

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY
2ND EDITION

A FOREIGN EMPLOYEE IN THE PANDEMIC



The report from the 2nd edition of the sociological study 'A foreign employee in Poland during the pandemic' 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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ANDRZEJ KORKUS

EWL S.A. Chairman of the Board

**WE ARE FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC WITH OPTIMISM**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to share with you the result of the work of our team of experts, which, thanks to the support of the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw, has once again this year made a comprehensive analysis of the conditions of labour migration in Poland, in terms of the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic.

Compared to spring of this year, when the previous study was created, we managed to get to know the scale of the phenomenon itself much better, as well as the conditions that determine future changes in the dynamics of labour migration in Poland. Although there are still many uncertainties, the data obtained allow us to look into the future with optimism. The same applies to the systemic measures implemented by the Polish government this year, which together with the commitment of Polish business made it possible to keep a significant part of migrants on the market. A number of solutions introduced in this challenging period also translated into better moods on part of the employees themselves. Despite the complications associated with cases of change of place or sector of employment, migrants mostly appreciated the liberalization of regulations and a number of offered reliefs, supporting the Polish economy in the most difficult moments.

It is said that the strongest bonds are formed in difficult moments and the results of our research seem to confirm this thesis. The pandemic has not discouraged foreigners from work-related arrivals during the pandemic. The majority, about 90 percent of those surveyed, are satisfied with their decision to stay or come to Poland. And almost 80 percent of the participants of the September survey recommend the prospect of working in Poland to their family and friends.

We hope that, as is the case of the previous studies carried out by EWL S.A., also this study will meet with great interest on part of the labour market representatives. The effectiveness of activities that increase the attractiveness of Poland for economic migrants is becoming even higher when we consistently carry out these activities together. Starting from the legislative processes and further liberalization of procedures for short- and long-term migrants, through the role of employment agencies in building transparent recruitment processes, to employers. We should all feel responsible for the Polish labour market and its international competitiveness.

I invite you to read the latest report and share your thoughts with our team.

73%

of foreigners have used or plan to use the automatic extension of their residence and work permits in Poland

39%

of foreigners had to find a new job in Poland due to the pandemic

31%

of foreigners plan to continue working in Poland until the end of the pandemic

32%

of foreigners had to change the employment sector in Poland due to the pandemic

60%

of respondents consider the extension of residence and work permits in Poland as the most important help from the Polish government

29%

of respondents consider the provision of a free quarantine stay to be the most important help from the Polish employer

92%

of foreigners do not regret staying in Poland during the pandemic

89%

of foreign employees do not regret coming to Poland during the pandemic

84%

of respondents feel safe in Poland during the pandemic

50%

of respondents claim the pandemic has not affected their plans to come to Poland

29%

of respondents who came to Poland during the pandemic did so for the first time

22%

of foreigners were leaving Poland during the pandemic

36%

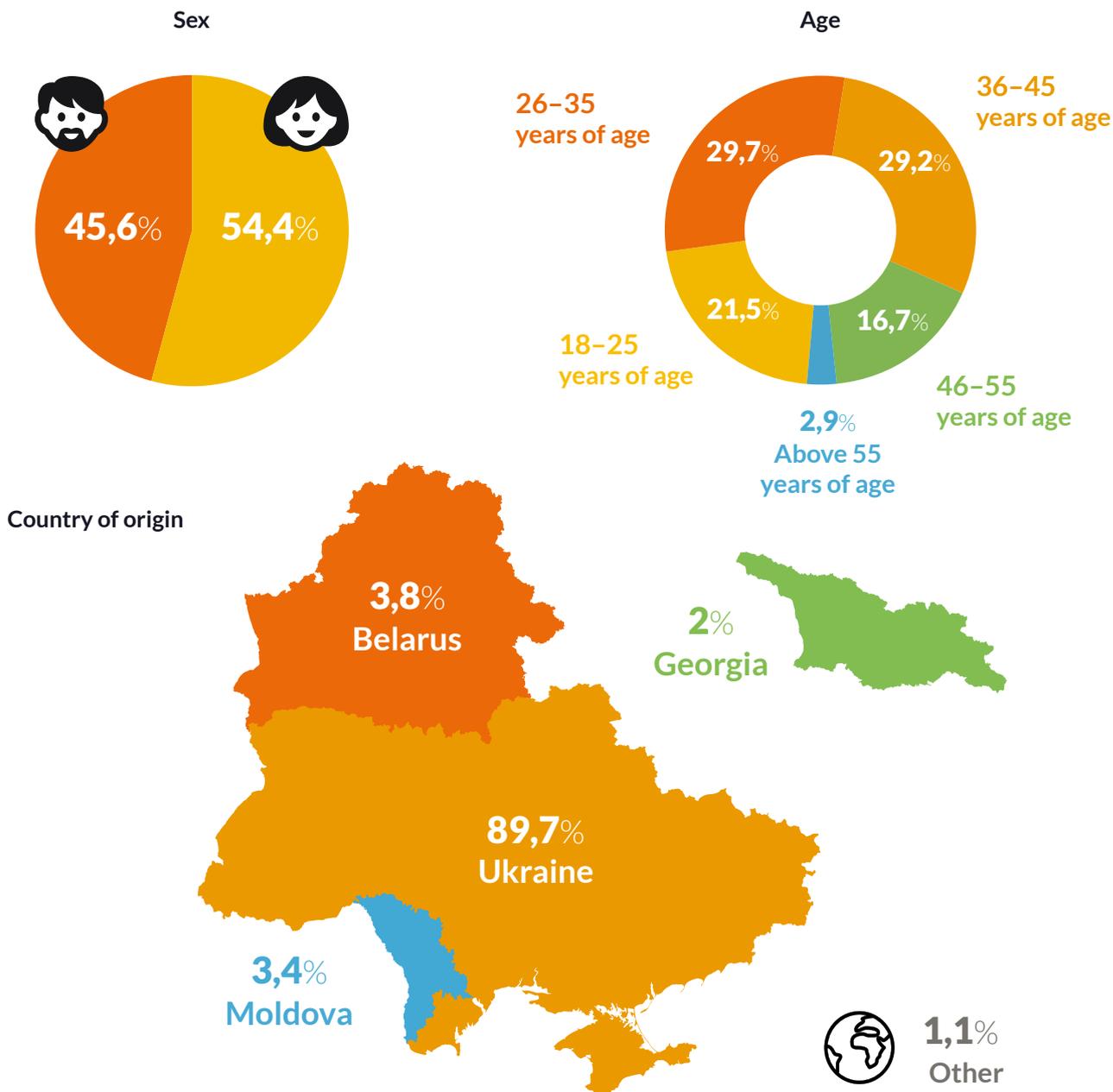
of respondents are most worried about losing their jobs due to the pandemic

19%

of respondents were looking for job offers in countries other than Poland during the pandemic

59%

of respondents are willing to work in Germany



METHODOLOGY

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the study of foreign employees in Poland was conducted using the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) method. The selection of the sample was oriented towards finding respondents representative of the community of foreign employees from beyond the eastern border of Poland. The invitation to take the survey was sent directly to this category of respondents. One of EWL S.A.'s registers of foreign employees was used for the purpose.

