A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY
AN EMPLOYEE FROM UKRAINE BETWEEN POLAND AND GERMANY

The report from the second edition of the sociological study 'Ukrainians on the Polish labour market - experiences, challenges, perspectives' conducted by EWL S.A., Foundation for the Support of Migrants on the Labour Market "EWL" and the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw
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A TURNING POINT FOR POLAND. ARE WE READY?

You are reading the report prepared on the basis of the second edition of one of the most indepth analyses of the prospects and needs of economic migrants in Poland ‘Ukrainians on the Polish labour market - experiences, challenges, perspectives’, prepared in cooperation with the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw.

In comparison with last year’s edition of the study, we put greater emphasis on the attempt to present the Polish labour market through the eyes of migrants, comparing it to other European countries. In particular Germany, which next year will have introduced a number of mechanisms extending access to its labour market for non-EU citizens. This poses a new challenge that we all will have to face.

At the same time, it is impossible not to notice factors that allow us to positively assess the attractiveness of Poland for migrants from Ukraine. The number of people declaring their willingness to learn Polish is growing dynamically, whereas the percentage of migrants speaking German is very low. Also, Ukrainian citizens working in Poland value Poland’s cultural proximity, lower costs of living or the possibility of free accommodation, confirming thus the status of Poland as the main direction of economic migration.

The German market, more open to migrants, will surely constitute competition for Polish companies. Partial migration of employees from Ukraine to Germany cannot be stopped as we cannot compete with Germany in terms of earnings. Still, we are far from recognizing new German regulations as the dark scenario for Polish companies. Both, the requirements set for candidates applying to work in Germany and language barriers will limit the scale of migration from the East.

We should constantly strive to support the competitiveness of the Polish labour market compared to other EU countries. Changes in Germany’s migration policy have shown the importance of the role that economic migrants play for the economy and for the demographic policy of each European country.

Have a good read.

Andrzej Korkus
EWL S.A. President of the Board
DEMOMETRIC DIVERSITY AND AWARENESS OF MIGRATION ARE GROWING AMONG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS

The demographic structure of migration from Ukraine is subject to significant fluctuations. The largest group of Ukrainian citizens who came to Poland to take up a job are people aged 26 to 35 - 32% of respondents. Compared with last year’s study, this group decreased by over 3 percentage points. At the same time the number of the youngest economic migrants (in the 18 - 25 age group) who came to our country shortly after completing their education in Ukraine increased by almost 8 percentage points.

Men dominate among the respondents (60%), though their number decreased in comparison with 2018 by 3.5 percentage points. Respectively, the share of women increased to 40% of the respondents.

Comparing with last year, the number of employees who came to our country from the southern and eastern part of Ukraine increased by 3 and 4 points percentage points, respectively. This shows that these regions of the country are opening up to labour migration to the west. Just like a year ago, every third Ukrainian citizen working in Poland comes from the west of Ukraine. However, we observe an over two-fold decrease in migration for residents of northern regions, including Kiev.

The disparity between the number of economic migrants coming from the city and the countryside is gradually decreasing. The participation of residents of rural areas in the structure of migration increased by 13 percentage points within one year. It is a natural process in which the economic migration of city dwellers spread to the representatives of rural areas that constitute about 1/3 of the total population in Ukraine.
A GROWING WILLINGNESS TO LEARN POLISH AS THE FIRST STEP FOR INTEGRATION

The largest group of employees from Ukraine are citizens with higher and incomplete higher education (almost 39%). The second group are people with vocational education (32%). They placed just behind people with secondary education (29.4%). These proportions have not changed significantly compared with last year’s study.

However, the number of employees from Ukraine who do not know the Polish language decreased by one third from 31% in 2018 to 20.6% in 2019. The determination of Ukrainians to learn Polish also confirms the fact that more and more respondents are convinced that the knowledge of Polish will be useful while working in Poland, (an increase by 18.5 percentage points).

At the same time, the vast majority of respondents (almost 3/4) are willing to learn this language. The above declarations are one of the first steps for the integration of migrants onto the Polish labour market.
What convinced you to come to work in Poland?

