the need to get a work permit on condition that they possess a written statement from the entity that entrusts them with work. Such statement has to be registered in the relevant Poviast Labour Office.

If the employer wants to employ a foreigner for a longer period of time, it's required that he or she has a work permit or a temporary residence permit and a work permit or a temporary residence permit to perform work in a profession that requires high qualifications. If a foreigner worked at the employer's company as a result of the registered statement, that employer can submit an application for a work permit (at the same job position) following a simplified procedure (without the need to get information from the staroste about the possibility of meeting the personnel needs on the basis of a local labour market).

Foreigners residing in Poland legally, whose purpose of stay is to perform work, can apply for a temporary residence and work permit or a temporary residence permit to perform work in a profession that requires high qualifications. Such permits are issued by governors following the so-called single application procedure that results in issuing one document to the foreigner that allows him or her to stay as well as to perform work in Poland without the need of having an additional work permit. As for the principle, the application for those permits requires information from the staroste about inability to meet personnel needs on the basis of the local labour market. That information can be obtained at the Poviast Labour Office by the employer.

Types of work permits

Work permits are issued by the governor relevant due to the place of residence/head office. An exception is the type S permit, which is issued by the staroste. The permit specifies the employer, type of work or position, minimum remuneration, working hours and permit validity period. It is issued upon request as a form, which has to be supplemented by the specified documents. A condition to allow a foreigner to work is his residence title that foresees the possibility of taking up work in Poland. The foreigner himself has to apply for such title.

The Governor issues 5 types of work permits:

A – issued upon request of the employer when the foreigner is employed in Poland and by the employer, whose main office, department or other type of business activity is located in Poland. In order to obtain such permit, the employer has to get information about the local labour market from the starosty, which confirms the inability to realize his personnel needs on the basis of registers of the unemployed and job-seeking persons. This permit, if there are no other local solutions, is issued for 3 years;

B – issued when the foreigner has a specific position in the board of an entity, is a general partner, or holds a commercial power of attorney;

C, D, E – it's a permit issued when the foreigner is sent to work in Poland by a foreign employer.

Seasonal work permits

On 1 January 2018, the government introduced the type S seasonal work permits in branches such as agriculture, gardening and tourism. It is issued for non-EU and non-EEA foreigners by the starosty following an administrative decision upon request of the employer. In this case, the employer applies for issuing a seasonal work permit at the Poviast Labour Office relevant due to the place of residence or head office of the company. The application can also be submitted online. If the foreigner is already in Poland: the staroste verifies the application and issues the permit or denies it. If the foreigner is trying to enter Poland to take up seasonal work, the staroste verifies the application and enters it into the seasonal work application register or denies it. The employer gives the foreigner a statement certifying the entry to seasonal work application register. This statement is the basis for issuing a visa to perform seasonal work or, in the case when the foreigner enters the country in terms of the visa-free movement, it is the justification for his or her purpose to enter Poland. After coming to the country, the employer of the foreigner should report that fact at the Poviast Labour Office at the same time providing the foreigner's place of residence. After providing those pieces of information, the decision is made whether to issue the type S permit. It's important to remember that the entry to the seasonal work application register is valid for 120 days – if during that time the staroste does not receive confirmation that the foreigner is going to take up work at a later date, he will end the proceedings to issue the seasonal work permit.

While waiting for the administrative decision the foreigner can work, on condition that the employer informs about his or her arrival in the country and the place of his or her residence. However, the performed work has to comply with the declaration made in the statement about the entry issued previously by the office. The foreigner can also perform work while waiting for his or her extension of the seasonal work permit. If the application is about continuation of work in the same place he or she can work until the decision is issued, but if he or she works at a new employer's company the period lasts 30 days. By continuing work with the foreigner, the employer can apply for a multi-seasonal entry, which can be valid up to 3 years.

