

COUNTERACTING UNEMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT IN POLAND FROM 2000 TO 2021

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Introduction/background: An analysis of the issue of counteracting unemployment and promoting employment was presented in the paper. Among the social problems, the one concerning unemployment appears as one of the most important. The consequences of unemployment, particularly such of a high rate and the long-lasting one, are especially adverse, not only for the economy, but also for specific people, their families and entire society. However, the phenomenon of unemployment has a varying character. The institutions which aim to counteract unemployment can significantly affect the level of unemployment through their actions. In the years 2000-2022, the actions counteracting unemployment and promoting employment have evolved - they had a varying character.

Aim of the paper: The aim of the paper is to analyse the process of counteracting unemployment and promoting employment, as well as presenting the evolution of changes within this matter from 2000 to 2021.

Materials and methods: The paper presents an analysis of the literature concerning the studied phenomenon, an analysis of legal acts and available statistical data on the studied problem.

Results and conclusions: The paper historically presents the problem of counteracting unemployment and promoting employment in 2000-2022, and the influence of changing actions of the public institutions on the level of unemployment. The authors also indicated arising problems that affect unemployment such as the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

Keywords: unemployment, counteracting unemployment, promoting employment.

1. Introduction

Unemployment is a social issue resulting in multidimensional effects in many fields of life. This phenomenon is caused by complex internal and external factors, which makes the fight against it and counteracting it an extremely difficult task. Such challenge had to be faced by many countries in the world, including Poland.

Developing an adequate technique and tools necessary in facing this problem might take a few decades. There is no model method yet which would eliminate unemployment completely. By means of the fish and the rod method, where the rod stands for providing the job and the fish for providing the social welfare - the years of institutional and legal practice indicate an advantage of the first one. Unemployment cannot be overcome without jobs.

The subject of the study is the problem of counteracting unemployment and promoting employment in Poland in 2000-2021. The choice of such time perspective was supported by the willingness to fill out the deficit of current studies on this matter, because many studies dedicated to unemployment and labour market institutions in Poland focus on the years of political transformation or on short, specific periods of time, e.g. the economic crisis. Among publications related to the unemployment issue, labour market and its institutions, there is a lack of items discussing this phenomenon also in the short term, including entirety of society, not only selected problem groups.

2. Active and passive policy of the labour market and its instruments

The policy of labour market strives to resolve structural problems on the labour market and to improve its functioning. In order to do so, the instruments specialised in influencing the structure of labour supply on the structure of labour demand are being used. A term of different nature is the employment policy directed on general level of employment in the economy – primarily on its growth (Wiśniewski, 2010).

Both the employment policy as well as the labour market policy use a wide range of measures and instruments oriented on certain elements of the economic system with the aim of producing an effect of reducing unemployment, alleviating its consequences, or halting its growth (Nagel, Smandek, 2010). These measures are called methods of counteracting unemployment. There are different ways of their classification, e.g. considering the results, they are divided into methods alleviating the consequences of unemployment, reducing the number of unemployed and counteracting unemployment. The most widely used criterion is the impact on productive potential, according to which a distinction is made between: an active labour market policy and a passive labour market policy.

An active labour market policy is characterised by a duality. On the one hand, it operates microeconomically – it is to help the unemployed to find a job, activate them and limit the processes of losing professional qualifications. On the other hand, it takes action from a macroeconomic perspective by reducing mismatches between demand and supply in the labour market and minimising the negative effects of business cycle (Nagel, Smandek, 2010).

The macroeconomic policy refers to the economy as a whole, that is why among its instruments there are such, which influence the entire labour market. Within the macroeconomic policy, the country reduces unemployment created as a result of imbalance on the labour market, that is, it either stimulates global demand or it creates more favourable economic conditions for manufacturers to develop production (Kwiatkowski, 2018). For this purpose, fiscal instruments such as taxes are being used.

The microeconomic policy is of selective character and it focuses on reducing unemployment in specific groups of the labour force (Kryńska, Kwiatkowski, 2010), e.g. among young people, women, people of particular profession etc. The actions taken within the microeconomic policy include range of instruments, which probably are most commonly associated with counteracting unemployment. These are:

- Public employment programmes that involve creation of jobs by the state in sectors which are not of interest to the private sector – e.g. public works.
- Non-repayable financial aids for the entrepreneurs who resign from the planned downsizing or create new jobs – so called intervention works.
- Loans for the employers in order to create new jobs.
- Loans for the unemployed for setting up their first business.
- Professional training for the unemployed.
- Services of the job placement and the job centres that involve collecting and providing information on available jobs (Kwiatkowski, 2018).

The execution of the above tasks is primarily carried out by the labour offices. Private companies of the job placement have more narrow field of activity – they mostly provide services of career counselling and improving professional qualifications and they mediate between the unemployed and the employer in the process of job searching.

Among the activities unavailable to the non-state labour market institutions, passive labour market policy is primarily included. Its subject is a social security for the unemployed in the form of benefits, one-off compensation for the people who have lost their job and pre-retirement security. Passive instruments also include introducing early retirement for particular, social or professional groups. Reducing unemployment cannot be counted among the effects of the passive labour market policy, because its mechanisms do not realistically influence the activation of the unemployed or the employers. Early retirement system only vacates the jobs on the labour market, whereas adequately constructed benefit system for the unemployed motivates them to find a job quickly.