The study included foreign employees staying in Poland and experiencing the effects of the pandemic and, like all Polish citizens, being subject to the rigours of the state of epidemic emergency.

In the period of 26 August – 8 September 2020 we received 610 responses.

The sample size and its selection ensure high representation. It is also confirmed by the characteristics of the respondents, because they included the representatives of nationalities constituting the core of cross-border migration to Poland (primarily citizens of Ukraine, as well as Belarus, Moldova and Georgia), representatives of different age groups and, in proportion, representatives of both genders.

IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON RESIDENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

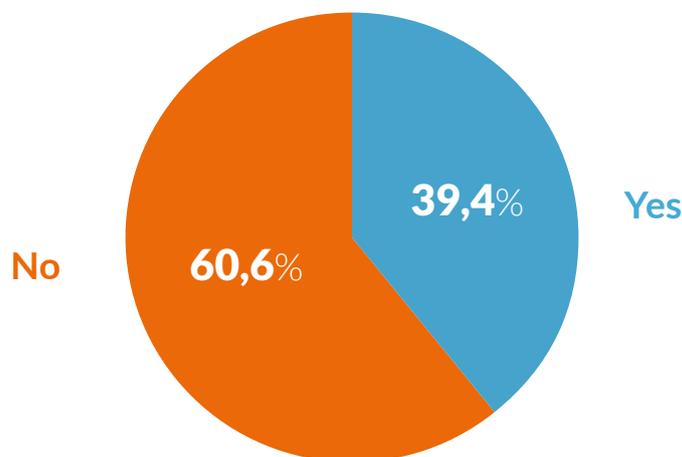
(respondents working in Poland when the pandemic started)

The coronavirus pandemic and restrictions introduced in Poland because of it also hit foreign employees. Almost 40% of foreigners who stayed in our country after the outbreak of the pandemic were forced to change their workplace, and almost 30% were forced to move to another Polish town/city.

Among foreigners who stayed in Poland during the pandemic, 1/3 of those surveyed changed their employment sector. Analyzing the results of the previous EWL study

of April 2020, since the beginning of the pandemic the sector change rate has increased by almost 6 percentage points. COVID-19 proved to be a major challenge for the hospitality or automotive sectors, but nevertheless had a positive impact on the competitiveness of companies from the e-commerce or logistics sectors. This confirms that the pandemic only had a small negative impact on the demand for foreign employees in Poland, while stimulating changes in the employment rate between individual sectors.

Did you have to change your workplace in Poland due to the pandemic?



Did you have to change the town/city of work in Poland due to the pandemic?



Did you have to change the employment sector in Poland due to the pandemic?



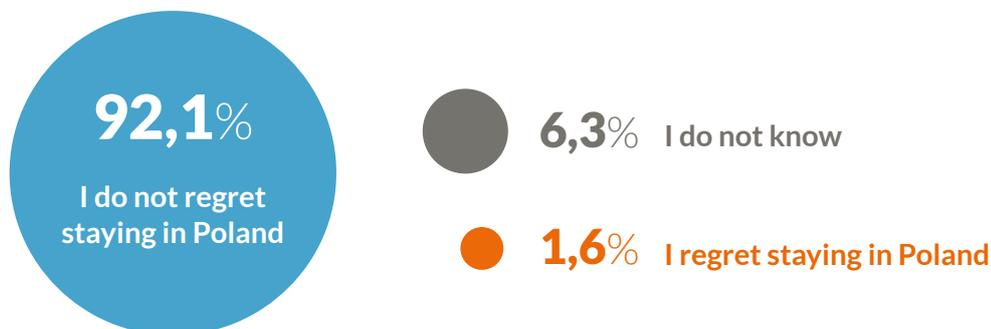
IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON RESIDENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

(respondents working in Poland when the pandemic started)

What made you stay in Poland during the pandemic?



Do you regret your decision to stay in Poland during the pandemic? (those who stayed)



For almost half of the respondents (47%) who stayed in Poland after the outbreak of the pandemic the argument for staying was lack of available work in the country of origin. Moreover, 44% of respondents expressed their willingness to continue working in Poland as long as there is such a possibility. It is worth emphasizing the importance of automatic extension by the Polish government of residence and work permits for foreigners during the pandemic. This helped to keep almost 40% of the surveyed foreign employees in Poland. A motivating factor to stay was also the high evaluation of the health care system and

the level of security in Poland (14% and 23% of respondents respectively).

As many as 92% of foreigners who decided to stay in our country after the outbreak of the pandemic do not regret their decision. Only 1.6% of respondents are of the opposite opinion. These results can be accepted with great optimism, thus confirming the effectiveness of both, government actions towards migrants and employer reactions to the pandemic.

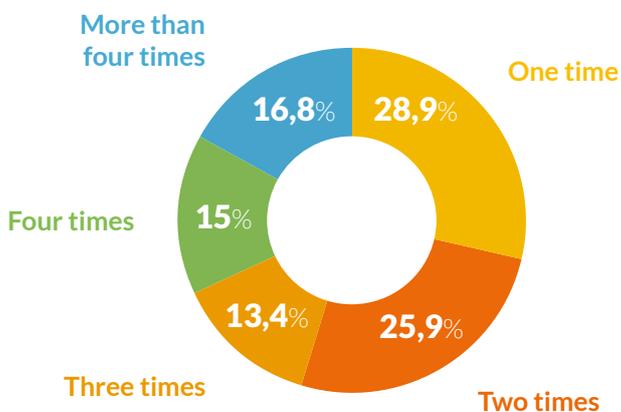
IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON ARRIVALS IN POLAND

(respondents who came to Poland during the pandemic)

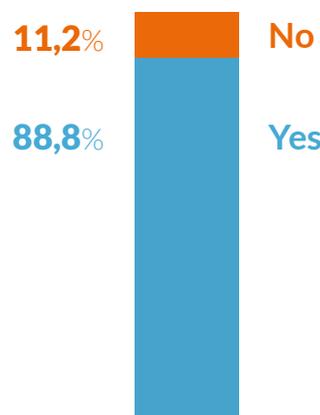
What made you to come to Poland during the pandemic?



How many times have you come to Poland for work?