The seasonal work permit allows for performing work for 9 months a year. If citizens of countries covered by the statement system apply for such permit, that is Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, Russia and Moldavia, the employer is not obliged to receive information from the starosty about the inability to meet personnel needs on the basis of the local labour market. If the application is denied, there's a possibility of a second instance appeal to the Minister of Labour.

Statement about entrusting work to foreigners

Another tool permitting the foreigners to work is the *Statement about entrusting work to a foreigner* submitted by the employer at the Poviát Labour Office. It is entered by the office to the statement registry and is applicable in the case of citizens of the following countries: Ukraine, Belorus, Georgia, Armenia, Moldavia and Russia. The statement gives the right to perform non-seasonal work for the period of 6 months throughout the next 12 months without an additional permit. It permits the foreigner to perform work without the obligation of having a work permit, if work is performed on conditions specified in that statement.

The entity that entrusts work is obliged to inform the Labour Office when the foreigner takes up work not later than on the day of work commencement and when the foreigner does not take up work, within 7 days from the date of work commencement specified in the statement register. Failure to meet the obligation is subject to a fine.

Changes introduced on 1 January 2018 foresee the possibility of denying the statement entry on the basis of information such as earlier penalties for illegal employment of foreigners, absence of payments of social security contributions or taxes.

SOCIAL INSURANCE SYSTEM

The purpose of Polish social insurance is to provide social safety to people in the case of unpredictable and difficult life situations such as disability, illness, old age or pregnancy. In situations, in which a given person is not able to live from his or her own work, he or she can count on payment of benefits of short or long term and permanent nature.

Due to the nature of accidents covered by the insurance, it includes:

- Illness insurance – the insured is protected in the case if he or she is unfit for work due to illness, when he or she's on paternity or maternity leave, in hospital, when he or she is forced to look after an ill family member;
- Accident insurance – the insured is protected if an accident at work happens or an occupational disease occurs;
- Pension insurance – the insured is protected if he or she's unfit for work or if a family supporter dies;
- Retirement insurance – the insured is protected if he or she reaches the retirement age.

In the above-mentioned cases, the Social Insurance Institution pays out benefits to people covered by social insurance.

The social insurance obligation is applicable to people who work in Poland and have an employment agreement, contract of mandate or run his or her own business activity.

The contributor, basically the employer, registers the employee for social insurance. The employer is obliged to do this within seven days since the insured started work. Insurance contributions are paid by the employer.

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN POLAND

The education system in Poland is currently being reformed following an act of 2016 on *Educational right*. Changes have already been partly introduced and will be gradually implemented over the next few years. The following description of the education system considers the introduced changes.

School obligation and learning obligation

All children in Poland, regardless of their country of origin, have an obligation and the right to study.

Knowledge of the Polish language is a condition for being accepted to school, that's why children who don't know Polish should first start learning in the age group, where they can gradually develop their language skills.

The course of learning:

- Learning obligation starts in the last year of kindergarten preparation, when the child is 6 years old and starts attending preschool. The year of preschool education prepares children for school lessons. Those lessons are carried out either at a kindergarten or at a school with the kindergarten division.
- Learning obligation lasts until the end of the eight grade of primary school, when the child is 14-15 years old.
- After finishing education in primary school, the obligation continues until the child is 18 years old. Meaning that young people at the age of 16-18 have the obligation to continue learning either at a chosen school or they can learn a profession from an employer if they don't want to learn anymore.

Education system

The education system in Poland consists of: kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, art schools, postsecondary schools and universities.

Nurseries and kindergartens

Nurseries are for children between the age 0-3. They are not part of the education system nor are they obligatory. For children aged 3-5 there's **kindergarten**, which is also not obligatory. However, it's worth remembering that in kindergarten children learn language, develop social relations, play under the care of a teacher and have proper conditions for correct adaptation and preparation for obligatory school learning. Every 3-6-year old child has the right to have a place in kindergarten. In order to find a kindergarten for your child, you have to contact the nearest public kindergarten. If there are no available places, the kindergarten will give you information where the nearest kindergarten that

the child can attend is located. Kindergartens are partially financed from the county budget, but some costs are also incurred by parents.

