

# Work permits for foreigners in Poland in 2020<sup>1</sup>

20.05.2021

## 72.6%

of issued work permits concerned Ukrainian citizens

In 2020, fewer work permits for foreigners were issued in Poland than in the previous year. The situation was different in the years 2015–2019, when a systematic increase in the number of permits issued was observed in Poland. In the analysed year, 406.5 thousand work permits for foreigners were issued in Poland. There were 38.2 thousand fewer of them than in 2019, but their number increased by 340.7 thousand compared to 2015. They were still most often issued to Ukrainian citizens.

A **work permit** is a document that authorizes a foreigner to work legally, provided that he or she has a visa or a temporary residence permit authorizing to work in Poland. Each foreigner who is not exempt from the obligation to have a work permit in Poland under the provisions of law, who wants to take up employment on the territory of Poland, need to have an appropriate permit.

The applicant and party to the procedure of issuing a work permit for a foreigner is each time the entity entrusting the performance of work to a foreigner. Permits are issued by the competent voivode. The competence is determined mainly due to the seat or place of residence of the entity entrusting the performance of work and does not have to be the same as the foreigner's workplace.

In 2020, 406.5 thousand work permits for foreigners were issued in Poland. There were 8.6% fewer of them than in 2019, but more than 6 times as many as in 2015. Compared to 2019, 11 voivodships saw a decrease in the number of issued work permits for foreigners, while in the remaining 5 voivodships there was an increase in their number. The largest decrease compared to 2019 occurred in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship (36.5%), while the highest increase was observed in the Podlaskie Voivodship (27.4%). In the analysed year, the greatest number of work permits for foreigners were issued in the Mazowieckie Voivodship. However, the share of permits issued in this voivodship in the total number of permits issued in the country is decreasing. For instance, in 2015 they accounted for 49.4% of all work permits, and in 2020 – 16.8%.

**Table 1. Work permits for foreigners**

VOIVODSHIPS	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>POLAND</b>	<b>65 786</b>	<b>127 394</b>	<b>235 626</b>	<b>328 768</b>	<b>444 738</b>	<b>406 496</b>
Dolnośląskie	3 388	10 880	12 284	19 158	23 907	22 069
Kujawsko-pomorskie	3 347	4 998	6 504	25 682	37 976	29 206
Lubelskie	1 615	2 782	5 254	8 043	12 981	15 684
Lubuskie	2 666	3 581	7 452	10 748	16 395	13 823
Łódzkie	1 305	3 577	19 345	32 423	41 993	41 428
Małopolskie	6 291	15 138	22 162	27 534	37 389	39 386
Mazowieckie	32 502	48 126	75 271	79 670	86 348	68 228
Opolskie	1 218	2 794	5 798	9 584	11 578	11 353

<sup>1</sup> This news release was prepared on the basis of the data of the Ministry of Economic Development, Labour and Technology concerning work permits for foreigners.

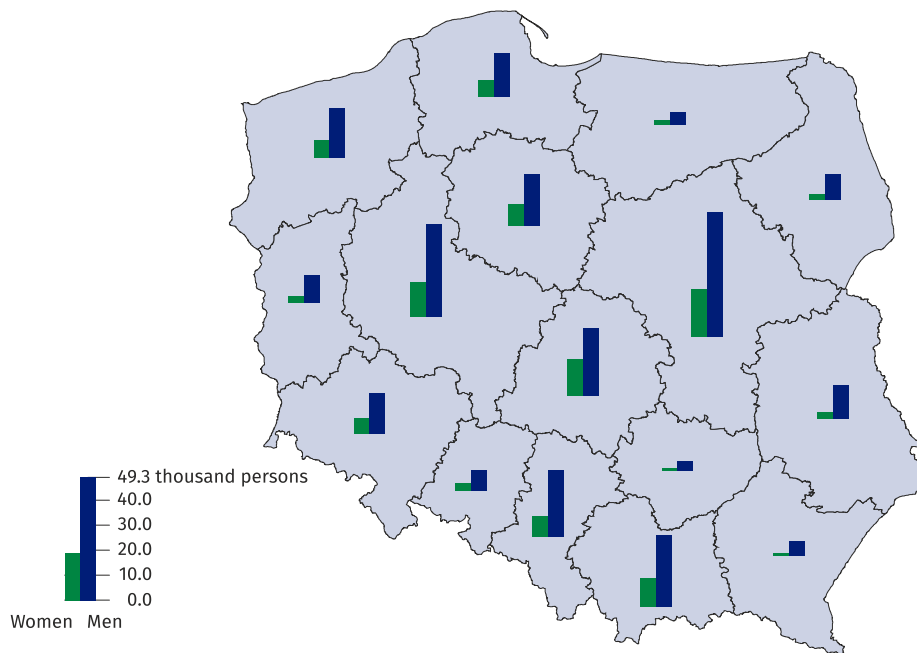
**Table 1. Work permits for foreigners (continuation)**

