

The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on selected elements of the labour market in Poland in the third quarter of 2020

10.12.2020

5.8%

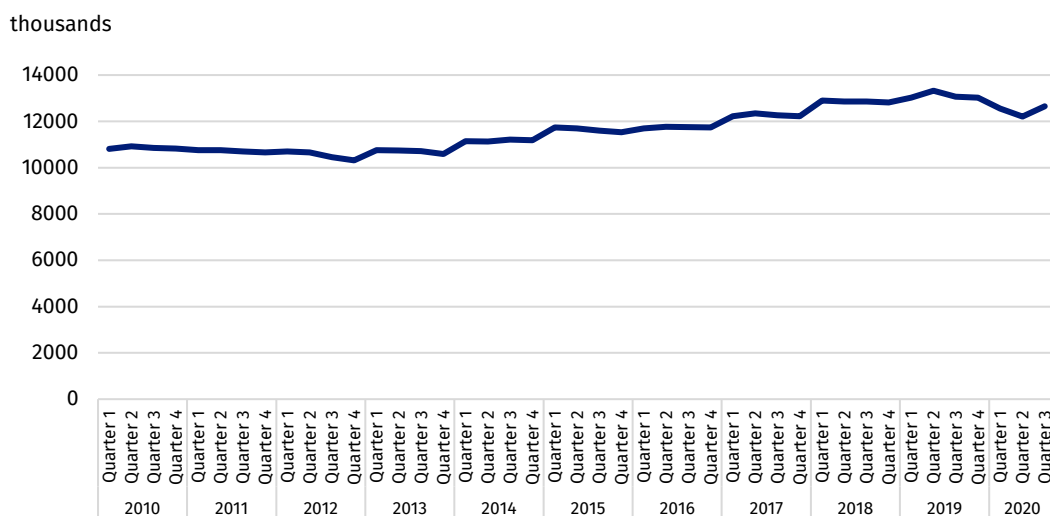
the share of people who worked remotely on 30 September 2020 due to the epidemic situation in the total number of employed persons

In March 2020, a state of epidemic threat was announced in Poland, followed by a state of epidemic in connection with the spread of an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, called COVID-19. In relation to the assessment of the state of epidemic, solutions were introduced by law to prevent and counteract the spread of the said virus and to combat the disease caused by it. These solutions were also applicable on the labour market. Among them was for instance the introduction of the possibility of working from outside a permanent workplace, that is remote work. The data presented in this publication were obtained from 'the Survey on the demand for labour'¹.

The Survey on the demand for labour is conducted by a representative method on a quarterly basis. According to the scope of the survey, it covers notional economy entities and their local units employing at least 1 person. At the end of the third quarter of 2020, the number of employed persons was 3.5% higher than at the end of the second quarter of 2020. This is a different situation than that observed in the second decade of the 21st century. Until 2019, the number of employed persons in the third quarters was generally slightly lower than in the second quarters. The largest loss of employed persons between the analysed quarters occurred in 2012 (a decrease of 2.0%). The increase in the number of employed persons in the third quarter compared to the second quarter was observed only in 2014 (by 0.7%).

Chart 1. Employed persons

As at the last day of the quarter



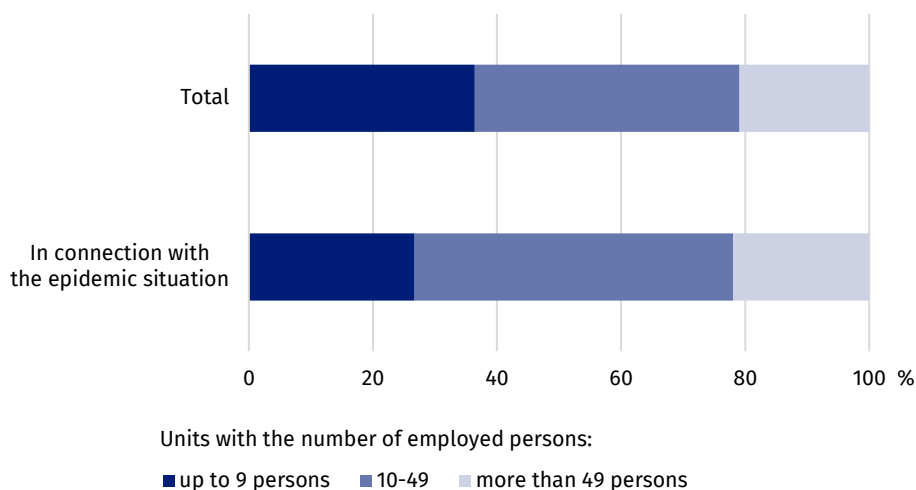
¹ The collected data come from the voluntary responses of reporting units to four additional questions attached on the Reporting Portal to 'the Survey on the demand for labour'. Half of the units that completed the reports answered the questions about the impact of the pandemic situation on the way enterprises operate.