Preschool

A child at the age of 6 starts obligatory school preparation learning– the so-called **preschool**. It is either the last group of kindergarten or takes place at school in the kindergarten division.

Primary school

Eight classes of primary school are divided into two stages. Classes 1-3 are the so-called early school education, and in classes 4-8 children are taught different subjects. Primary school education is free, however the presence of children at school requires certain expenses. Parents pay money for child insurance, school fund, class fund, trip organization, canteen etc. Here, it's worth bearing in mind that there are options to get social-living assistance. In difficult situations, you have to get advice on available help from the school administration and in social assistance centres.

Psychological and pedagogical clinics

An important element of the school system is **a psychological and pedagogical clinic**. They are worth using to help you child cope with stressful situations, depression or behaviour disorders. The address and contact details of such clinic can be obtained at school.

Secondary schools

So far first-degree secondary schools have been junior high school, which are being slowly closed due to the education reform. Currently, speaking about secondary school we mostly mean **(1) 3-4-year high schools** depending on the fact whether the student graduated from junior high school or the 8-grade primary school (high school are the preparation for higher education and end with the matura exam); **(2) 4-5-year technical high schools**, which on the one hand prepare for studies, because they end with the matura exam, but on the other hand prepare to perform a specific profession by giving the technician title; **(3) 1 degree 3-year vocational school** (it's a school that prepares to perform a specific profession by giving a diploma of professional qualifications); **(4) 2-year vocational school**, in which students can continue their education after finishing the 1 degree vocational school and prepare to the matura exam, which opens the door towards studies.

Postsecondary schools

Schools for people who graduated from high schools. They last from one year up to 2,5 years and prepare to take up a specific profession.

Universities

Studies are divided into **(1) I. degree bachelor's studies** (they last three years and are vocational studies preparing to perform a specific profession); **(2) II. Degree master's studies**, which can broaden

professional competencies and prepare to III degree studies; **(3) III. Degree studies** are doctorate studies, which prepare for the academic degree Doctor.

Education and courses for adults.

This stage of education gives adults the opportunity to complement their education, obtain new qualifications, professional and personal skills. This education takes place in continuing education facilities, in vocational training and development institutions or as postgraduate studies.

Labour Offices offer (to the registered) free courses that often grant professional qualifications. Sometimes such courses are organized following an agreement with employers, who look for people with exactly that type of qualifications and skills. Starting a course like that can present an employee with a job offer before he or she even finishes it.

REMEMBER

- Report to a public kindergarten or a public school that's closest to your place of residence. As part of regionalization, children that live closest to a school are most of the time accepted to it.
- If your child didn't go to school or had a longer break in education or you don't have school certificates, you can contact the psychological and pedagogical clinic, where employees will advise you what school and level is the best for your child.
- You have to translate or prepare medical documentation as soon as possible. The school can require the child's health card. You can consult with the doctor what vacancies have to be given to the child.
- You can help your child learn the Polish language. Contact the child's tutor, school headmaster and ask about additional corrective lessons, for example in the school common room.
- Be in touch with the school, so you can help teachers and other children understand your child and its needs. If there are more families and children from your country, organize everything together and keep in touch with the school.
- If you have your own school certificates, graduation papers, vocational courses or job certificates with you, try to get a document that confirms them. Confirmation of secondary and postsecondary school certificates can be obtained at the Voivodeship Education, which is subject to the Ministry of National education. University diplomas can be confirmed at the National Academy of Academic Exchange subject to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The issued document will be recognizable on the Polish labour market and will increase your chances of getting a job corresponding to your education. The project's centre can help you get such confirmations.

HEALTH CARE IN POLAND – MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The health care system in Poland is an insurance system, in terms of which the National Health Fund takes care of the organization of health care, signs service provision agreements with doctors and the whole medical personnel. That's why it has to be remembered that free medical help, financed from insurance contributions, is offered only in medical facilities with National Health Fund agreements. A foreigner going to the doctor should ask if a given doctor or medical facility has an agreement with the National Health Fund – then you can be treated in that facility for free.