- Low earnings in Ukraine: 79.1%
- No job in my town: 28.1%
- Bad political and economic situation in Ukraine: 25.7%
- No sense of security: 24.4%
- Corruption in Ukraine: 17.0%
- A higher standard of living in Poland: 7.3%
- Reunion with family who is staying in Poland: 1.5%

What was your priority when choosing a job offer in Poland?

- Remuneration: 72.9%
- Recommendations of friends and acquaintances: 25.3%
- Free accommodation: 20.6%
- Ability to work overtime: 16.3%
- Location of the workplace: 15.4%
- Work corresponding to education and qualifications: 11.2%
- Free meals: 5.5%

What would force you to quit your job in Poland before the end of the contract?

- Employer dishonesty: 52.3%
- Family situation: 33.6%
- Difficult working conditions: 31.7%
- A better job offer: 27%
- Bad accommodation: 26.1%
- Discrimination on grounds of origin: 12.9%
- Nothing: 12.1%

THE DISSONANCE BETWEEN LIVING CONDITIONS AND WORK REMAINS ONE OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF ECONOMIC MIGRATION

Just as a year ago, low earnings in Ukraine are the main reason for Ukrainians coming to work in Poland - this is the opinion of almost 80% of all respondents. There is a significant increase of 11 percentage points in the number of people mentioning lack of work in their place of residence among the reasons for migration. The number of people who mentioned the unfavourable economic and political situation in Ukraine among the reasons for their decision to come to Poland increased by about 6 percentage points.

While selecting a specific job offer in Poland, respondents most often paid attention to the remuneration (73%). It is worth noting that the weight of this factor in comparison with last year’s study increased by almost 4 percentage points. A similar increase was observed in the case of recommendations of friends and acquaintances (25.3%). Every fifth Ukrainian was looking for offers with free accommodation, and every tenth for work corresponding to their education and qualifications. For 16% of respondents, the possibility to work overtime to earn as much as possible was a priority.

Honesty is a feature that our respondents value much. Over 52% of respondents declared they would resign from work in Poland before the end of their contract, if their employer was dishonest. Almost a twice lower number of Ukrainian employees (27%) would decide to take such a step because of a better job offer, and almost every third employee because of difficult working conditions.
Citizens of Ukraine who came to Poland in order to take up a job most often work in the industrial sector. This section of the Polish economy was marked by 40% of respondents in the study. The logistics industry, where 16% of Ukrainians in Poland work, came second. Construction came close behind it - 14.4%. 8% of respondents found employment in agriculture, and 7.2% in hospitality and gastronomy.

Until now, some commonly mentioned difficulties related to adapting to a new job included the employment in the profession which did not correspond to the qualifications. It is worth emphasizing that more than half of Ukrainians who came to work in Poland in a specific position have the relevant qualifications. Lack of proper qualifications was declared by 39% of respondents.

Nearly one third of respondents work in Poland in a similar position as their last position in Ukraine. For 28% of employees work in Poland is connected with a lower professional position, and every fifth Ukrainian in Poland found a better position than in his homeland, which confirms the decreasing discrepancy between the qualifications and responsibilities entrusted to a given position.
The study showed that every fourth respondent has the experience of working in countries other than Ukraine and Poland. Russia is the leader (14.7%) among other countries where citizens of Ukraine used to work, followed by the Czech Republic (6.4%) and Germany (2.2%).

One can see a change in the experience of working in Poland for our eastern neighbours. If last year almost 2/3 of the Ukrainians surveyed came to Poland for the first time to work, then this year the proportions between people without such experiences and those who have come to work here once again are almost equal. This may indicate that Ukrainians are eager to return to our country in order to start or continue employment, yet the increase in the field of economic travel may also influence their willingness to take up employment in other Western European countries.

In addition, 27% of Ukrainians with experience of working in Poland worked in our country two times, and almost every fourth one only once. 16% of respondents visited Poland three times to take up employment. Last year, the first place was held by a group of people who worked in our country only once (43%), and every fifth worked here two times. This change in proportions proves that many people came to work in Poland again, and people without such experiences were not as numerous as a year ago.
WORK ABROAD - PERSPECTIVES

Do you plan to work in countries other than Poland or Ukraine? If so, when?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I do not know</th>
<th>Yes, in 2019</th>
<th>Yes, in 2020</th>
<th>Yes, in 2021</th>
<th>Yes, in 2021</th>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>39,8%</td>
<td>60,2%</td>
<td>4,5%</td>
<td>5,5%</td>
<td>5,5%</td>
<td>5,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>24,6%</td>
<td>30,5%</td>
<td>12,6%</td>
<td>18,8%</td>
<td>6,1%</td>
<td>7,4%</td>
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Which countries, apart from Poland and Ukraine, are you considering to work in?