Liquidated jobs

In the third quarter of 2020, 62.4 thousand jobs were liquidated, 33% fewer than in the second quarter of 2020. However, it should be noted that the scale of job cuts related to the spread of COVID-19 was around 1/4 of job cuts. The cutting of jobs took place in all unit size classes. The share of jobs liquidated due to the epidemic situation lower than on average in Poland was in the units with 10 to 49 employed persons. In other size classes of units, this share was slightly higher than the average in Poland.

Out of all job losses in the third quarter of 2020, 26.1% were caused by the epidemic situation

Chart 2. Liquidated jobs in Poland in the third quarter of 2020



Job losses due to the spread of COVID-19 mainly occurred in the private sector.

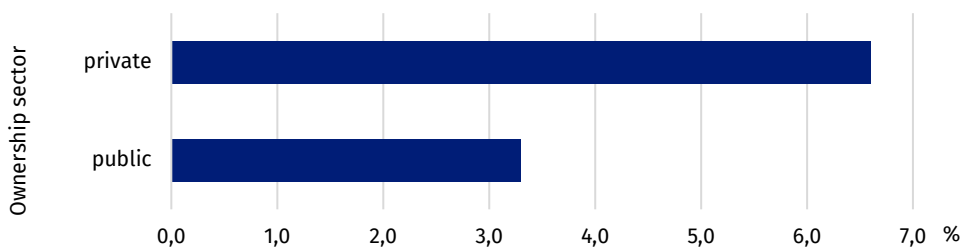
Taking into account the type of activity according to PKD (NACE Rev.2) it can be stated that the number of jobs liquidated due to the epidemic situation in individual sections was strongly correlated to the number of jobs liquidated at all. For example, jobs liquidated in the Manufacturing section accounted for approximately 22% of jobs liquidated in the entire economy, while jobs liquidated in this section due to the epidemic situation accounted for approximately 33% of all jobs lost for this reason. A greater difference between the share of jobs liquidated due to the epidemic situation and the share of total jobs liquidated was in the Accommodation and food service activities section. In this section, the share of jobs liquidated due to the epidemic situation was almost 4 times higher than the share of jobs lost in total.

Remote work during the period of epidemic threat

The epidemic situation that occurred in March 2020 limited the activities of national economy entities in their hitherto existing form. This was manifested, on the one hand, by the liquidation of jobs, and on the other hand, by the fact that employers became open to forms of employment enabling staff to maintain social distance. One of such forms is remote work.

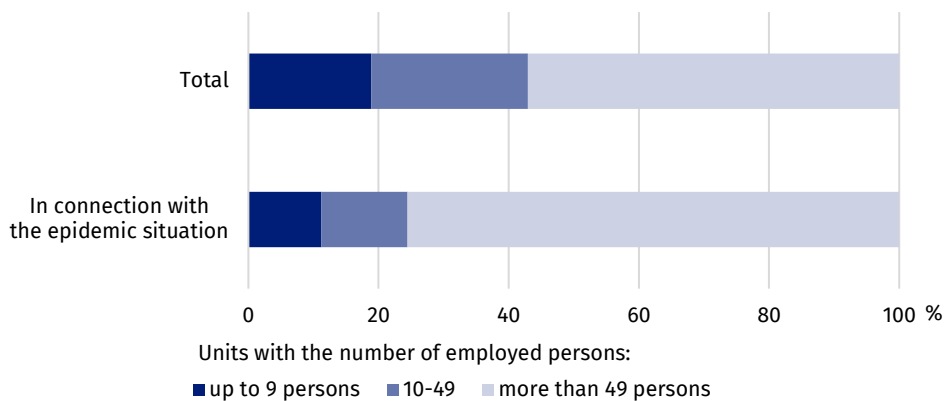
As at the end of September 2020, the share of people who worked remotely in connection with the epidemic situation in the total number of employed persons covered by 'the Survey on the demand for labour' was 5.8%, 4.4 percentage points fewer than at the end of June 2020. During the third quarter, the extent of remote work in the private sector was larger than in the public sector.