VOIVODSHIPS	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Podkarpackie	936	1 754	3 730	5 378	8 551	6 656
Podlaskie	643	1 011	2 898	5 339	9 796	12 481
Pomorskie	4 133	7 889	12 480	20 929	30 409	23 431
Śląskie	2 003	7 175	23 160	21 924	39 077	34 469
Świętokrzyskie	603	1 765	3 252	4 177	6 166	4 759
Warmińsko-mazurskie	506	1 483	5 228	6 936	10 504	6 674
Wielkopolskie	3 608	10 231	21 036	36 464	49 069	50 330
Zachodniopomorskie	1 022	4 210	9 772	14 779	22 599	26 519

In 2020, the largest number of permits after the Mazowieckie Voivodship were issued in the Wielkopolskie Voivodship (12.4% of the total number of positive decisions). In this voivodship, in 2020 compared to 2015, the number of work permits for foreigners increased 14 times. In the analysed period, the highest increase in the number of permits occurred in the Łódzkie Voivodship (32-fold increase).

The smallest parts of the total number of work permits for foreigners were issued in the following voivodships: Świętokrzyskie, Podkarpackie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie (below 2% in each of the voivodships mentioned), and between 2015 and 2020 there were recorded respectively 8-fold, 7-fold and 13-fold increases in the number of permits issued in these voivodships.

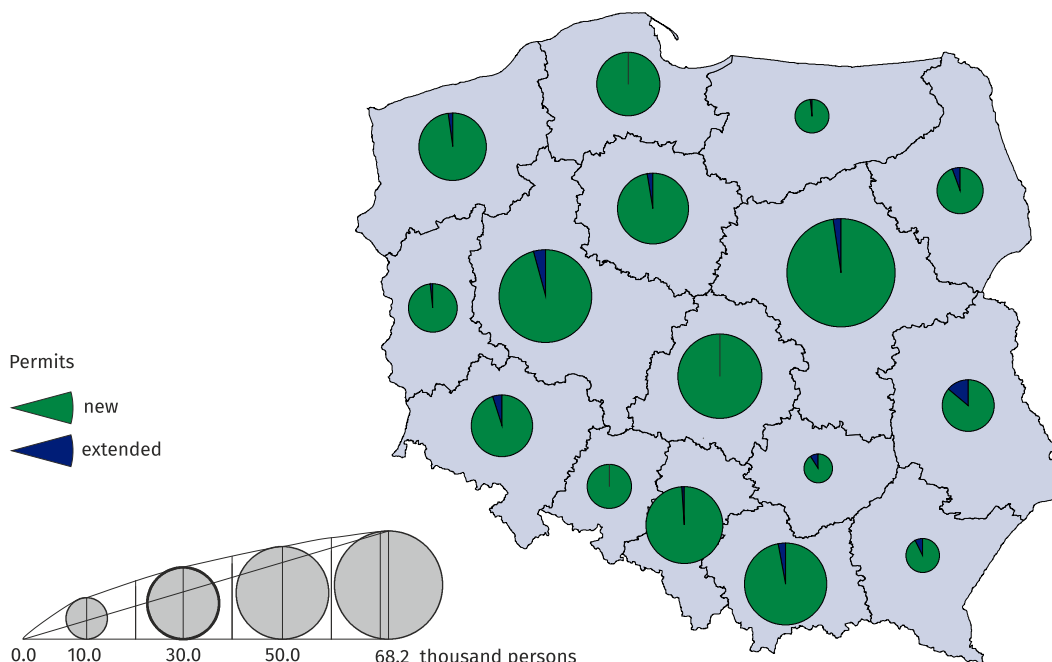
**Map 1. Work permits for foreigners by sex in 2020**



In 2020, the vast majority of the issued work permits for foreigners, that is 73.2%, concerned **men**. There was an advantage of men in this regard in all voivodships. Higher than the average in Poland share of women among foreigners for whom employers obtained a work permit was recorded in half of the voivodships, and the highest in the Łódzkie Voivodship (35.2%). The smallest percentage was recorded for the Podkarpackie Voivodship, where every seventh work permit was granted to a woman.