- Germany: 34%
- Czech Republic: 13,1%
- Sweden: 7,2%
- Netherlands: 6,8%
- Norway: 6,6%
- USA: 6,5%
- United Kingdom: 5,5%
- Canada: 5,4%
- Denmark: 5,1%
- UAE: 2,1%
- Russia: 1,9%
- I do not know if I am planning it: 13,1%
- I am planning it, but I do not know where: 10,5%

IF NOT POLAND, THEN WHAT? A GROWTH IN THE IMPORTANCE OF GERMANY

Despite the high popularity of Poland as a direction for economic migration, 45% of interviewed Ukrainians plan to continue their professional career in other countries. Every eighth respondent intends to leave Poland this year in order to travel to another country. In 2020, every fifth Ukrainian citizen working in Poland intends to take such a step. For 13.5% of respondents, work in a country other than Poland and Ukraine is a matter of the next 2-3 years. Only every fourth Ukrainian employee is currently planning to continue employment in our country, and almost every third person has not thought about this issue yet.

In comparison with last year’s study, the number of people considering work in Germany has grown by 7 percentage points. Employment in this country is planned by every third Ukrainian citizen currently working in Poland. The growth of Germany’s popularity is undoubtedly connected with the upcoming liberalization of the German migration law. The Czech Republic is in second place (13%), but a travel to this country is less tempting for 7.5 percentage points of Ukrainian employees compared to a year ago. It is worth noting that the countries of Northern Europe - Sweden, the Netherlands and Norway have jumped to the 3rd, 4th and 5th positions with the result of 7.2%, 6.8% and 6.6%, respectively. Let us add that a year ago only 1.5% to 2% of Ukrainians working in Poland planned to go to these countries. It should be noted that Ukrainians are more interested in the countries that Poles also traditionally choose when considering economic migration. This is undoubtedly the effect of Ukrainian migrants gaining experience during their stay in Poland and learning about the migration destinations of Polish citizens.
Do you know that in 2020 Germany plans to simplify the procedure for employing non-EU citizens, including Ukrainians?

- Yes: 76%
- No: 24%

What criteria should a non-EU citizen meet to take advantage of the new simplified recruitment procedure in Germany?

- I do not know: 52.8%
- Know the German language: 37.2%
- Have vocational education: 10.7%
- Perform a specific profession: 8.5%
- Have a university degree (wrong): 7.8%
- There are no criteria (wrong): 3.6%
- Be of German origin (wrong): 1.9%
- Be a graduate of a German university (wrong): 1.2%

How do you assess your knowledge of German?

- Fluent and very good: 5.5%
- Good: 21.1%
- Medium: 70.4%
- Bad: 1.4%
- I do not speak German: 1.6%

THE AWARENESS OF MIGRATION TO GERMANY IS GROWING

The fact that Germany is planning to open its labour market to the inhabitants of non-EU countries in 2020 is known by more than 3/4 of Ukrainian citizens working in Poland. Their knowledge of the specific requirements looks a bit worse. More than half of the respondents do not know the criteria which have to be met by a foreigner to find employment in Germany.

The requirements set by the German labour market were most often determined in a correct way (they are: German language skills - 37%, vocational education - 11% and a specific profession - 8.5%). There were, however, also erroneous opinions, although their share was proportionally low (no criteria - 3.6%, higher education - 7.8%, graduation from a German university - 1.2%).

As many as 70% of respondents declared that they did not know German at all, and every fifth Ukrainian working in Poland knows it badly. Only 8.5% of respondents speak that language better than ‘bad’. The knowledge of German remains the basic condition of employment in Germany.

Ukrainians are observing the situation on the German labour market, but the knowledge of the specific guidelines related to the opening of the market for third-country nationals remains insufficient. In this context a poor command of the German language may be of particular importance as it becomes a serious obstacle to finding a job in Germany.
When do you plan to start working in countries other than Poland or Ukraine?