Chart 3. The share of employed persons performing telework in connection with the epidemic situation by ownership sector as at the end of the third quarter of 2020



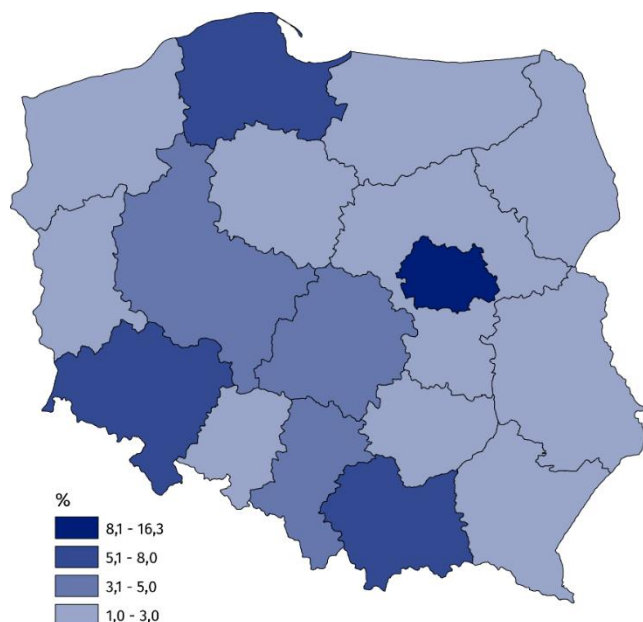
Across the whole economy, the use of remote work in order to reduce the epidemic risk remained the highest in units employing over 49 persons. The share of people working remotely in units of this size was 7.6%, but it was about 4 percentage points fewer than in the second quarter of 2020. In units employing fewer than 50 persons, remote work was performed on average by slightly over 3% of employed persons.

Chart 4. The structure of employed persons performing telework in connection with the epidemic situation by size of units as at the end of the third quarter of 2020



Remote work caused by the epidemic was implemented by employers in individual regions at different scales.

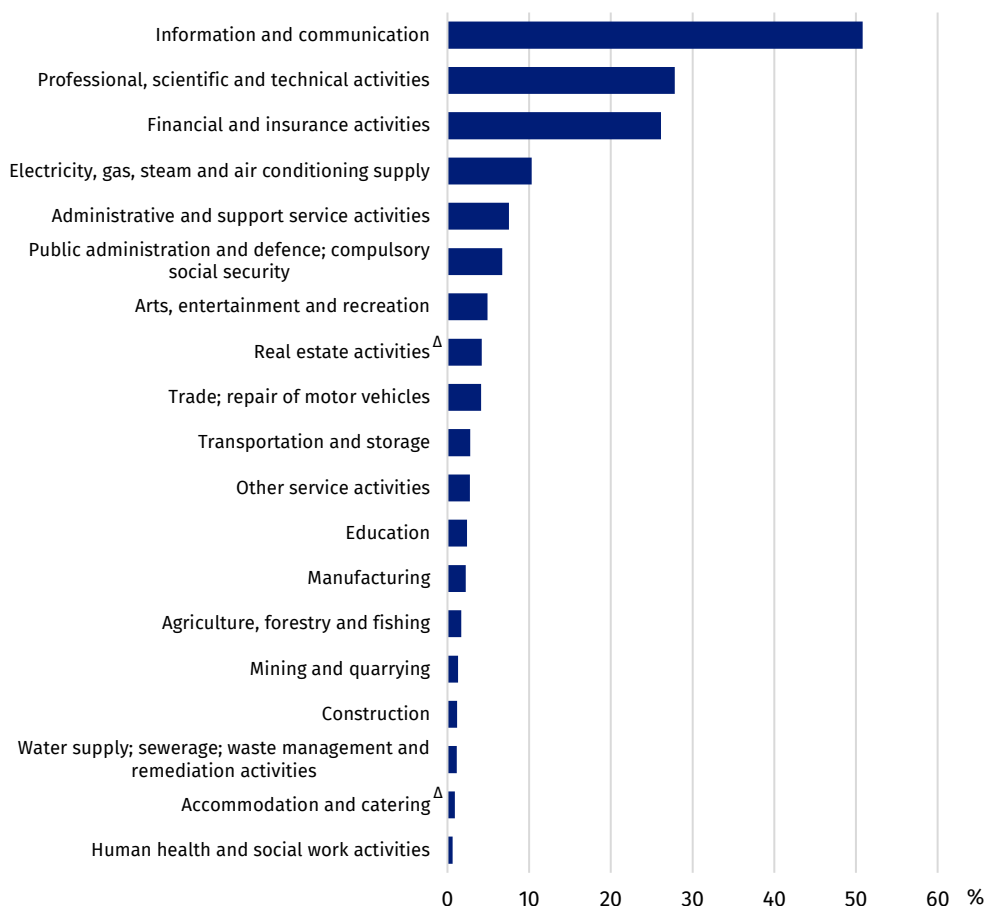
Map 1. The structure of employed persons performing telework in connection with the epidemic situation by region (NUTS 2016) as at the end of the third quarter of 2020