Primary health care is provided at the general practitioner's office. In emergency situations, such as accidents, injuries or sudden deterioration of health with life threatening condition, the patient has to report to the emergency medical service. Specialist help, often after getting a relevant referral, can be obtained at specialist clinics, hospital or physiotherapy centres.

HEALTH INSURANCE

The public health care provides medical services to people with the National Health Fund insurance, Individuals, who have an employment agreement or contract of mandate or run their own business activity, have the obligatory health insurance. The employed can also register their family members such as spouses and children for health insurance.

If a foreigner does not have health insurance, then he or she can be insured voluntarily by paying financial contributions. All it takes is for him or her to turn to NHF with an application for own and family insurance. Such situations may concern people who came to Poland to study, to complete an internship or other citizens of third countries who reside in Poland but are not covered by the health insurance

REMEMBER

Not having health insurance in the case of sudden illness or accident will result in charged treatment. If you sign a contract for mandate, then the health insurance contributions are not paid.

Who can use health care services?

People with health insurance can use health care services. Foreigners who belong to one of the following groups can use medical care:

1. **employed in Poland** on the basis of an employment agreement or contract of mandate, the employer is obliged to cover the newly accepted employee with health insurance. To do that, the employer registers the foreigner at the Social Insurance Institution and pays monthly health insurance contributions deducted from the employee's salary;
2. **members of the insured families**
 - a. children – until the age of 18 or if they continue their education until the age of 26, if the child has the certificate of severe disability– without age limit;
 - b. spouses;
 - c. parents, grandparents – if they reside in the same household as the insured.

ATTENTION!!!!

Every insured person is obliged to register family members for insurance if they are not insured (e.g. they don't work). Registering for insurance is based on providing family members' details to the employer. If someone insures himself voluntarily, then after entering into the voluntary health insurance agreement with the voivodeship NHF department, he has to register his family members for insurance at the Social Insurance Institution.

3. Foreigners with **the refugee status** in Poland or **subsidiary protection** or **a temporary residence permit to connect with family, if he or she is in Poland and he or she is a member of the foreigner's family, who lives in Poland due to the refugee status or subsidiary protection,**

4. foreigners **registered at the labour office as unemployed** (insurance may also cover family members of the registered unemployed if they are not insured in any other way)

Voluntary health insurance

People, whose residence in Poland is legal and who do not have the obligatory health insurance, can insure themselves voluntarily. In order to do that, they should submit a relevant application to the relevant due to the place of residence Voivodeship NHF department. The application template is available at NHF headquarters and on the NHF website:

<http://www.nfz.gov.pl/dla-pacjenta/zalatw-sprawe-krok-po-kroku/jak-ubezpieczyc-sie-dobrowolnie/>

By submitting their application for voluntary health insurance foreigners, who aren't EU citizens should present their passport and one of the following documents:

- work visa;
- temporary residence permit;
- permanent residence permit;
- long term EU resident residence permit;
- residence permit due to humanitarian reasons;
- tolerated residence permit;
- document confirming the refugee status granted in Poland or use of temporary protection within its territory.

After entering into an agreement with NHF, you have to go to the Social Insurance institution to submit the ZUS ZZA form.

People insured voluntarily are obliged to register their family members for insurance if they do not have any other obligatory health insurance.

In order to register your family members for insurance, you have to submit the ZUS ZCNA form at the Social Insurance Institution (the form is available here). You can deliver it in person or send it by mail.

Contributions are paid to the Social Insurance Institution account– details can be obtained at the Institution.

The contribution for each calendar month is paid until the 15th day of the following month (for example, the contribution for the month of April has to be paid until the 15th May).

Health insurance confirmation documents

In most cases, it's possible to confirm the right to medical care benefits immediately on the basis of our data contained in the eWUS system (Electronic Verification of Beneficent Authorization). All you have to do is provide your Personal ID no and confirm your identity with an ID card, a passport or a driving license. In the case of children under school obligation, until they reach the age of 18, it's necessary to show the school ID.

