

Industrial Relations **Poland: Developments in working life 2018**

[Working life in 2018 – Annual review](#)

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Political context affecting working life aspects

The majority government of Law and Justice (PiS) remains in power. Following Mateusz Morawiecki's appointment as the Prime Minister in December 2017, a substantial reconfiguration of the cabinet formerly led by Beata Szydło took place in March. The government's line towards the growing discontent in the public sector has not changed significantly: a 'concession bargaining' (under direct pressure of specific occupational and sectoral groups of employees the government would occasionally grant their pay demands) continued. Tripartite social dialogue was becoming increasingly weak with the government's growing reluctance to negotiate. Indecisive results of municipal elections in October and the forthcoming EU and national parliamentary elections scheduled for 2019 make it unlikely that any massive changes in the legislation (similar to those implemented in the early phase of the current term, 2015-2019) will be introduced. Yet, the general pensions system will undergo serious changes (in the 3rd pillar, private-optional) enacted in late 2018.

Labour market reforms or major packages of working life regulations

The Labour Law Codification Committee delivered the drafts of two separate labour codes (individual and collective) in March 2018 despite growing tensions and disagreements among the social partners' delegates involved with the body. The divisive issues included excessive control over working time to be given to employers, enhanced protection of employment relationship and extreme limitations for freelance (or to be more precise, any other than based on a contract of employment) work. On the other hand, the proposals were innovative in numerous aspects, especially the collective labour code draft, which includes measures aiming to promote collective bargaining (almost extinct in the reality of Polish industrial relations). Subsequently, the government decided to drop the issue from the legislative agenda. As a result, the 1974 Labour Code stays in force, specific amendments transposing selected provisions of the two drafts may be promoted but – based on declarations of the government near the end of the year – it is not going to happen during the current parliamentary term which ends in 2019.

The Act on Employee Capital Plans (ustawa o pracowniczych planach kapitałowych, PPK), was adopted in October, signed into law in November and set to come into force as of 1 January 2019. PPK are to become the foundation for the third pillar of the pensions system (voluntary and private). Not only people with employment contracts are eligible for PPK, also civil contract holders can join in. Means accumulated in PPK are inheritable. The contributions are to be shared between employers and employees in the following way: basic rate is 3.5 % of a monthly gross wage (split between the parties in 1.5%/1% relation), maximum rate is 8% of a monthly gross wage (up to 2.5% delivered by employer and up to 2% by employee). Each PPK member will receive an annual top up of PLN 240 and a one-time starter lump sum of PLN 250 from the state. All entities that employ staff and pay social insurance contributions for their employees are obliged to set up a PPK, with the following exceptions: employers who have already established Employee Pension Schemes (PPE) and deliver PPE contributions of at least 3.5% of gross wages; micro-firms (if all employees activate opt-out clause) and individuals not conducting business activity. PPK are voluntary but by the letter of law all employees of the employers concerned are to be included, and only subsequently may request a leave from the schemes.

Trade Unions Act was finally amended in June, as a result the right to association is now enjoyed by "persons performing paid work", regardless of legal basis of their working

relationship. However, non-employees must remain in the relationship with the employer for six months before ‘earning’ their right for union eligibility. Vast part of the amendments will enter into force on 1 January 2019.

The prerogatives of the Social Dialogue Council (RDS) body were increased because of a complex amendment proposed by the President of Poland and adopted by the parliament in July. In addition to its original prerogatives, the central tripartite body was equipped with the right to issue opinions on governmental policy programmes and strategies, to motion the Minister of Finance for so-called general interpretation of tax regulations, and to conclude bipartite resolutions with electronic means of communication. The maximum number of social partner delegates to the body cannot exceed 25 on each side.

On 1 January 2018, the amendments to the **Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions** transposing provisions of the so-called Seasonal Workers Directive came into force. The new regulations introduce previously unknown ‘seasonal work permit’ for employment in farming, agriculture and tourism for nine months per year. The procedure for issuing the permit is simpler comparing to other work permits (it is in hands of local labour offices). Furthermore, citizens of six countries (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine) enjoy even more preferential treatment when applying for the seasonal work permits and can make transition to regular employment based on work permit or work and residence permit.