Did you plan to come to Poland to work before the coronavirus pandemic?



The coronavirus pandemic did not stop economic migration. Almost 89% of foreigners who decided to come to Poland during the pandemic had been planning this even before the outbreak.

The reasons why foreigners choose to work in our country have not changed for several years. As in the period before the pandemic, the main argument to come to Poland for 53% of the surveyed economic migrants were higher earnings than in their home country. In turn, one in nine came to Poland to work because they had lost their jobs in their country.

It is impossible to ignore the role played by the stable character of migration among the respondents. Among those who came to Poland in recent months, almost half claimed they had earlier plans to take up employment in our country regardless of the outbreak of the pandemic. A significant part of respondents also pointed out the difficulties related to security procedures, including quarantine upon arrival (almost 51%) and difficulties in mobility and crossing the border with Poland itself (32% and 38% respectively). Only 15.5% of foreigners who came to work complained about difficulties with obtaining a Polish visa during the pandemic.

IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON ARRIVALS IN POLAND

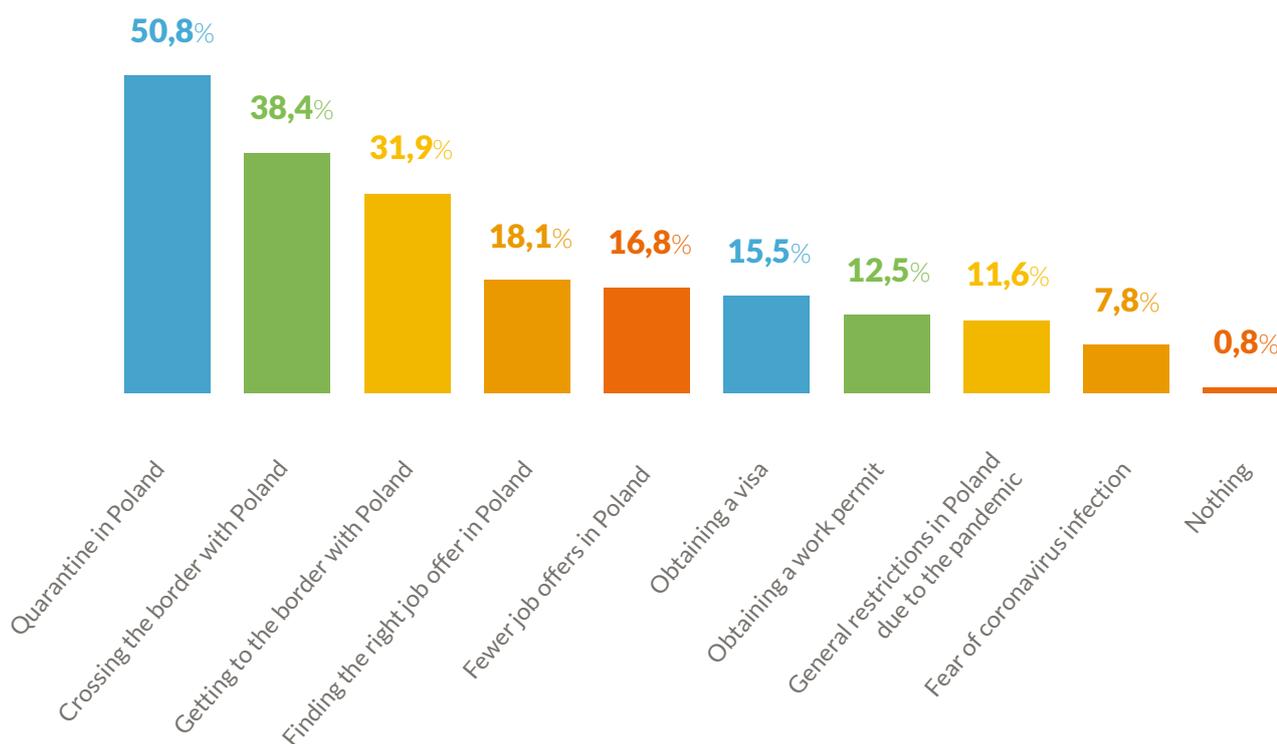
(respondents who came to Poland during the pandemic)

It is worth noting the significant share of migrants in the labour market who have visited Poland for the first time. For 29% who came to work during the coronavirus pandemic, it was the first visit to Poland for work purposes.

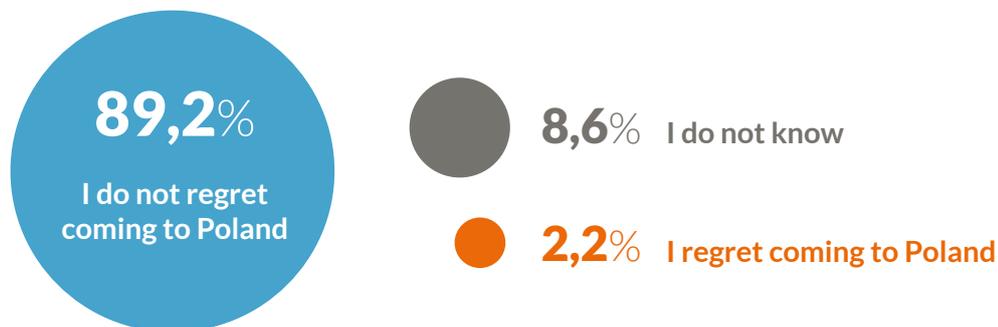
Similarly to those who stayed in Poland, migrants just arriving to Poland positively assess the decision about

coming to our country. Over 89% of foreigners who took part in the survey do not regret their decision to come and work in Poland after 14 March 2020. Only about 2% of respondents regret it.

What made it the most difficult for you to come to Poland during the pandemic?



