



## Poland

### ***Impact of COVID-19 outbreak in the EFFAT Sectors and measures taken to deal with the consequences of the pandemic***

*EFFAT affiliates: NSZZ, FZZPPT, ZZPR*

#### Governmental measures:

The Government has ensured that those employed under civil law contracts will be able to benefit from a monthly income of approximately PLN 2,000 zł gross. The state will also pay nearly half of the salaries and pension contributions of company employees.

Subsidies from Bank GK (one of several State Treasury banks in Poland) in the amount of PLN 500 million are foreseen to cover for interest on business loans.

There is a possibility for medium and large companies to obtain an increase in capital or financing in the form of bonds from the “PLN 6 billion Polish Fund for Investments.” And one hundred thousand small and medium enterprises will be able to obtain a loan with a de minimis guarantee up to PLN 3.5 million.

In addition, it will be possible to postpone payment of public levies - PIT, CIT, VAT, social and pension contributions - without fees and interest until the next financial year, whereupon the settlement of indemnities will be possible.

#### The following regulations have been introduced at governmental level:

- 500,000 micro-enterprises employing up to 9 employees, self-employed, will be able to take advantage of loans in the amount of 5,000 PLN
- Poland will extend the right to childcare allowance for parents who look after children up to 8 years old.

To protect workers' health, regulations were issued by the Polish Ministry of Health, Sanepid (Polish State Sanitary Inspection). All enterprises operating in Poland are obliged to comply with them:

- Promote regular and thorough washing of hands by employees: with soap and water or disinfection of hands with an alcohol-based agent (min. 60%).
- Ensure that employees, customers and contractors have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water.
- Place disinfectant dispensers in a prominent place in the work area and ensure that these dispensers are refilled regularly.
- Display in a visible place information on how to wash your hands effectively.
- Combine this with other means of communication, such as staff training by health and safety specialists.
- Pay special attention to workplace recommendations not to touch your face, especially the mouth, nose and eyes, and observe guidelines for coughing and breathing. Protective masks are not recommended for healthy people; instead they should be worn by sick people, caregivers and medical staff working with patients suspected of having coronavirus infection.
- Make every effort to keep workplaces clean and hygienic:
  - touch surfaces including desks, counters and tables, door handles, light switches, handrails and other objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) must be regularly wiped with a disinfectant or wiped with water and detergent,



- all frequently used areas, such as toilets, common areas, should be cleaned regularly and thoroughly, using water and detergent.
- Minimize business trips and foreign delegations to a minimum. An employee has the right to refuse participation in a foreign delegation if there is transmission of coronavirus in the country to which s/he is set to travel.
- Promote remote/home working where possible.

Trade unions indicate that, at present, they have received no signals that these regulations are being violated by employers.

More information on the governmental measures can be found on the ETUC webpage [here](#).

### Impacts in the EFFAT sectors and specific measures adopted to deal with them:

#### **Agriculture sector:**

There have been clear deficiencies in agricultural employment. Many workers have benefited from a 14-day care allowance for the closure of nursery schools and crèches, which has now been extended by another 14 days.

Due to the state of the epidemic as a result of stricter border crossing regulations for workers employed abroad, every worker crossing the Polish border (entering or leaving) is obligatorily subjected to 14-day quarantine and thus will not work during this time. We have signals about termination of employment contracts and dismissal of employees working abroad. The loss of employment makes the income situation for employees and their families very complicated. The tightening of regulations on the movement of people has caused about 20 thousand agricultural workers from Ukraine and Belarus to decide to return home.

Employers offer higher rates of pay for national seasonal workers. Without their work, it is difficult for them to fulfil their contracts. Despite such financial incentives, there is a problem with the recruitment of employees who would like to take up seasonal work.

An anti-crisis package called **Anti-Crisis Shield** was introduced, which assumed, among other things, unfavourable solutions for employees:

(1) restrictions on uninterrupted daily and weekly rest,

(2) the introduction of a system of equivalent working time, in which an extension of daily and weekly working time is permitted,

(3) the application of less favourable employment conditions for workers than those resulting from employment contracts.

(4) a provision which is unfavourable to trade unions, allowing employers (after only two days' consultation period) to make arrangements for themselves to claim job protection benefits.

#### **Food, Drink and Tobacco sector:**

Regarding several meat sector plants, production has been reduced due to the closure of hotels to which they distributed some of the products. It is possible that due to the increase in the general demand for meat, these plants will soon find other buyers. Other meat-producing plants have increased their production. This has much to do with people 'stocking up' on goods, a feature which also applies to dairy, fruit and vegetable, alcohol, bakery and sugar processing.



The situation in the tobacco sector remains unchanged.

**HRCT sector:**

At the moment, the pandemic has hit the tourism and catering sectors the most. According to information from affiliates, 90% of hotel rooms are empty. For smaller hotels and B&B houses, this means a reduction of employment within one month. In hotels operating as part of large transnational hotel companies, trade unionists have held meetings with the management boards and have been informed that many hotels will be closed but employees will still be paid, at least until June.

So far there have not been too many redundancies, but if as seems likely in 2-3 weeks the situation does not normalize, then most people employed in gastronomy and tourism will lose their jobs.

[Measures adopted in specific companies:](#)

*For more information on the measures adopted in transnational companies please check the main page*