Foreigners with residence in Poland receive their Personal ID no. automatically, and foreigners who cannot register for residence can submit an application. More information about that can be found here:

<https://obywatel.gov.pl/dokumenty-i-dane-osobowe/uzyskaj-numer-pesel-dla-cudzoziemcow>

Sometimes, visits to medical facilities are connected with the need to confirm on paper that you are insured and you have the right to use free health care.

Documents that confirm health insurance include:

1. for people with employment agreements:

- ZUS RMUA monthly report issued by the employer + ZUS ZUA or ZUS ZZA,
- current certificate from the place of employment,
- insurance card with current date and stamp of the employer;

2. for people registered as unemployed:

- current certificate from the Labour Office;

3. for people insured voluntarily:

- agreement entered into with NHF along with current proof of health contribution payment + confirmation of registration at the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS ZZA);

4. for a family member of the insured:

- proof of contribution payment by the main tax payer and registration for insurance of that family member, e.g. forms: ZUS RMUA + ZUS ZCNA (ZCZA);
- current certificate issued by the employer;
- certificate issued by the Social Insurance Institution about the registration of family members

ATTENTION!!!

Additionally, in the case of school students and university students (between the age of 18 and 26) it's necessary to have the school or university ID.

If there's no proof of insurance, a medical facility can provide help on the basis of a certificate about the right to benefits.

When does the right to benefits end?

The right to benefits of health care financed from public funds usually ends after 30 days since the last day of health insurance obligation, for instance, if the employment ends (due to the employment agreement).

Visit to the doctor

It's best to go to the nearest general practitioner's office. There, you can choose a doctor of the primary health care. By selecting the general practitioner we fill out the Declaration of choice. If we'd

like to change the doctor to another one, we have to remember that we can do it for free twice a year. When changing the primary health care physician another time you have to pay 80 zł.

How to schedule an appointment?

Before the visit to the doctor's office, you have to register at the family physician's clinic. You can do it personally, someone else can do it for you or you can do it over the phone. It's best to register on the day of your visit early in the morning, for instance keep on trying to contact the clinic from 7:00 a.m. Registering too late may result in a lack of openings for that day and reservation often cannot be made on another day.

Emergency cases

In cases, in which medical care is required immediately, for instance if there's a threat to your life, medical benefits are provided instantly and without referrals from the primary health care physician. **In life threatening situation you have to call an ambulance by dialing 999 or 112.** You have to provide a detailed description of the event and the address, give the reason for calling an ambulance, details of the person calling for help. In emergency situations, the patient can also report to the 24/7 admission room without referral.

Overnight and holiday medical help

If medical help is necessary at night between 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. or on work-free days and a lack of immediate medical help will affect the patient's health in a negative way, you can go to the on call medical clinic. Each medical clinic has an information about the nearest on call medical clinic in an easily visible place. At night and during holidays on call pharmacies are also open. Information about the nearest on call pharmacy should be located on the door of every pharmacy.

Health care benefits

Foreigners entitled to receive health care benefits, which are financed by the NHF, are entitled to receive health care benefits, examination and medical advice, hospital treatment, physiotherapy and preventive care.

Benefits can be provided both by public and non-public institutions, as well as by people of medical profession.

In some cases, besides confirming the right to benefits, you also need to have a valid referral. It's a document that's required while undergoing diagnostic examinations and benefits provided in terms of:

- specialist ambulatory care,
- hospital treatment,
- sanatorium and health resort treatment,
- medical physiotherapy,
- care of patients suffering from chronic diseases.

REMEMBER!

Having one referral, you can only register at one clinic that provides the required benefits. Patients, who require more than one specialist visit, present the referral only during the first visit to the selected specialist clinic.

Referrals are not needed to visit the following specialist doctors:

- gynaecologist and obstetrician,
- oncologist,
- psychiatrist,
- venerologist,
- dentist.