Social partners’ views and reactions on changes in governments and working life policies

Social partners have been growing frustrated throughout 2018, due to the government’s unwillingness to engage in tripartite talks. Initially, the appointment of Mateusz Morawiecki as the Prime Minister met with neutral to sympathetic comments by the major organisations. Throughout the year the criticism toward the government policies only intensified, and even NSZZ “Solidarność”, the closest ally of the government among all central-level representative organisations started to display signs of dissatisfaction with the state policies in the second part of the year, visible also during the XXIX congress held in Gdańsk in October. NSZZ ‘Solidarność’ (2018), *Manifesto of the XXIX National Convention of Delegates*.

Developments in industrial relations 2018

Changes affecting the national-level actors and institutions in 2018

Actors

By the end of the year, the composition of RDS – the central-level tripartite body – changed. In April the Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers (Związek Przedsiębiorców i Pracodawców, ZPP) was recognised by the court of law as meeting the representativeness criteria set by the law: pursuit of operations on a national scale, minimum number of employees working for the organisation’s members (523 thousand, while the threshold is 300 thousand), who are active in at least half of the NACE sections. In late November, four delegates of ZPP joined the RDS. On the other hand, the amendments to the Act on Social Dialogue Council and other social dialogue bodies re-defined the number of seats to which each of representative social partner at the national level is entitled (25 for employers and employees) in anticipation of ZPP joining in soon.

Representativeness

The criteria of representativeness at the central level remained unchanged. The third-largest national-level trade union organisation, the Trade Unions Forum (FZZ) successfully defended its status of representative central-level social partner (hence, the seats in the Social Dialogue Council, RDS) before the District Court for Warsaw in late December. The court positively assessed the FZZ application, according to which unions associated in the confederation had 306 thousand members altogether. The threshold set by the law is 300 thousand.

Kadra (2018), *FZZ - the court confirms representativeness*

Institutions

Institutional structure of social dialogue remains unchanged. The amendments to the Act on Social Dialogue Council and other social dialogue bodies slightly enhanced the body’s prerogatives. In particular, RDS’s new prerogatives include the right to issue opinions on governmental policy programmes and strategies, to motion the Minister of Finance for so-called general interpretation of tax regulations, and to conclude bipartite resolutions with electronic means of communication. The amendments redefined the maximum number of social partner delegates to the body (in anticipation of new employer organisation’s admission to the body), which cannot exceed 25 on each side. After the government’s term as the leading party of RDS, the Chair was resumed by social partners. FZZ’s leader, Dorota Gardias, replaced the Minister of Labour, Elżbieta Rafalska. The Act on Social Dialogue Council states that the Chair alternates among all three parties (in 2016 the seat was occupied by Piotr Duda of NSZZ “Solidarność” on the unions’ mandate and in 2017 by Henryka Bochniarz of the Confederation “Lewiatan” as the employers’ nominee).

Changes affecting the sectoral and company level social dialogue 2018

The most significant change affecting the sectoral and company level social dialogue was definitely produced by the complex amendment to the Trade Unions Act. The amendments

not only extend the right to association to all “persons performing paid work” but establish new rules for representativeness at the enterprise (establishment) level: for unions not associated with supra-enterprise organisations representative at the national level in line with the regulations of the Act on Social Dialogue Council (that is, three national level organisations seating in the RDS) the threshold is 15% of all eligible (formerly, 10%), while for unions associated with such supra-enterprise organisations, the threshold is 8% (formerly, 7%). That change is seen as a factor possibly boosting consolidation of unions at company level, but smaller, independent organisations criticise it as a threat to union pluralism and industrial democracy. Other significant innovations brought about by the amendments include boosting veto power of unions at company level: even if only one representative union disagrees with the proposed internal regulations (work regulations, pay regulations) presented by employer, it is enough to block it. Formerly, all unions had to speak in unison, which was often commented as an incentive for employers to stimulate emergence of ‘yellow unions’.

In 2018 a new tripartite sectoral committee (TZB) was established, the Tripartite Sectoral Committee for Social Dialogue in Sea Ports (by the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Shipping) because of the RDS bipartite resolution no. 59. Such committees have been in existence since 2003 and to date there are 18 of them operating.

Social Dialogue Council (2018), *Bipartite Resolution no. 59*

Innovation in collective bargaining

No innovations in collective bargaining occurred. The collapse of the labour law reform means that the prospects for revival of collective bargaining are very unclear.