Do you regret your decision to come to Poland during the pandemic? (those who came during the pandemic)



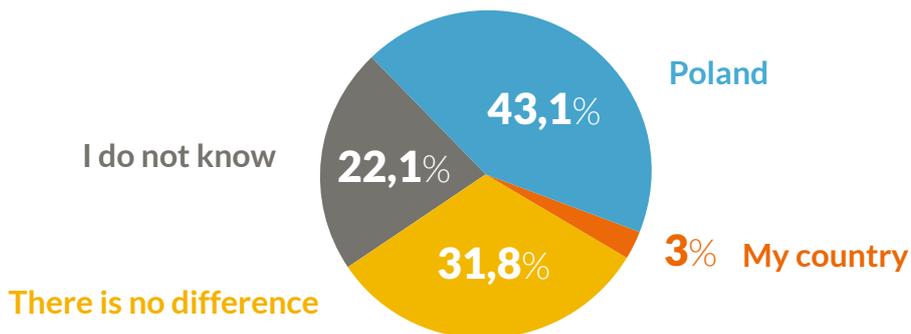
FEELING SAFE DURING THE PANDEMIC

The feeling of safety among economic migrants is growing. Over 84% of foreigners working in Poland feel safe here. This indicator has increased by almost 12 percentage points compared to the similar survey conducted in April 2020. 68% of respondents claim that they did not feel the reinforcement of negative stereotypes towards economic migrants in Poland, which could result from the

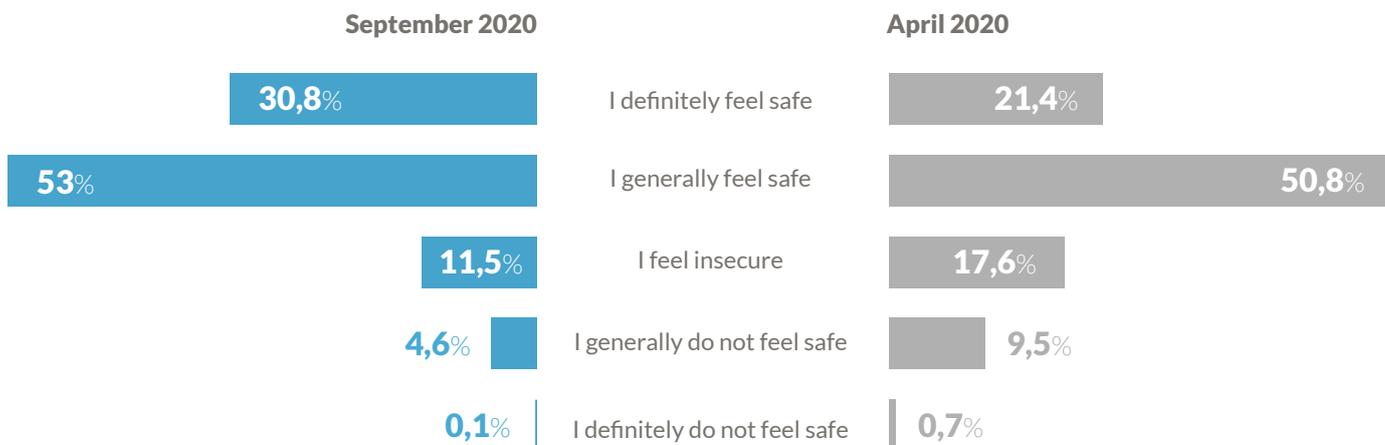
coronavirus pandemic. In turn, 19% of foreigners are of the opposite opinion – almost as many as five months ago.

According to 43% of foreign employees, it is now safer in Poland than in their own country. Only 3% of the opposite opinion.

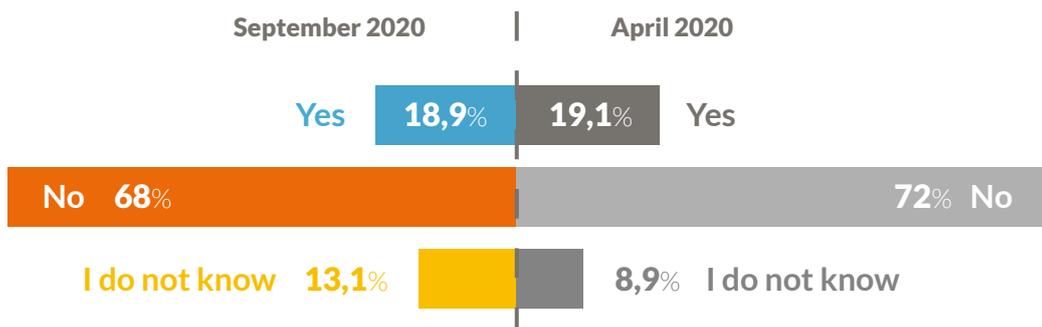
Which do you think is safer: Poland or your home country?



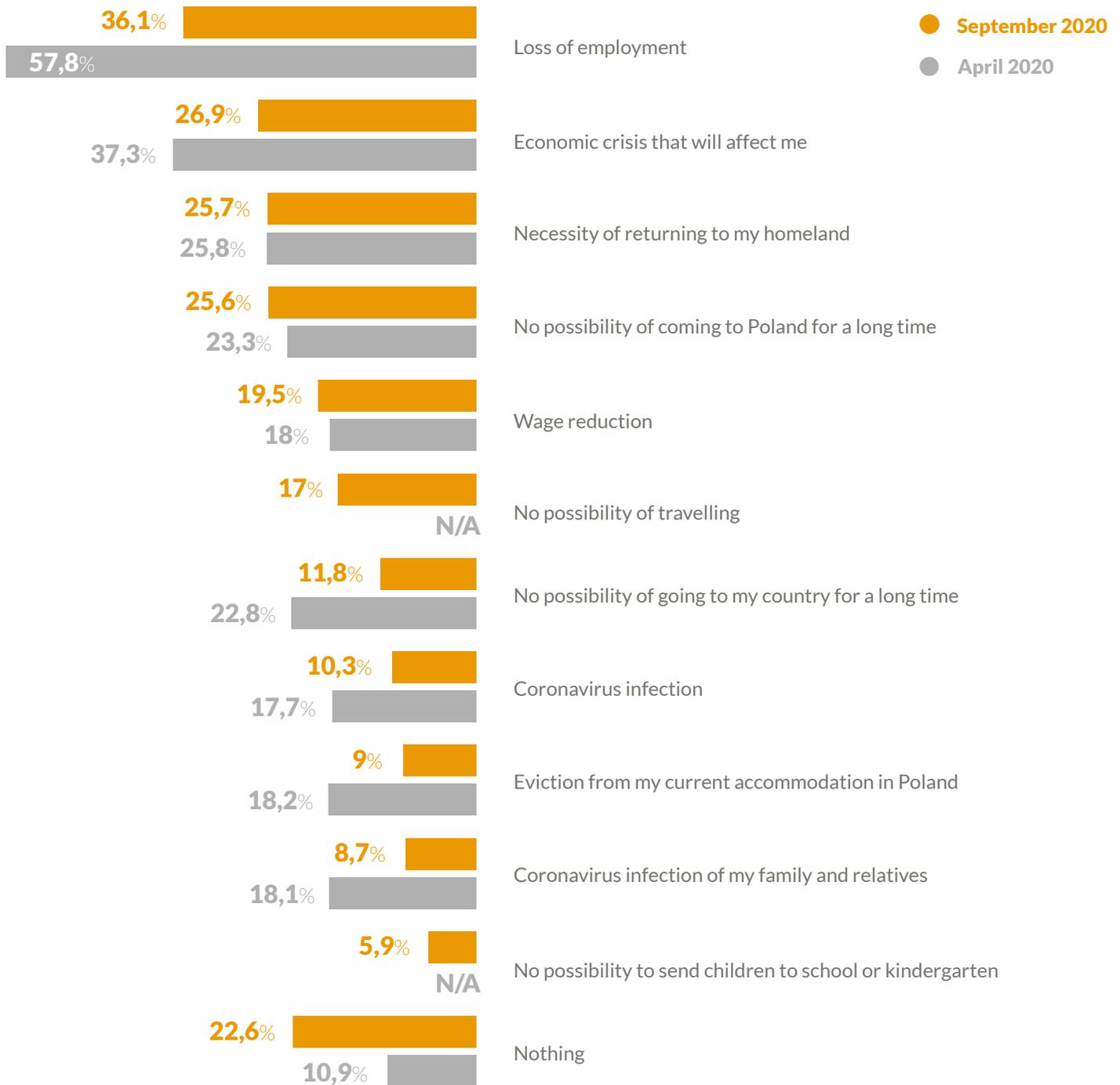
How would you rate your sense of security in Poland during the pandemic?