The transition to remote work to a significantly higher degree than on average in Poland took place in the Warszawski stołeczny region. As a result of the epidemic situation, every sixth employed person worked there remotely. Among the remaining regions, the use of the described form of work in the realities of an epidemic threat was least common in the following regions: Podlaskie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie, where remote work due to the COVID-19 threat was performed by only about 1% of employed persons.

The extent of remote work in the third quarter of this year was varied in terms of the type of activity. For instance, in the Manufacturing section, remote work was performed by 2.2% of employed persons. In services, the scale of the phenomenon was over 4 times larger, and the use of the analysed form of work was conditioned by the specificity of services. In the Information and communication section, approximately 50% of employed persons were covered by this form of work due to the outbreak of an infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus. Almost one in ten employed person in the Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply section worked remotely. This form of work was also used to a large extent in sections: Financial and insurance activities, as well as Professional, scientific and technical activities – remote work was performed by every fourth employed person in these sections. In the remaining sections, the transition to remote work concerned less than 8% of employed persons.

Chart 5. The structure of employed persons performing telework in connection with the epidemic situation in selected PKD (NACE Rev.2) sections as at the end of the third quarter of 2020

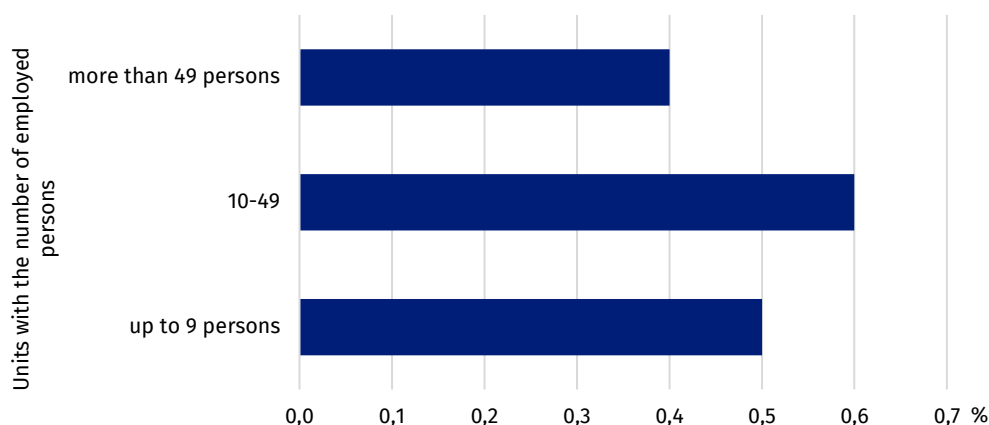


Employed persons who in connection with the epidemic situation received a sick pay or sickness allowance because of undergoing quarantine or isolation

In the third quarter of 2020, in order to limit the spread of the infectious disease, forms of temporary isolation due to the suspicion of an infection were still in use, for instance quarantine and isolation. Employed persons who, as at 30 September 2020, were recipients of a sick pay or sickness allowance due to quarantine or isolation, constituted 0.5% of the total employed population. Such cases were reported at a similar scale in both the public and private sectors.