The majority of work permits for foreigners are granted to men

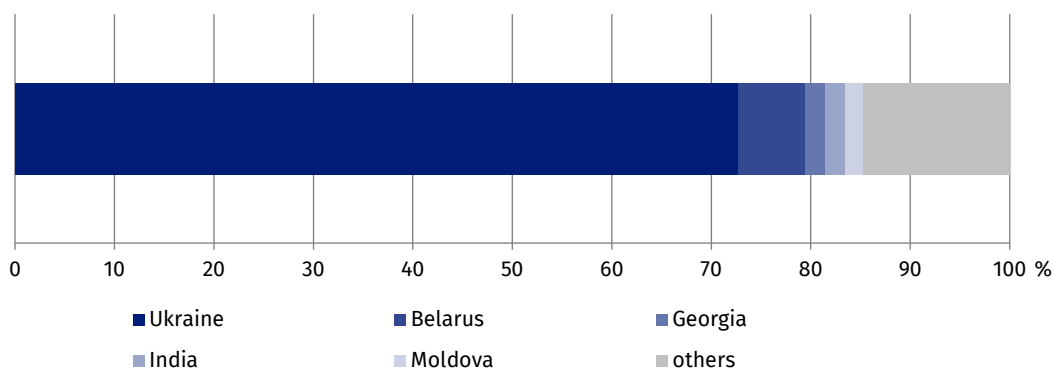
**Map 2. New and extended work permits for foreigners in 2020**



In each voivodship, work permits for foreigners which were not an extension of previous permits accounted for over 86% of all permits

In Poland, the vast majority of issued work permits for foreigners are not an extension of previous permits. In 2020, they accounted for 97.0% of all permits issued. The largest share (13.9%) of extensions in the total number of work permits issued in a voivodship was recorded in the Lubelskie Voivodship. A significant share was also recorded in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (8.9%). Extensions of work permits for foreigners were issued least frequently in the Łódzkie and Opolskie voivodships. In each of the above-mentioned voivodships, they accounted for less than 1.0% of the total number of work permits for foreigners.

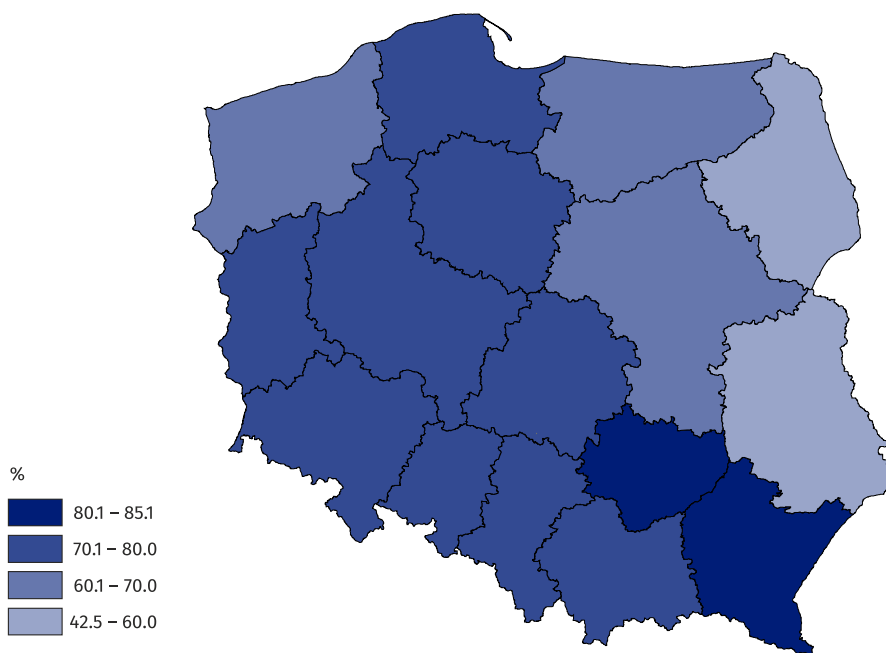
**Chart 1. The structure of work permits for foreigners by citizenship in 2020**