National social dialogue in 2018 – Scope and Contribution

Theme	Description	Social dialogue interaction	Social dialogue outcome and/or output
<i>Employment - Reform of labour market policy</i>	In August the draft act on labour market prepared by the government became subject of discussion in the RDS (by Thematic Sub-team on Reform of Labour Market Policy). The main aim of the initiative is to increase flexibility of labour offices. Department of Social Dialogue and Partnership of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018), The session of the Thematic Sub-team on Reform of Labour Market Policy, available at: http://www.dialog.gov.pl/aktualnosci/art,982,posiedzenie-podzespolu-ds-reformy-polityki-rynku-pracy.html , accessed: 14 January 2019.	Technical discussion, where the parties concerned voiced their opinions on the content of the draft regulation and the way of proceeding it. The latter, especially, met with criticism.	The government's intention was to conclude the legislative process by the end of the year. Due to social partners and labour offices discontent with a very hectic way of proceeding the draft (the completed, very extensive draft was sent for consultations on 29 June, which meant all the comments should be delivered within 30 days, during the holiday period), the plans for finalising the changes have been postponed.
<i>Skills, training and employability - Vocational training</i>	RDS discussed the prospects for and challenges faced by the vocational education system. The Ministry of Education presented the conceptual paper called "Business for Schools - Schools for Business" outlining the possible directions for cooperation between schools and employers. Social Dialogue Council (2018), Social Dialogue Council on the importance of vocational schooling, available at: http://rds.gov.pl/aktualnosci/na-radzie-dialogu-spolecznego-o-znaczeniu-szkolnictwa-zawodowego/#more-2324 , accessed: 14 January 2019	Open discussion intended to evoke opinions and positions of stakeholders.	The discussion itself did not produce any significant outcome but it had not been intended to. Bringing the issue to a plenary session of RDS was itself an act prioritising the need to modernize vocational schooling, the other (besides replacing the three-tier system with a two-tier one) aim of the reform of general education, not yet fulfilled. The issue would be continued to find a conclusion in the Resolution 63 near the end of the year
<i>Taxation and non-wage related labour costs - Frozen occupational social funds</i>	At the meeting of the Thematic Team for Budget, Wages and Social Benefits of RDS, the government representatives presented the draft of regulations concerning execution of national budget. In particular, the government informed it was going not to 'defreeze' the thresholds for the level of write-offs to be allocated for occupational social funds (zakładowe fundusze świadczeń socjalnych, ZFŚS). Department of Social Dialogue and Partnership of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018), The Session of the Thematic Sub-team for Budget, Wages and Social Benefits, available at: http://www.dialog.gov.pl/aktualnosci/art,1009,posiedzenie-zespolu-problemowego-ds-budzetu-wynagrodzen-i-swiadczen-socjalnych.html , accessed: 14 January 2019	Technical meeting of one of the units of RDS.	The government put forward its intentions, which would later materialise into draft 2019 budget legislation. Negligence of the union's postulates which voiced their criticism of the decision to keep the thresholds at the 2013 level for another year did not contribute to the social dialogue climate well.