Have you observed the reinforcement of negative stereotypes towards foreigners in Poland in relation to the pandemic?



What do you fear most about the coronavirus pandemic?

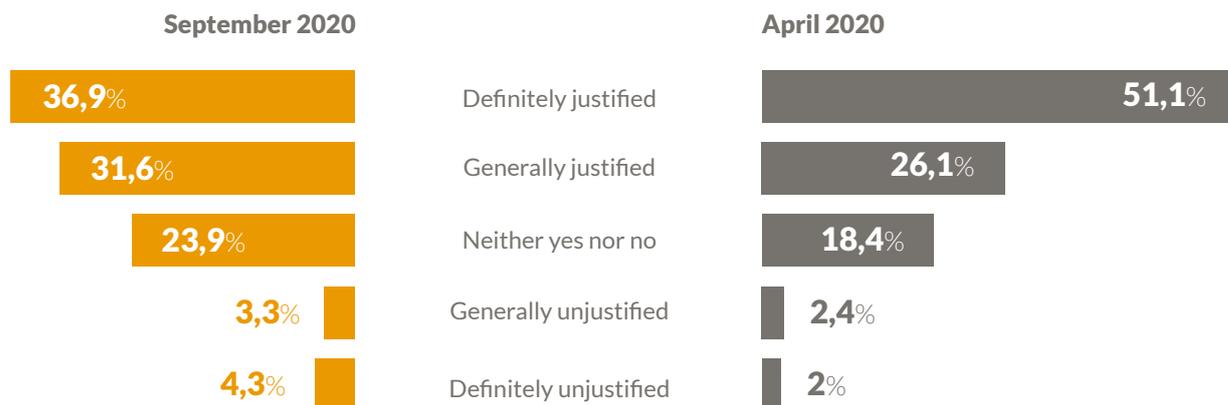


The pandemic still remains one of the main factors causing uncertainty among migrants, but the scale of fears has shifted quite significantly compared to the previous study. Loss of job in Poland remains the most frequently mentioned risk factor related to the pandemic (36% of respondents), but currently it is mentioned as the main concern by almost 22 percentage points fewer respondents than in April 2020. Moreover, fewer and fewer economic migrants fear the economic crisis that will hit the Polish

labour market (27% compared to 37% in April). Only one in ten respondents is afraid of the coronavirus infection – five months ago one in six foreign employees was afraid of the infection.

More optimistic moods are also confirmed by the growing group of respondents who did not express any concerns about the pandemic (23% in September, compared to 11% in April this year).

Do you feel the restrictions on crossing the Polish border are justified?



Were you leaving Poland during the pandemic?



What is the most difficult for you when working in Poland during the pandemic?



Foreign employees continue to positively evaluate the restrictions that were introduced in Poland during the coronavirus pandemic (68.5% of respondents), with only 5% of respondents being of the opposite opinion, i.e. almost the same as in April 2020. However, the number of foreigners who consider the restrictions when crossing the Polish border as justified has decreased by almost 9 percentage points. What is more, the share of migrants critically assessing the restrictions connected with crossing the Polish border has almost doubled. This is related to the growing group of people who, while moving

between the territory of Poland and abroad, had both positive and negative experiences related thereto. Every fifth respondent declared that they were leaving Poland during the coronavirus pandemic.

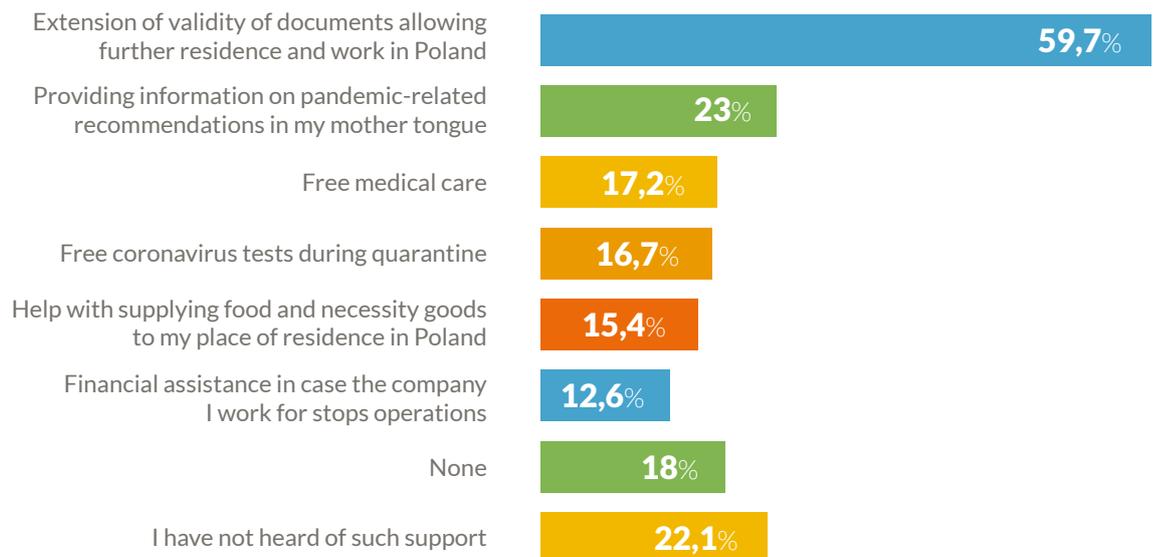
Taking into account the difficulties of working in Poland during the pandemic, almost 42% of the respondents complained about the reduction in the number of hours worked and over 37% complained about the psychological tension caused by the ongoing pandemic.