SOCIAL CARE IN POLAND

Social care benefits

Social care is an institution of the social policy of the country and its purpose is to support people and families in overcoming difficult life situations, with which they cannot cope, by using own resources and entitlements.

Social care supports people and families, who strive to satisfy the elementary needs, and allows them to live in decent conditions. It also enables prevention of difficult life situations by supporting them while they become independent and integrate with the society.

Social care supports people and families in terms of finances, aid in-kind and by providing services. The system of social help benefits financially supports people and families with low incomes or without any income.

Tools used by the social care first and foremost include social work, different types of pensions, help and counselling.

Who can use social care benefits?

People and families, who use social care, are obliged to cooperate in solving their difficult life situation.

The right to social care benefits is given to foreigners who reside in Poland on the basis of:

- permanent residence permit,
- long term EU resident permit,
- temporary residence permit granted to connect with family members, if they are present in Poland and are family members of the foreigner living in Poland in relation to the granted refugee status or subsidiary protection,
- in relation to the granted refugee status in Poland or subsidiary protection,
- in relation to the granted humanitarian residence permit in Poland or tolerated residence – in the form of shelter, meal, necessary clothing and designated benefit.

Rules for providing social care benefits

Social care benefits are provided upon application of:

- the interested person,
- her or his statutory representative,
- other person, following the consent of the interested person or his or her statutory representative.

The person or family applying for social care assistance can report to the social care centre in the place of residence (centres are located in every county). The positive or negative decision first

requires the social employee to conduct a family interview. Decisions in cases of social care benefits are issued in writing.

The right to monetary benefits is for people and families, whose income does not exceed the established income criteria. From 1 October 2018, the income criterion for a single-person household cannot exceed **701 zł**, and for a person in a family **528 zł**.

Scope of social care

Every foreigner, who is entitled to receive social care can request help, but he or she has to remember that main purposes of social care include:

- supporting people and families in their strivings to satisfy necessary needs and allow them to live in conditions that respect human dignity, i.e. by monetary and non-monetary help;
- help of a social employee in the form of social work in overcoming difficult life situations so that the family can become independent and live in decent conditions;
- providing care and support to poor people and families, and offering counselling to them;
- providing help to families and people who are victims of, e.g. family violence;
- help in social integration of people threatened by social exclusion or those who experienced social exclusion.

If you're a foreigner in a difficult life situation, find the nearest social care centre to find out whether you are entitled to social care benefits. The list of social care centres can be found here <https://ops.pl/kategoria/baza-instytucji/>

BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN POLAND

The possibility of running own business activity in Poland in the case of foreigners depends on the type of the possessed residence right. The foreigner can run his or her own business activity on the same rules as Polish citizens, if they have:

- permanent residence permit
- long term EU resident permit;
- permanent residence permit granted regarding connection with family that resides in Poland on legal terms, university education;
- refugee status;
- subsidiary protection;
- residence permit due to humanitarian reasons or tolerated residence permit;
- temporary residence permit and marriage with a Polish citizen residing in Poland;
- temporary residence permit to run a business activity, granted due to continuation of the already run business activity on the basis of the entry to the Central Business Register and Information Service;
- temporary protection in Poland;
- valid Polish card.

The most important types of business activity in Poland include:

- partnership business activity (as a civil law partnership)
- trading company
 - ✓ capital company (limited liability and joint-stock company)
 - ✓ partnership (general partnership, professional partnership, limited, limited joint-stock).

Sole proprietorship (self-employment)

- it is the simplest form of business activity
- it is intended for physical persons
- registered in the Central Business Register and Information Service (can be registered online)
- does not require the minimum capital
- entrepreneur and his or her whole wealth are responsible for obligations resulting from the business activity
- company (name) of the entrepreneur entered into the Central Business Register and Information Service must have at least the name and surname of the applicant– e.g. Jan Kowalski. Other elements can also be added, for instance, details that specify the profile of the run business activity
- entrepreneur has the sole right to represent his or her activity
- entrepreneur is a PIT tax payer
- entrepreneur can be a VAT tax payer.