Theme	Description	Social dialogue interaction	Social dialogue outcome and/or output
<i>Pension reforms - Third pillar</i>	The reform of the 3rd pillar of the pensions system (introducing employee capital plans, PPK) was one of the main issues of interest for social partners. In July six central level social partners signed the joint position on the draft legislation on PPK. the Social Dialogue Council (2018), the Joint Position of Representative Trade Union Organisations and Representative Employer Organisations of 12 July 2018 on the Governmental Draft Law on Employee Capital Plans, available at: http://rds.gov.pl/rds_assets/uploads/2018/07/Wspo%CC%81ne-stanowisko-ws-PPK.pdf , accessed: 14 January 2019	Social partners negotiated and agreed on a joint statement.	In general, the tone of the position was positive. In particular, a number of reservations was addressed, including i.e. the need to ensure employers who had established employee pensions schemes (PPE) before would not be affected negatively by the new regulations or a suggestion to introduce longer interim periods for launching the new schemes. Some of the suggestions (regarding PPE) were reflected in the final draft of the regulation.
<i>Wage setting - Pay increases for teachers</i>	In April at the meeting of the Thematic Team for Public Services of the RDS social partners negatively assessed the draft decree by the Minister of Education on minimum levels of basic pay for teachers. The position of social partners pointed to the need of conducting genuine pay talks for the sector and fulfilling declarations on pay raise in 2019-2020 period made by the Minister of Education earlier. Social Dialogue Council (2018), Social Partners Negatively Assess the Wage System for Teachers, available at: http://rds.gov.pl/aktualnosci/strona-spoleczna-negatywnie-o-systemie-wynagradzania-nauczycieli/#more-2582 , accessed: 14 January 2019	Technical meeting of the thematic team.	The opinions in writing handed over to the Chair of RDS (at the time the seat was held by the Minister of Labour). The postulates were not reflected in the draft document which as of the end of the year was still being proceeded at the pre-parliamentary stage. The issues remain unresolved (early in January the Polish Teachers Union, ZNP announced it would activate the collective dispute procedure with the Minister of Education).
<i>Working time - Organisation of working time of older workers</i>	Joint session of two thematic themes: for labour law and social dialogue development focused on possible means for implementation of the European social partners' autonomous framework agreement on active ageing and an inter-generational approach. Department of Social Dialogue and Partnership of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018), The Joint Session of the Thematic Sub-teams for Social Dialogue Development and Labour Law, available at: http://www.dialog.gov.pl/aktualnosci/art,968,wspolne-posiedzenie-zespolu-rds-ds-rozwoju-dialogu-spolecznego-oraz-zespolu-rds-ds-prawa-pracy.html , accessed: 14 January 2019	Technical session with a view of summing up the works of special Working Group of RDS set up to prepare the grounds for implementation of the agreement.	Allocation of specific tasks to be further proceeded by each of the thematic teams and the "Dialog" Centre for Social Partnership. Concerning working time, the team for labour law was assigned a task of debating the issue of working time organisation for older workers and on a mentoring scheme.
<i>Health, safety and well-being at work - energy sector</i>	In June the Tripartite Sectoral Committee for the Energy Sector met to discuss the draft decree by the Minister of Energy regarding the health and safety conditions for work related to power devices and installations. See information update: Department of Social Dialogue and Partnership of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018). The Session of the Tripartite Sectoral Committee for the Energy Sector, accessed: 14 January 2019 http://www.dialog.gov.pl/aktualnosci/art,964,posiedzenie-zespolu-	A session of Tripartite Sectoral Committee.	The meeting concluded with the parties agreeing that the union side would provide their comments and suggestions to the draft at the public consultation stage

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Theme	Description	Social dialogue interaction	Social dialogue outcome and/or output
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No major social dialogue debates were held on the following themes: Benefits; Terms and conditions of employment and Work-life balance.

Selected major social dialogue debates

Debate on vocational education

The need for improvements and modernization of vocational education has been a widely discussed issue in recent years. The reform of the general education system of 2016 focused not only on replacing the three-tier system with a two-tier one (with middle schools merged with elementary schools) but also on vocational schools. While the formal changes were implemented, transforming former general vocational school into new ones, whose teaching curriculum is tied to the qualifications framework, the new teaching formula, which is supposed to provide dual education combining in-class education with vocational training (minimum 50% of education time should be allocated to that objective) is far from being effectively implemented. In 2017 national level social partners issued recommendations on modifications of the vocational education system in the bipartite resolution no. 48, pointing to the need of closer cooperation between schools and enterprises.

In early 2018 RDS discussed the prospects for and challenges faced by the vocational education system. The Ministry of Education presented the conceptual paper called “Business for Schools – Schools for Business” outlining the possible directions for cooperation between schools and employers.

In late 2018 the issue re-entered the agenda with the draft amendments to the Law on Education discussed by the RDS, which led to adoption of bipartite resolution no 63 by social partners. Social partners urged the government to take advantage of a favourable situation in the national labour market (with unemployment hitting all time low after 1989) to introduce substantial changes to vocational schooling through increased financial allocation channelled to all key stakeholders (teachers, students and employers). In the resolution the signatories explicitly upheld all the postulates forwarded earlier in the resolution 48.

Social Dialogue Council (2018), *Social Dialogue Council on the importance of vocational schooling*

Social Dialogue Council (2018), Bipartite Resolution no. 48

Social Dialogue Council (2018), Bipartite Resolution no. 63

Debate on new law on public procurement

The need for modification in public procurement law has been a recurring issue of not only social dialogue but also for the public debate in general. RDS debated the issue, which produced bipartite resolutions no. 58 and 60. The focus of debates was the new conception of public procurement law presented by the government.