In 2020, in Poland, work permits were issued to citizens of 129 countries and to 11 stateless persons

In 2020, in Poland, work permits were issued to citizens of 129 countries and 11 stateless persons. They were most often granted to citizens of **Ukraine**. Almost 73% of foreigners who were granted permission to work in Poland had a Ukrainian passport. The foreigners' labour market was to the greatest extent dominated by Ukrainian citizens in the Podkarpackie Voivodship, where 85.1% of permits were issued to citizens of Ukraine. Only in the Podlaskie Voivodship, the share of Ukrainians among foreigners who obtained a work permit was lower than 50%. In the country, the second largest group of foreign nationals receiving work permits were Belarusian citizens (6.7% share in the total number). Their largest share was recorded in the Lubelskie Voivodship (30.5% of the total number of permits in the voivodship) and in the Podlaskie Voivodship (28.6%).

**Map 3. The share of work permits issued to Ukrainian citizens in the total number of work permits for foreigners issued in 2020**

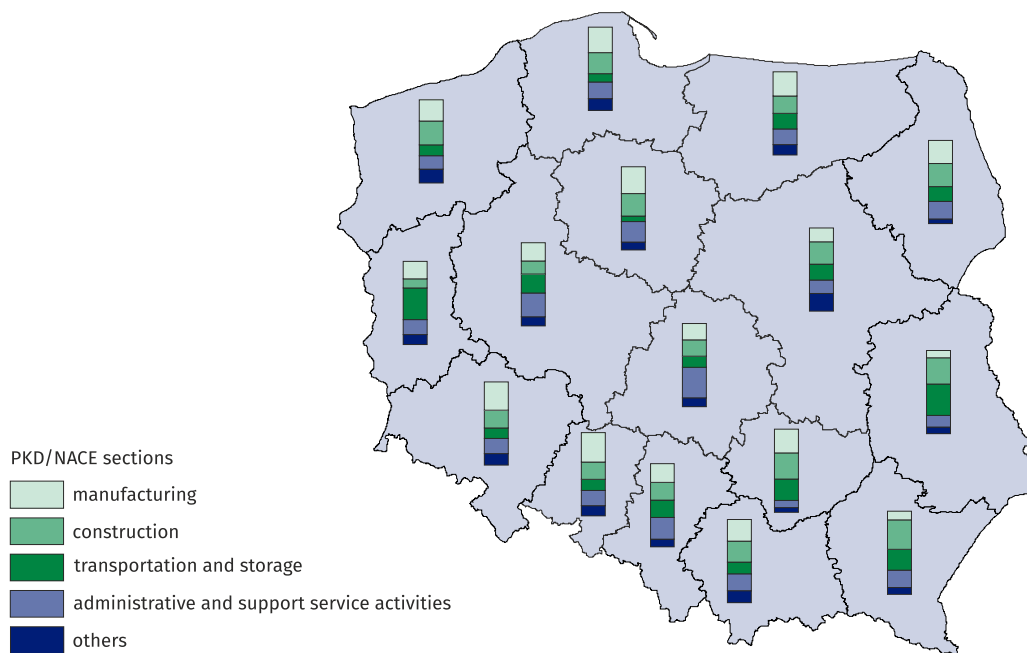


In 2020, in all voivodships, the largest number of work permits for foreigners were issued to Ukrainian citizens

It is worth adding that in 2020, a noticeable percentage of permits were also issued to citizens of Georgia and India (2.0% of the total number of permits) as well as Moldova (1.9%). The largest number of work permits (in the total number of permits issued in the voivodship) granted to Georgian and Indian citizens were in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship, and to Moldovan citizens in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship.

In Poland, in 2020, employers who obtained work permits for foreigners were conducting economic activity mainly in the following **PKD<sup>2</sup>/ NACE sections**: construction (23.5% share in the total number of permits), manufacturing (23.3%), administrative and support service activities (22.1%) as well as transportation and storage (17.8%). In 2020, in all voivodships, the total share of permits for the above-mentioned PKD/ NACE sections exceeded 78%.