How to register sole proprietorship?

Business activity can be set up online or in person at the county office. In the first and second case, it's best to view the website of the Central Business Register and Information Service www.ceidg.gov.pl. There, you can find all necessary information connected with running a business activity and the possibility of getting answers and help in solving problems. All activities connected to this are free of charge.

In order to register a business activity as a physical person you can choose one of the following modes of proceedings =:

- Log in* to the Central Business Register and Information Service website, fill out the online application and submit it (sign) electronically.
- Log in* to the Central Business Register and Information Service website, prepare the online application and sign it in any county (you have to know the application number).
- Without logging in, prepare the online application and sign it in any county (you have to know the application number).
- Download and submit the paper application in any county. The county transforms it into an electronic application.
- Send the application by registered mail to any county. The signature must be confirmed by the notary.

*** While logging in for the first time you have to create an account and activate it after receiving the confirmation e-mail**

The entrepreneur entered into the register is obliged to put the tax identification number in different types of written statements connected to his or her activity and to use this number in legal cases and trade. Different office registers require the entrepreneur's TIN to identify him or her.

Cancelling business activity

If the entrepreneur intends to end his or her business activity, he or she should submit an application about deletion from the register within seven days from the end of the activity. If the entrepreneur wants to suspend his or her business activity, he or she can do it for the period of 30 days to 24 months. If the entrepreneur does not resume his or her business activity within 24 months, the entry is deleted from the register automatically.

Duties of person running his or her business activity

While preparing to run a business activity in Poland, you have to remember about certain duties and practical requirements connected with it. Among them it's important to mention the following ones:

- Tax duty – the complete information about this duty can be obtained at the Tax Office in the place of the registered business activity;

- Registering the contribution tax payer to the Social Insurance Institution– regardless of registering in the CEIDG-1 application, you have to register yourself for insurance at the Social Insurance institution within seven days after starting the business activity and fill out necessary forms – also in connection to the employed;

It's also worth taking care of profession accounting – on your own or by hiring a qualified accountant or by handing over the documentation to an accounting office.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.biznes.gov.pl/pl>

EXCHANGING FOREIGN DRIVING LICENSE TO POLISH ONE

Third country citizens, who have a driving license issued in their home country, should exchange it for Polish driving license after 6 months of getting a temporary or permanent residence permit in Poland. Thanks to this document, they will be able to drive vehicles in Poland and in other EU countries.

How to exchange my driving license?

First of all you have to prepare the necessary documentation:

the driving license exchange application, which can be obtained from the city hall or starosty;

- current picture;
- passport or current residence card;
- document that confirms the place of residence, e.g. permanent or temporary residence permit;
- a copy of your foreign driving license with Polish translation – translation has to be written or confirmed by a certified translator or a consul and has to be an integral part of the document.

The application has to be submitted at

- the powiat starosty in the place of residence,
- the city hall – if living in a city on powiat rights,
- in the office of the district relevant due to the place of residence – if living in Warsaw.

The cost for issuing a driving license is 100,50 zł.

While driving a car remember to have:

- driving license that permits you to drive a given vehicle;
- ID card;
- vehicle registration card;
- valid vehicle check-up;
- valid vehicle insurance document.

While driving you have to:

- keep your seatbelt fastened at all times;
- transport children, who are shorter than 150 cm, in a children's seat;
- have your daytime running lights on at all times;
- respect the traffic regulations and adjust your speed to conditions on the road.

WHILE DRIVING ON POLISH ROADS ...

Adjust your speed to the applicable regulations – while driving in the city zone don't exceed the speed of 50 km/h.

On other single lane roads the speed limit is 90 km/h.

Any way pay attention to traffic signs– speed limits can be different on different road sections.

REMEMBER!!!

Driving under the influence has legal repercussions

0,2 – 0,5 blood alcohol level = a petty offence

> 0,5 blood alcohol level = a crime

ATTENTION!!!