In the attachment to the resolution 58, social partners provide a list of recommendations for the prospective new regulations regarding such fields as: scope of contracts (with a postulate on allowing flexibility in negotiating scope of contracts, so both service providers and end users have greater influence on how specific conditions for delivery are determined), penalties (with a postulate to moderate their levels and limit the scope of responsibilities deemed too excessive under the currently binding regulations), descriptions of contract subjects (with a postulate to focus on effects and parameters); awarding contracts without open calls for tender (with a postulate to clarify and specify conditions for in-house procurement, which are deemed too loose and ambiguous at present), exemptions from the scope of the public procurement law (with a postulate to review the current list with a view of reducing the

number of exemptions allowed), transparency of public procurement (with emphasis on ‘small’ contracts, worth less than 30 thousand EUR, the threshold is proposed to be lowered to 14 thousand EUR), compliance with labour law (by extending the obligation for holders of all contracts awarded under public procurement law to employ staff on the basis of employment contracts), personal data protection (a postulate to make it more rigorous, especially in the context of GDPR); social clauses (by expanding their use to contracts awarded by local government and to improve execution of clauses), non-price award criteria (a postulate to further limit the weight of price as a selection criterion); prequalifying of bidders (by introducing an official list of approved economic operators), subcontracting (explicit formulation of a principle of joint liability, in a manner typical for civil law), authority of the National Board of Appeals (KIO, by extending to all matters related to contracts, not limited to public procurement law only), judiciary (establishment of courts or special chambers in courts to deal with public procurement); legal protection measures (extending time limits for appeals and lowering the processing fees at KIO); periods of exclusions (to be defined precisely, preferably at 3 years); Code of Good Practice (to create it); SMEs (to introduce measures more inclusive for small and medium sized firms, such as equivalent arrangements or partial payments).

In the subsequent resolution 60, social partners positively assessed the conception of the law document, addressing several points that should be further discussed, when the draft legislation will be presented, and stressing that despite expressing their opinions in two resolutions, they expect to be consulted during next stages of legislative proceedings.

Social Dialogue Council (2018), Bipartite Resolution no. 58

Social Dialogue Council (2018), Bipartite Resolution no. 60

Public Procurement Office and Ministry for Entrepreneurship and Technology (2018) The Conceptual Framework for the New Public Procurement Law

Unilateral government actions – without social dialogue

Unilateral government actions – 2019 minimum wage

2018 produced another case of the government’s deciding on the raise of the national minimum wage unilaterally. Not only tensions in talks among social partners but also the attitude of the government contributed to the outcome. In September the minimum wage raise for 2019 was decided upon unilaterally by the government. This was a consequence of the Social Dialogue Council (RDS) failure to reach agreement on the scale of the increase. In line with the Minimum Wage Act, the government delivered the proposal for the raise to 2,220 PLN (from 2,100 PLN) to the Social Dialogue Council (RDS) in mid-June. The hourly minimum wage was to be increased from 13,70 PLN to 14,50 PLN. At the RDS meeting on 12 July, no consensus was accomplished. To trade unions the government’s proposal was unsatisfactory. NSZZ "Solidarność" opted for increase to 2,278 PLN, whereas All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions’ (OPZZ demands went even further with the increase to the level of 2,383 PLN put on the table. FZZ union boycotted the meeting. Ultimately, by the government’s decree the minimum wage for 2019 is set at 2250 PLN, while the hourly minimum wage – at 14,70 PLN.

Collective labour disputes in 2018

Changes in the regulation of collective labour disputes

No changes in regulations concerning collective labour disputes occurred in 2018. The possible updates to the existing regulations were subject to talks between the social partners and the government which presented some propositions but with no conclusion. The talks may be continued in 2019.