- 18.7% Yes, in 2019
- 19.8% Yes, in 2020
- 36.8% Yes, in 2021
- 12.2% Yes, after 2021
- 12.5% I do not know

What industry did you come to Poland to work for?

- Industrial sector: 37.2%
- Logistics, transport and warehouse management: 20.8%
- Construction: 15.3%
- Agriculture: 10.4%
- Hospitality and gastronomy: 5.2%
- Trade: 4.9%
- Services: 4.7%
- Other: 4.5%

How do you assess your knowledge of German?

- Fluent and very good: 1.4%
- Good: 1.7%
- Medium: 8.7%
- Bad: 23.2%
- I do not speak German: 65%

The requirements for candidates will limit the scale of migration of Ukrainian employees from Poland to Germany

In the group of people considering work in Germany, every fifth respondent declared the change of the country as early as 2019, which was even before the new migration policy came into force. With regard to going to work in Germany in 2020, the number of those willing to do so is almost double. Every fourth Ukrainian is thinking about moving west of Poland in 2021 or the following years. As far as the sectors of the Polish economy are concerned, the possible departure of some of the workers from Ukraine may strike the industrial sector the most. 37% of respondents planning to move found employment in Poland in this sector. Construction is in second place - every fifth citizen of Ukraine planning to go to Germany works here. 15% of those who declare to leave our country represent the logistics industry.

The biggest obstacle for Ukrainians planning to move to Germany is the lack of language skills. In the same group (citizens of Ukraine working in Poland and planning to continue employment in Germany) only 11.8% of respondents declared their knowledge of German as 'medium', 'good' or 'very good'. In addition, every fourth representative of the group declared that they spoke German badly, and almost 2/3 admitted that they did not know it at all.

The study proves that currently about 7.6% of Ukrainians working in Poland who plan to continue their careers in Germany meet the main criteria currently set by the German government (education and language skills). This equals 2.6% of the total number of Ukrainian employees in our country.

If we assume that even bad language skills are enough to work in Germany, there is a chance for 24% of Ukrainians to move from our country to Germany. This accounts for 8.1% of the total number of Ukrainian employees in Poland.
What convinces you to go to work to Germany instead of Poland?

- Higher earnings: 86.7%
- A higher living standard: 44.4%
- Better social care: 20.3%
- Free language and vocational courses: 14.7%
- Work in big international companies: 14.0%
- Recommendations of friends who are already working or worked in Germany: 12.2%
- Traditions of multiculturalism: 4.9%

What would convince or persuade you to stay and work in Poland even after Germany has simplified the procedure for employing non-EU citizens?

- Increase in earnings: 70.6%
- A lower language barrier: 22.8%
- Free accommodation: 22.1%
- The possibility of obtaining a residence and citizenship permit: 22.1%
- Simplification of the procedure of employing foreigners: 17%
- Care of the Polish employer: 16.9%
- A shorter and cheaper travel from Ukraine: 16.6%
- Lower maintenance costs: 15.6%
- Cultural proximity: 12.1%
- Friends and acquaintances in Poland: 10.7%
- Ability to work overtime: 6.2%
- Nothing: 10.4%

HOW TO KEEP UKRAINIANS PLANNING A DEPARTURE TO GERMANY IN POLAND?

In the last part of the study, we undertook an attempt to assess which working and living conditions influence the decision on the choice of a given country as a target for economic migration. The reasons for the planned departure of Ukrainian workers from Poland to Germany are mainly higher earnings (86.7%) and a higher living standard (44.4%). Better social care has become an argument for every fifth employee from Ukraine, and free vocational and language training for every seventh employee.

What could convince them to stay? According to the collected data, over 2/3 of respondents who are already planning a move to Germany could stay if their salary increased. A lower language barrier is an argument for every fifth employee from Ukraine.