The extension of the validity of documents allowing for residence and work in Poland is assessed among foreigners as the most important element of assistance from the Polish authorities. This is the opinion of almost 60% of respondents. In turn, 23% of foreign employees praise the Polish government for providing information on restrictions and recommendations related to the pandemic in their mother tongue. On the other hand, one in five economic migrants did not receive any information about the support from the Polish administration, while

18% of respondents did not consider the available forms of support as important.

As far as the assistance from the Polish employers is concerned, foreigners appreciated most the provision of free antiviral protection and hygiene measures (34% of respondents) and the coverage of accommodation costs in case of quarantine (29%). Almost 16% of the respondents did not hear about any help from their employer.

Which form of support from the Polish government in connection with the pandemic was most important to you?



Which form of support from your employer in Poland in connection with the pandemic was most important to you?



PLANS OF FOREIGN EMPLOYEES IN CONNECTION WITH THE PANDEMIC

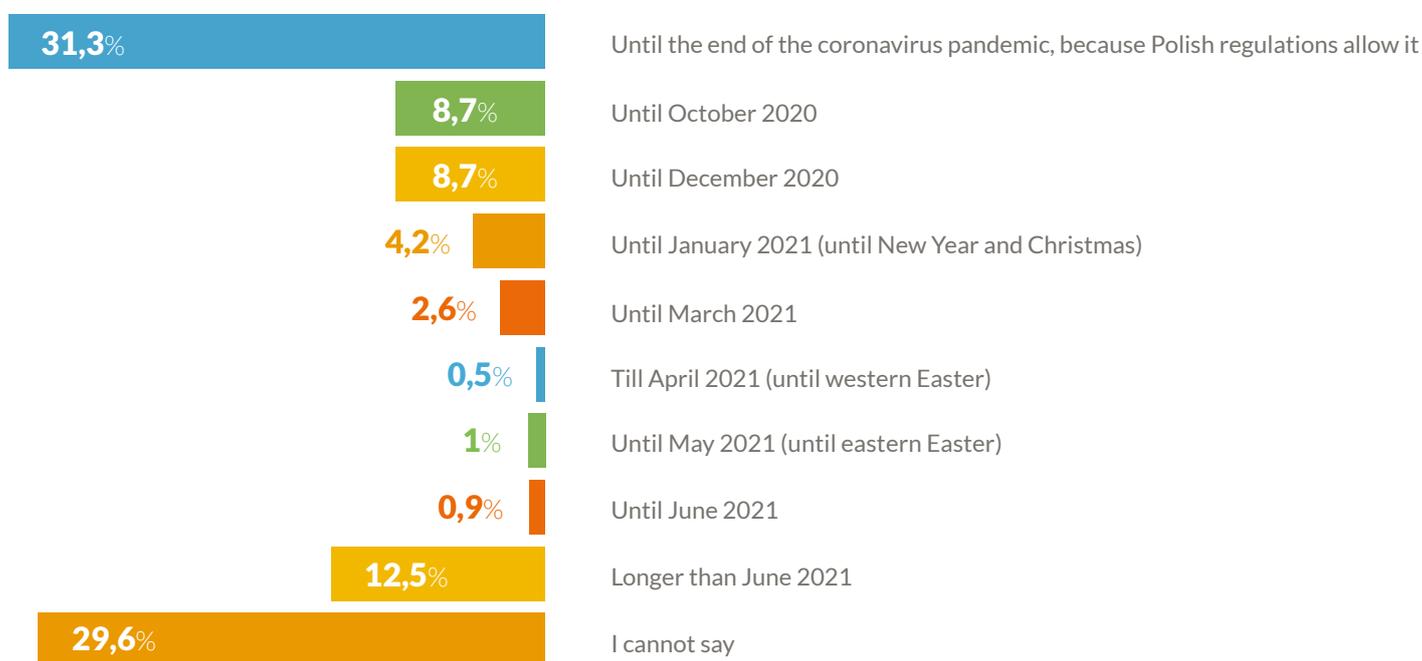
Nearly 1/3 of the foreigners currently working in Poland* plan to continue working until the end of the pandemic, in accordance with the current regulations that extended the legal stay and work of foreigners 'until the 30th day following the day of cancellation of this state'. Nearly 9% planned to leave our country with the coming of October, the same number with the coming of December.

It should also be stressed that almost 30% of economic migrants did not specify how long their current stay in Poland would last.

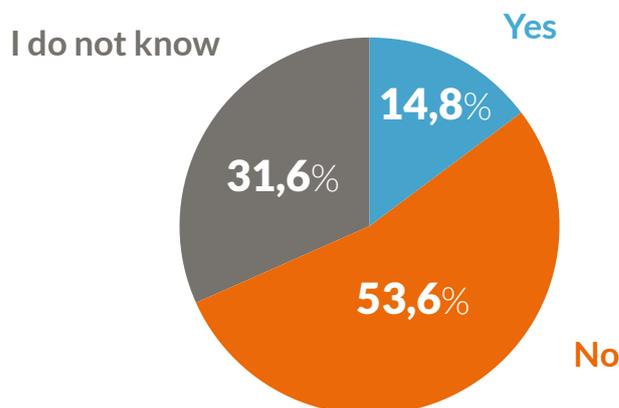
Despite the uncertainty related to COVID-19, the mood among economic migrants and their attitude to work in Poland remain positive. Almost 54% of respondents declare that the reintroduction of restrictions in connection with the ongoing pandemic in our country will not lead them to a decision to stop working in Poland.

*assuming the pandemic will not end in Poland within the next 9 months

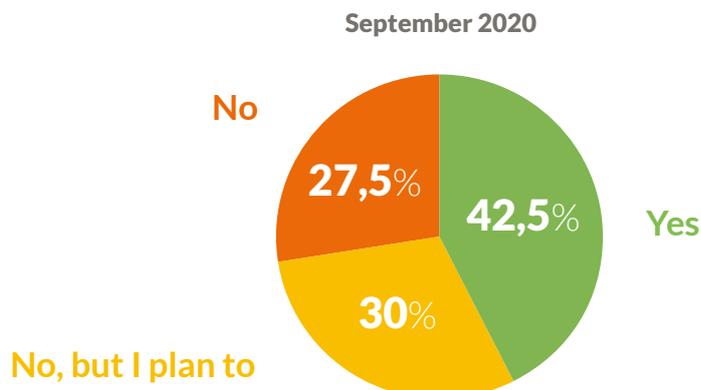
If the coronavirus pandemic in Poland does not end within the next 9 months, how long do you plan to work in Poland? (those who stayed)



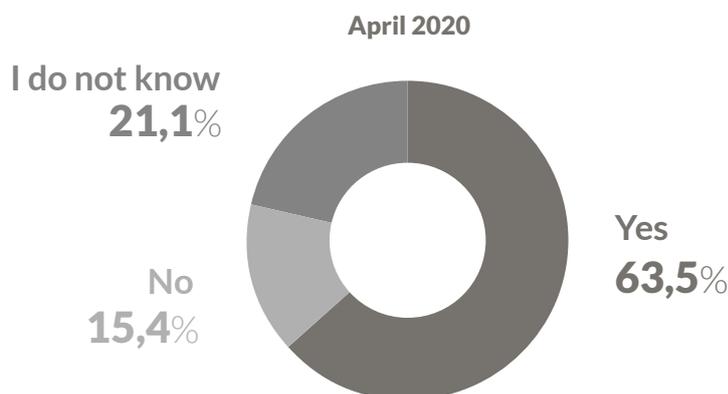
Could the reintroduction of restrictions make you decide to terminate your employment in Poland?