Department of Social Dialogue and Partnership of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018), *The Session of the Thematic Sub-team for Labour Law*

Selected major labour disputes of national significance

LOT

Tensions in labour relations continued in the 4th quarter of 2018. The most prominent conflict in the final months of the year comprised the collective dispute and strike action in LOT Polish Airlines. The collective dispute erupted in 2013 as enterprise-level trade unions demanded reinstatement of the former wage system dismantled a part of 'rescue management' introduced to restore the company's competitiveness in 2010. Despite general recent improvement of LOT's stature, the board would not comply with unions postulates. In April the unions called a strike referendum (legal prerequisite for a strike). The board maintained the referendum was invalid on procedural grounds and obtained a court order preventing a strike. In May the head of the Cabin and Flight Personnel Trade Union was suddenly dismissed in highly controversial circumstances. The conflict dragged on to the point of actual proclamation of a strike on 18 October. The board reacted by sacking 67 flight attendants and pilots on 22 October. Under continued pressure of the unions (endorsed inter alia by the European Trade Union Confederation), the strike ended on 1 November. The parties agreed to "keep the social peace for at least 24 months, as long as the law and the agreement provisions are both observed". The board made a pledge "not to demand any financial compensation from the organisers and participants of the strike" and "to begin works on new financial regulations." The unions welcomed the decision but explicitly stated the collective dispute was not over.

Public sector

Pay disputes have been escalating in the public sector since the beginning of the year. The main reasons for the tensions rising was the steady improvement in the labour market situation and pay pressure in the private sector translating into growing wages therein. Provided the wages in the national budgetary sphere (part of the public sector remunerated directly from the state budget such as central administration, uniformed services, public education and healthcare) have remained frozen since 2010, the pay gap between public and private sectors continues to widen. Numerous occupational groups have signalled their dissatisfaction thus far by open protests (paramedics, resident MDs, teachers) or by other forms of grievance (police). As for the latter, the action has taken the form of a 'work-to-rule' protest (on-duty officers would abstain from ticketing for petty offences like minor road rules violations) and limit their interventions to verbal reprimanding. In mid-July other uniformed

services (fire-service, penitentiary service, Border Guard, Customs and Fiscal Service) joined the protest of the police. As for the former, in August paramedics would re-call their protest action demanding the government to honour its pledges for pay raises made a year ago. In mid-September, sectoral unit of NSZZ “Solidarność” picketed the premises of the Ministry of Education, some five thousand participants were reported by the organisers. In mid-September, following the failure of tripartite negotiations on public finance, bilateral talks between the government and NSZZ “Solidarność”, and ultimatum made by OPZZ demanding the 12.1 % pay raise for the public budgetary sphere the latter organised a street manifestation in Warsaw under “Poland needs higher wages” banner. In the rally also, the Polish Teachers’ Union (ZNP) participated. Some 20 thousand people took part, according to organisers.

Working time 2018

Changes in the regulation of working time 2018

Legislation on working time duration or organisation

No changes in the regulation of working time took place 2018

Collective bargaining outcomes on working time duration or organisation

No impact due to general atrophy of collective bargaining

Major debates concerning working time duration or organisation

One of many controversial solutions envisaged by the draft of the collective labour code presented by Labour Law Codification Committee concerned working time: specifically, the proposal assigning more control over over-time wages. The idea was to allow employers to create special accounts where overtime wages would be deposited (and not paid directly to the workers). Even though the solution was foreseen as optional and requiring consent of employees and their representatives, the reception was very critical.

OPZZ (2018), Position of the OPZZ Presidium of 6 March 2018 on the Labour Law Codification Committee Proceedings

Health and well-being at work 2018

Physical working environment

New regulations regarding the hazardous physical agents in the working environment replacing the former (from 2014) were enacted by the Decree of the Minister of Family Labour and Social Policy in June.

Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018), Decree on the Highest Acceptable Levels of Presence of Hazardous Physical Agents in the Working Environment

Psychosocial working environment

No significant developments.

Employment status 2018

No major changes in 2018 for: Standard employment contracts; Self-employed; Temporary agency workers; Posted workers and Zero hour contracts (irrelevant).

Fixed term contracts

Because of the major amendment to the Labour Code of 2016, which limited the total duration of fixed-term contracts concluded with the same employer to 33 months on 22 November 2018 the last fixed-term contracts concluded before the new provision became binding transformed into permanent contracts.

Seasonal workers

On 1 January 2018, the amendments to the Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions transposing provisions of the so-called Seasonal Workers Directive came into force. The new regulations introduce previously unknown 'seasonal work permit' for employment in farming, agriculture and tourism for nine months per year. The procedure for issuing the permit is simpler comparing to other work permits (it is in hands of local labour offices). Furthermore, citizens of six countries (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldavia, Russia and Ukraine) enjoy even more preferential treatment when applying for the seasonal work permits and can make transition to regular employment based on work permit or work and residence permit.

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