A very important advantage of our job market is also the possibility of obtaining a residence permit in Poland and the Polish citizenship. Another motivation is free accommodation from the employer. Every tenth Ukrainian employee in Poland declares that nothing can stop them from leaving our country for Germany.
855 respondents

30% of Ukrainians working in Poland are from 18 to 26 years old

40% of Ukrainians work in Poland in the industrial sector

20% of Ukrainian employees work in Poland in positions higher than in Ukraine

92% of Ukrainian employees in Poland do not know German or speak it badly

21% employees from Ukraine declare they will not leave Poland for Germany

34% of Ukrainians working in Poland are considering taking up work in Germany

22% of respondents planning to go Germany are considering continuing to work in Poland due to the possibility of getting a residence permit and citizenship

19% of Ukrainian citizens working in Poland are planning to leave our country in 2020

10,4% Ukrainians employed in Poland and planning to leave for Germany say nothing will stop their departure

7,6% of Ukrainians working in Poland and planning employment in Germany meet the main criteria set by the German government

2,6% of Ukrainians working in Poland meet the main criteria set by the German government

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METHODOLOGY

The study of employees from Ukraine was carried out by means of direct individual questionnaire interviews. The selection of the sample was oriented towards finding respondents representative of the community of Ukrainians working in Poland. Thus, the interlocutors were selected in places where one could meet people representing all regions of this country, all age groups, professions and levels of education. The study included citizens of Ukraine who were staying, working or arranging formalities related to taking up a job in Poland and were ready to take that job.

In the period of 17 April - 31 May 2019 interviews were held with 855 adult respondents (18 years of age and above). The sample size (bearing in mind that about 1 million citizens of Ukraine residing in Poland) and the place of its selection ensure adequate representation. It is also confirmed by the cross-cutting nature of the selection of people covered by the study, which included the inhabitants of all regions of Ukraine (in line with geographic conditions, including the overrepresentation of citizens from Western Ukraine), the representatives of various age groups, occupations and levels of education, and city and countryside residents in proportions that correspond to the current demographic structure of Ukraine.
EWL S.A.

Founded in 2007, EWL S.A. recruits top-notch specialists from Eastern markets. It is the leader on the Polish market of employment of foreigners in the field of permanent recruitment, employee leasing, outsourcing and servicing the employment of non-EU citizens. The Group provides HR solutions for most sectors of the economy in the European Union, including formalities related to staffing and legalization of stay.

EWL S.A. has 32 branches in 5 European countries (Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the Czech Republic), and last year opened 16 new offices in Ukraine. This is the company’s response to the ever-growing demand for qualified employees from the East and the constant improvement of the quality of services provided to candidates. For this reason, the company is planning - next to the working branches in Belarus and Moldova - to open further offices in other countries of the former USSR.

EWL S.A. wants to be as close as possible to its foreign candidates in order to look after them from the beginning to the end of the recruitment process and work in the target place. It guarantees the company's clients the recruitment of only matching and loyal staff. The result? A high percentage of orders (94%) and a low percentage of turnover of employees recruited by the company (6.1%).

Foundation for the Support of Migrants on the Labour Market 'EWL'

Founded in 2015, the Foundation for the Support of Migrants on the Labour Market 'EWL' aims to initiate and support activities related to the presence of foreigners on the Polish labour market.

Our idea is to raise awareness of rights and obligations and the benefits of legal employment among foreigners, as well as to limit the abuse by dishonest employers.

One of the main objectives of the Foundation is to improve multilateral cooperation between employers, government institutions, non-governmental organizations and migrants themselves.

The Foundation also does charity work addressed mainly to foreigners who are in a difficult life or financial situation. In addition, it works for European integration, active dialogue and the development of contacts and cooperation between societies. The Foundation's activities are directed, among others, to entities involved in migration processes and participants of the global labour market.

The Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw

The Centre for East European Studies is a unique academic unit in Poland, continuing the traditions of pre-war Sovietological centres - the East European Institute in Vilnius (1930-1939) and the Eastern Institute in Warsaw (1926-1939). The teaching offer of the Centre includes elite Eastern Studies (1st and 2nd degree and postgraduate courses) as well as schools for foreign students. The lecturers are eminent scientists, diplomats and specialists from Europe and the USA.

The Centre annually organizes international scientific conferences and a series of events building positive relations between Poland and the countries of the former USSR. It is also the publisher of numerous books and magazines devoted to the eastern themes. In the years 2004-2013, the Centre for East European Studies, under the content-related supervision of Mariusz Kowalski and the general management of Jan Malicki, conducted a series of social studies in Ukraine. The first of them took place in December 2004. A total of about 2,000 questionnaire interviews was carried out, pertaining issues such as political views and preferred directions of international cooperation, with particular emphasis on the place of origin, nationality and language of the respondents' daily communication.