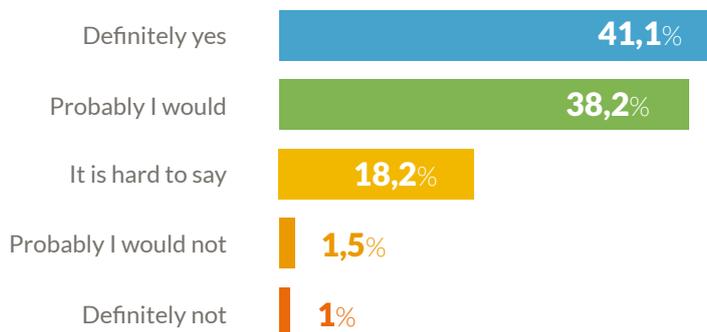
Have you taken advantage of the automatic extension of residence and work permits in Poland proposed by the Polish government?



Will you take advantage of the automatic extension of residence and work permits in Poland proposed by the Polish government?



Would you recommend working in Poland to your friends and relatives?



The automatic extension of the permits for legal residence and work in Poland, proposed by the Polish government, has already been taken advantage of by 42.5% of respondents. In the future another 30% of respondents intend to use the solution. Let us recall that at the beginning of the pandemic,

63.5% of foreigners employed in Poland were planning to use this solution.

Over 79% of foreigners currently employed in our country would recommend working in Poland to their friends and relatives. Only 2.5% of respondents would not recommend it.

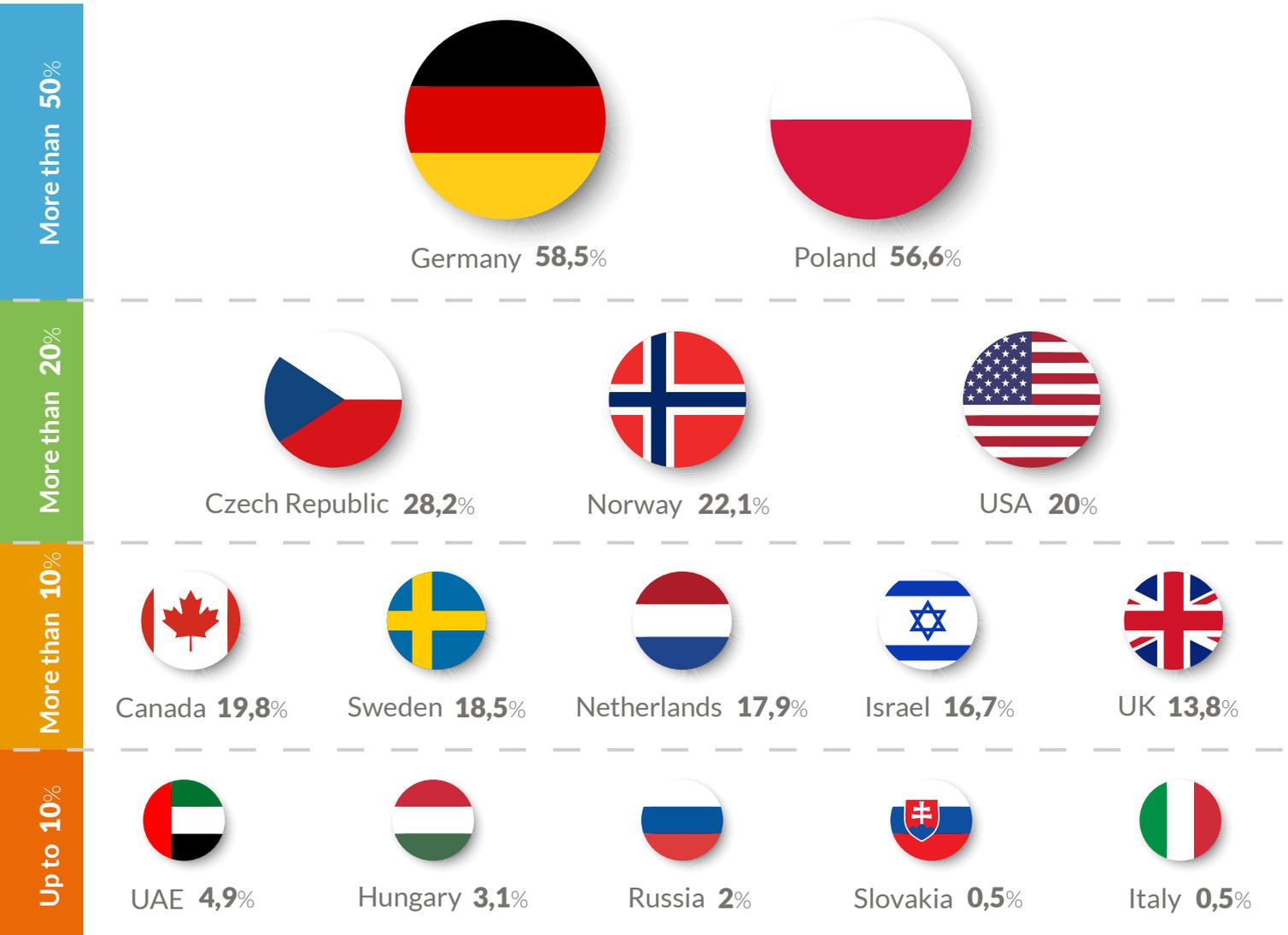
Did you look for employment in other countries than Poland before the coronavirus pandemic?



Did you look for employment in other countries than Poland during the coronavirus pandemic?



Where abroad would you like to work?