**Map 4. The structure of work permits for foreigners by PKD/ NACE section in 2020**

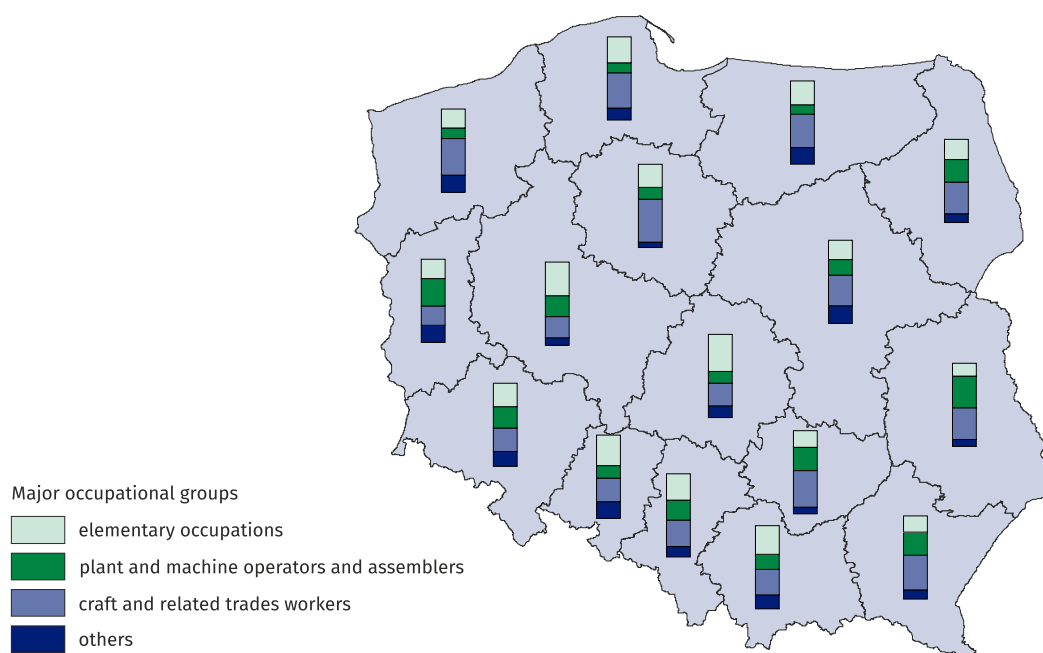


<sup>2</sup> Polish Classification of Activities – PKD 2007.

When analysing the spatial differentiation of issued work permits by PKD/ NACE section, it can be noticed that employers operating in the construction section were most numerous in the Podkarpackie Voivodship (36.1% of the total number of work permits in this voivodship). The fewest of them were in the Lubuskie Voivodship (11.1%). In turn, the manufacturing section dominated in the Opolskie Voivodship – 34.9%. Its lowest share was recorded in the Lubelskie Voivodship (8.3%). Employers from the administrative and support service activities section obtained the most work permits for foreigners (36.6%) in the Łódzkie Voivodship. However, in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship their share was only 9.1%. In the Lubuskie Voivodship, work permits in the transportation and storage section accounted for 38.2% of issued work permits for foreigners. This section was least often represented in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship (7.1%).

When examining the number of issued work permits by major groups of the **Classification of Occupations and Specialisations (KZiS)/ ISCO-08**, it can be observed that in 2020, in Poland, the largest group were craft and related trades workers (34.4% of the total number of permits issued). A significant share of permits was also observed in the case of people in elementary occupations (30.4%) and plant and machine operators and assemblers (20.3%). The total share of permits for the above-mentioned occupational groups exceeded 77% in all voivodships.

**Map 5. The structure of work permits for foreigners by major occupational group in 2020**



The predominance of the share of work permits for craft and related trades workers in the total number of work permits for foreigners occurred in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship (51.6%). This occupational group dominated in most voivodships, and least frequently it was indicated in permits issued in the Lubuskie Voivodship (23.2%). In the Lubelskie Voivodship, work permits for foreigners in large part were granted to plant and machine operators and assemblers (38.1%). In turn, in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship, work permits in occupations from this group constituted only 10.0% of permits.

Among work permits granted, those concerning elementary occupations were also numerous represented. In the Łódzkie Voivodship, the share of work permits for this occupational group was nearly 45%. The occupational group was least often represented in the Lubelskie Voivodship, where 15.4% of work permits for foreigners concerned elementary occupations.

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#### **Terms used in official statistics**

[Work permit for a foreigner](#)

[Foreigners](#)

[Citizenship](#)