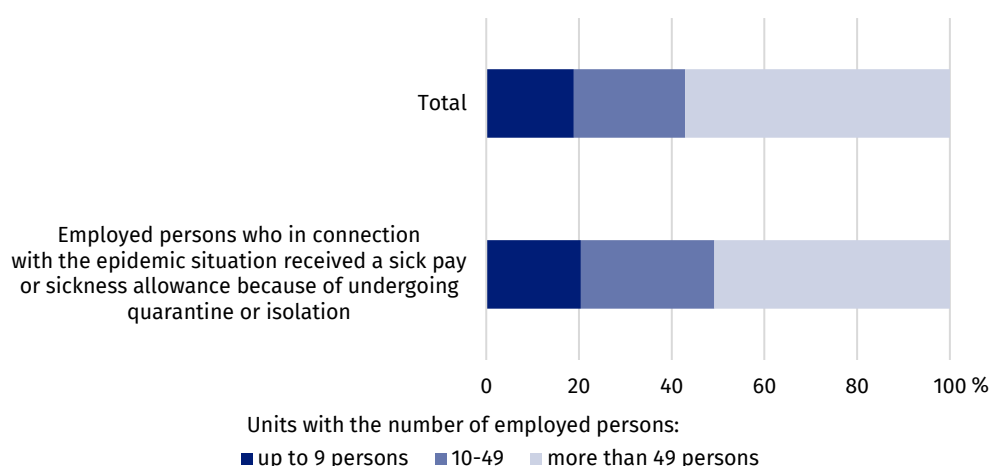
As at 30 September 2020, 0.5% of employed persons were recipients of a sick pay or sickness allowance because of undergoing quarantine or isolation

Chart. 6. Employed persons who in connection with the epidemic situation received a sick pay or sickness allowance because of undergoing quarantine or isolation by size of units as at the end of the third quarter of 2020



There was also no significant difference in shares of employed persons undergoing quarantine or isolation in particular size classes of units.

Chart 7. The structure of employed persons by size of units as at the end of the third quarter of 2020

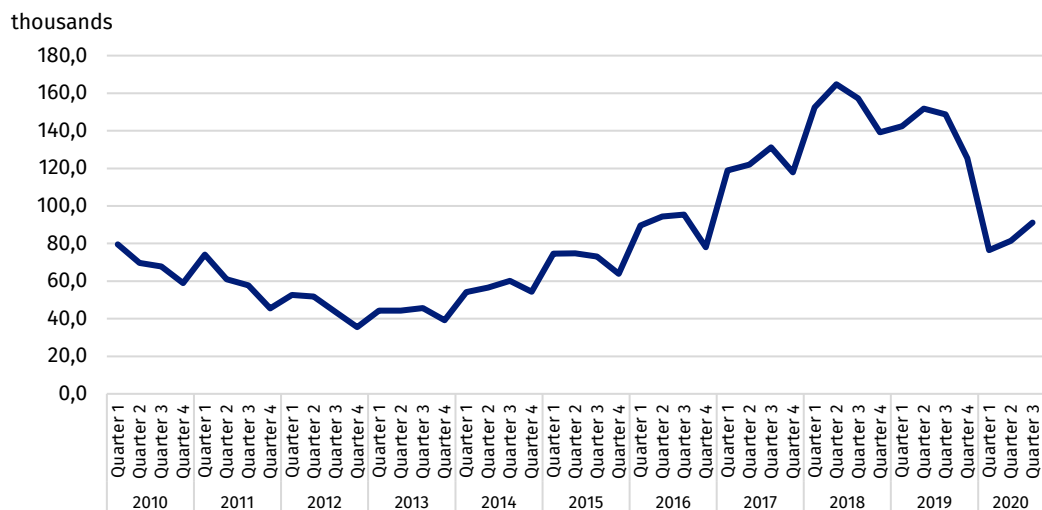


Quarantine or isolation of employed persons took place in all regions, with the relatively highest occurrence in the Małopolskie Voivodship – where employed persons who as at 30 September 2020 were recipients of a sick pay or sickness allowance because of undergoing quarantine or isolation accounted for 0.8% of the total number of employed persons. When considering types of activities, it can be stated that at the end of September 2020, much higher shares of employed persons subject to quarantine or isolation than the average share for Poland were in sections: Human health and social work activities, Construction, Other service activities and Arts, entertainment and recreation.

Summary

The SARS-CoV-2 virus began to spread in Poland in the first quarter of 2020. The results of the survey show that in the following quarters of 2020, the situation regarding filled and unfilled jobs was different than in the previous years of the second decade of the 21st century. In the third quarter of 2020, the number of employed persons, which reflects filled jobs, after a significant decrease in the second quarter of 2020, returned to the level of the first quarter of 2020. In the previous years, the number of occupied jobs was the highest in the first quarters and in subsequent quarters it was generally diminishing.

Chart 8. Job vacancies



In the third quarter of 2020, despite the continuation of the pandemic, the decline in the number of job vacancies observed in the first quarter of this year stopped. The number of vacancies increased by nearly 12% compared to the second quarter. The phenomena presented in this study will be monitored in subsequent editions of the Survey on the demand for labour.

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