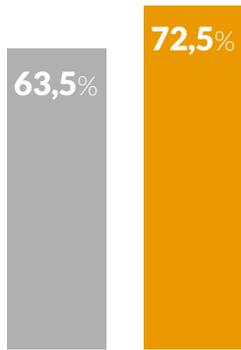


The coronavirus pandemic caused the interest of migrants in employment in foreign countries other than Poland to decrease. More than 31% of the respondents had previously been looking for job offers in countries other than Poland, after the outbreak of the epidemic the scale decreased to almost 19%.

Among the countries where economic migrants currently employed in Poland would like to work are Germany

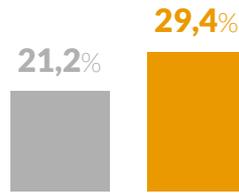
(58.5%), followed by Poland with 57%. More than twice as few would like to work in the Czech Republic (28%). Norway, the USA, Canada, Sweden, the Netherlands, Israel and the United Kingdom have also entered the top ten of destinations of economic migration. In comparison, currently only 2% of economic migrants employed in our country want to work in Russia.

● April 2020 ● September 2020



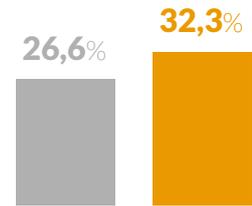
↑ by 1/7

increase of interest among foreigners in automatic extension of legal residence and work permits in Poland



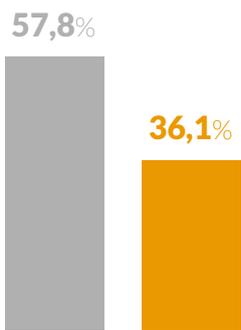
↑ by 1/3

increase of share of foreign employees who had to change the town/city of work in Poland due to the pandemic



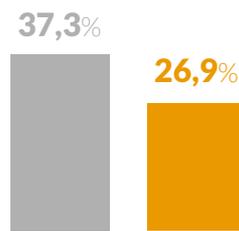
↑ by 1/5

increase of share of economic migrants who had to change their employment sector in Poland due to the pandemic



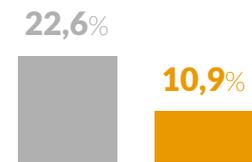
↓ by 1/3

decrease in the number of foreigners who are afraid of losing their jobs



↓ by 1/3

decrease in the number of foreigners who fear that the pandemic will cause an economic crisis



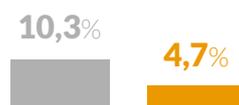
↑ 2x

increase of the number of foreign employees in Poland who have no concerns about the pandemic



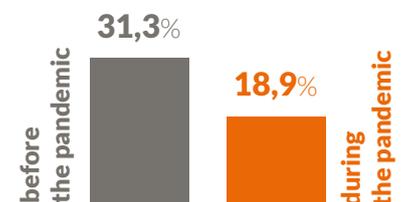
↑ 2x

increase of the share of foreigners who assess the restrictions applied when crossing the Polish border as unjustified



↓ 2x

decrease in the number of economic migrants in Poland who feel unsafe because of the pandemic



↓ 1,7x

decrease in the number of foreigners seeking employment in countries other than Poland



EWL S.A.

Founded in 2007, EWL S.A. recruits top-notch specialists from four continents. 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). 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 to open further offices in other countries.

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. Thanks to advanced IT technologies and tools the recruitment process and employee management are getting faster and more automated. The result? A high percentage of orders and a low percentage of turnover of employees recruited by the company.

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.

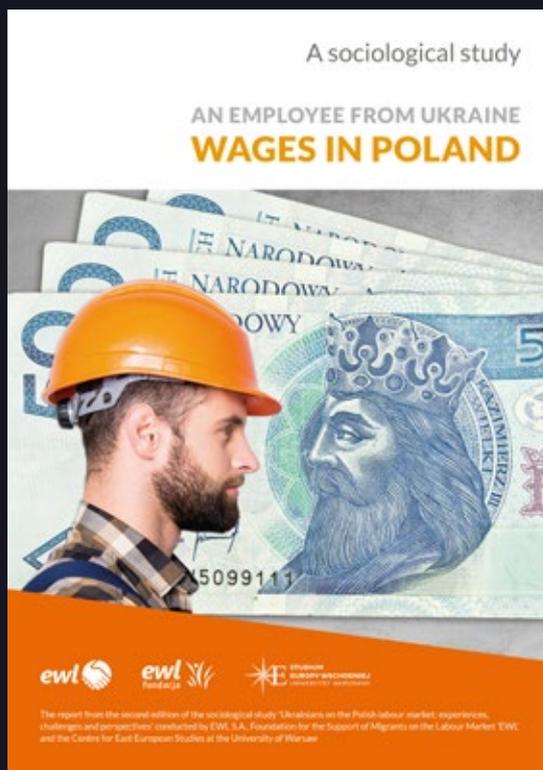
The Centre annually organizes international scientific conferences and a series of events building positive relations between Poland and the countries of the former USSR. It is also the publisher of numerous books and magazines devoted to the eastern themes.



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.



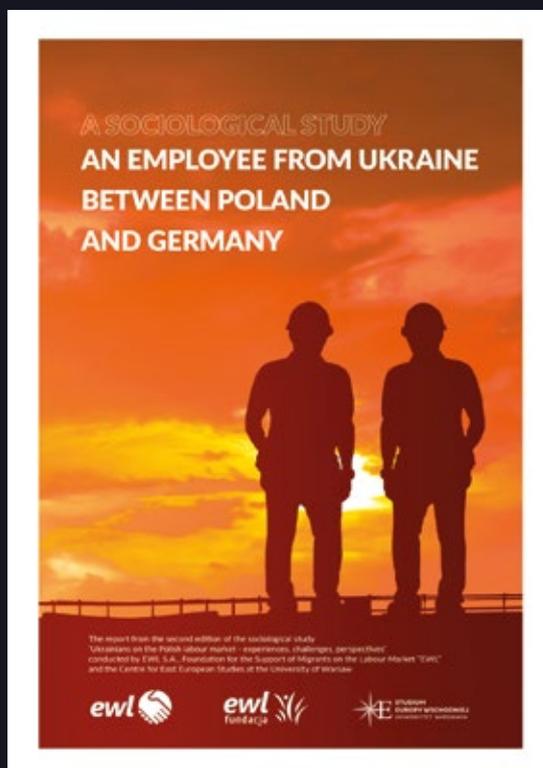
**‘A FOREIGN EMPLOYEE
in the pandemic’**
May 2020



**‘AN EMPLOYEE FROM UKRAINE
wages in Poland’**
December 2019



**‘UKRAINIANS ON THE POLISH LABOUR MARKET
experiences, challenges and perspectives’**
September 2019



**‘AN EMPLOYEE FROM UKRAINE
between Poland and Germany’**
June 2019

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