You have to take care of your safety and thus:

- Never give anyone your passport or ID card
 - Watch out for illegal agents
- Before starting employment, check your employer – contact him, check his company

While looking for a Police station anywhere in our country, you can use the free mobile app „Moja Komenda”. It even works offline!



The advertisement features a smartphone on the left displaying the app's interface. The screen shows the logo of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration at the top, followed by the text 'MOJA KOMENDA' and 'POLICJA' at the bottom. To the right of the phone, the text reads: 'Aplikacja mobilna "Moja Komenda"', 'Kontakt z policją i dzielnicowymi na wyciągnięcie ręki', and 'Aplikacja powstała w ramach programu Dzielnice bliżej nas'. A small icon of a building is also present.

INSTITUTIONS WORKING FOR INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS IN GREATER POLAND VOIVODESHIP

Public institutions

VOIVODESHIP OFFICE IN POZNAN

www.poznan.uw.gov.pl

Foreigner Affairs Department

Pl. Wolności 17, 61-739 Poznań

tel. 61 850 87 77, 61 854 10 00

NATIONAL LABOUR INSPECTORATE:

REGIONAL LABOUR INSPECTORATE IN POZNAN

Marcelińska 90 st., 60-324 Poznań

tel. 61 628 40 00 (head office)

fax 61 628 40 03

Legal counselling:

<p>Regional Labour Inspectorate in Poznan</p>	<p>Regional Labour Inspectorate in Poznan</p>
<p>Phone counselling: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Hotline of the Counselling Centre of the Regional Labour Inspectorate. Landline phone - 801 002 006. Mobile phone - 459 599 000.</p> <p>In person: Monday 8:30 a.m. -6:00 p.m., remaining days 8:30 a.m. -3:00 p.m. Marcelińska 90 st. 60-324 Poznań ground floor.</p>	<p>Legal counselling about the teacher's charter and the law on higher education is available on every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Regional Labour Inspectorate in Poznan Department in Konin</p>	<p>Regional Labour Inspectorate in Poznan Department in Leszno</p>
<p>In person: Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Bankowa 14 st. 62-500 Konin room no 1.</p>	<p>In person: Monday - Friday 8:30 - 3:00 p.m Ul. Magazynowa 4 64-100 Leszno room no 218.</p>
<p>Regional Labour Inspectorate in Poznan Department in Ostrow Wielkopolski</p>	<p>Regional Labour Inspectorate in Poznan Department in Pila</p>
<p>In person: Monday - Friday 8:30 - 3:00 p.m. Grabowska 29 st. 63-400 Ostrów Wlkp. room no 1.</p>	<p>In person: Monday - Friday 8:30 - 3:00 p.m. Dzieci Polskich 26 st. 64-920 Pila room no 6.</p>

POVIAT LABOUR OFFICES

List of poviats labour offices located in the Greater Poland Voivodeship is available here:

<http://wuppoznan.praca.gov.pl/powiatowe-urzed-y-pracy>

BORDER GUARD:

NADODRZAŃSKI BORDER GUARD UNIT

www.nadodrzanski.strazgraniczna.pl

e-mail: noosg@strazgraniczna.pl

Emergency number 800422322

Border Guard Office in Kalisz

Józefa Sułkowskiego 9 st.

62-800 Kalisz

tel. (0-62) 753 80 20

fax (0-62) 753 80 25

Border Guard Office in Poznan -Lawica

Bukowska 285 st.

60-189 Poznan

tel. (061) 861-13-00

fax (061) 861-13-05

e-mail: poznan@strazgraniczna.pl

Organizations

CARITAS POLSKA

Migrant Assistance Centre in Kalisz

Stawiszynska 20 B st., 62-800 Kalisz

Phone numbers:

+48 572-571-183

+48 572-571-182

e-mail:

biuro.kalisz@caritas.org.pl

Opening hours:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.

On Wednesdays and Fridays between 8.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.