In order to limit the appearance of preying on the benefits and realistically encourage to take up employment instead of collecting the financial aid, the state must accordingly construct the system of social security. The benefits should not be too high, only provide enough funds for minimal existence. Eligibility criterion cannot include all unemployed, only those who really need help. The maximum period of collecting the benefits should also be defined. Variety

of solutions concerning benefits in specific countries results from their financial feasibility and the importance assigned to the passive labour market policy in the process of counteracting unemployment (Kwiatkowski, 2018).

While creating legal bases and systems of counteracting unemployment, the instruments of active and passive labour market policy should be connected in such way, that they complement each other, provide effectiveness of action and security of public funds.

3. Legal bases of counteracting unemployment in Poland

Conducting rational and effective policy of counteracting unemployment requires, first of all, establishing its legal basis. Due to this, the institutions dealing with employment and unemployment issues are created and equipped in various instruments of action. Therefore, the first law concerning counteracting employment after political transformation has been passed on 29 December 1989 - the law on employment¹. This legal act has been replaced by a new one in 1991², and then in 1994³. These acts have been repeatedly amended in order to meet the requirements and face the problems that Poland was struggling with after the introduction of the democratic system and the free market economy.

Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997 takes the highest place in the hierarchy of legal acts and regulates the matter of counteracting unemployment in art. 65 par. 5, ordering public authorities to pursue such a policy, which leads to complete, productive employment⁴. Programmes of counteracting unemployment, career counselling, professional training, public works and intervention work are intended to serve this purpose. The aforementioned programmes of counteracting unemployment are developed by the government and are often inspired and based on the programmes contained in European Union documents, also when Poland was just aspiring to join the union (Kwiatkowska, 2012).

Poland has been a part of European Union since 1 May 2004. Membership in the union brings many benefits as well as requirements. Due to that, there was also a necessity to actualise Polish law and pass the Act of 20 April 2004 on employment promotion and labour market institutions⁵, which (along with amendments) is functioning to this day. This act defines, among others, tasks of the state related to employment issues, mechanisms for institutional service of

¹ Act of 29 December 1989 - Journal of Laws No. 75, item 446.

² Act of 16 October 1991 on employment and unemployment - Journal of Laws No. 106, item 457.

³ Act of 14 December 1994 on employment and combating unemployment - Journal of Laws No. 1995 No. 1, item 1.

⁴ Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 r., Journal of Laws No. 78, item 483, as amended.

⁵ Act of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and institutions of the labour market, original text, Journal of Laws of 2004 item 1001, consolidated text Journal of laws 2021 item 1100 as amended; other acts dealing with these problems were: the Act of June 13, 2003 on social employment - Journal of Laws No. 122, item. 1143; Act of July 9, 2003 on the employment of temporary workers - Journal of Laws 2003 No. 166, item 1608.

the labour market, professional activation and alleviation of the effects of unemployment (Ziomek, 2007). It also introduced bigger possibilities of using an active state policy on the labour market. Within the meaning of the Act, the above tasks of the state are implemented by the minister responsible for labour on the basis of the National Action Plan for Employment, which is passed by the Council of Ministers (Ziomek, 2007).

Among other legal acts providing market institutions with a basis for action, the Act of 11 October 2013 on specific solutions related to protection of jobs⁶ can also be mentioned, as it regulates the matters of granting the benefits for protection of jobs and funding training courses for the employers included in specific solutions for protection of jobs.

In accordance with the current law of 20 April 2004 on employment promotion and labour market institutions, the employment authorities include: the minister responsible for labour, governors, provincial marshals and mayors. Along with the district and provincial Labour Offices, they form the so called Public Employment Services. The state organisations are also the Voluntary Labour Corps, specialised in activities for young people - especially those at risk of social exclusion. They provide job placement, career guidance and professional preparation. They also help young people, who did not graduate from the primary or middle school, by enabling the possibility of gaining professional qualifications.

The law also mentions employment agencies, which are non-public labour market institutions. These are the economic activities included in the register of subjects running employment agencies. They can provide job placement services (in the country and abroad), career guidance, personal guidance and temporary employment. Training institutions, which provide out-of-school education, that is training courses for the unemployed, can also take a non-public form.

Labour market institutions include the so called social dialogue institutions. These are the trade unions (and their organisations), employer organisations, unemployed organisations and non-governmental organisations, whose status includes carrying out employment promotion tasks, alleviating the effects of unemployment and professional activation. Another group of institutions implementing actions and projects for the labour market are the local partnership institutions and training institutions.

4. Evolution of counteracting unemployment and employment promotion

Conducting the policy of the labour market requires constant observation and adapting it to the needs of the citizens, as well as answering to the problems arising in the economy. Subjects and instruments of the labour market policy in Poland were created from the scratch after the

⁶ Uniform text 2019 Journal of Laws, item 669 as amended.

political transformation of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and have been repeatedly changed and modified in the following years by defining new goals and ways of achieving them and focusing on the priorities. At first, the labour market policy was of protective nature and was conducted mostly with the means of social support for the unemployed. In the following years, its objective was oriented more on professional activation, investing in human capital and promoting employment (Szyłko-Skoczny, 2014).

In the 1990s, unemployment was being reduced by the early retirement system. In 1998, it has been practically eliminated and replaced with pre-retirement benefits, which were directed toward the long-term unemployed with low chances of finding a job. Reformation of the retirement system in 1999 has also introduced the bridging retirement. It is assumed, that before the reformation, an actual retirement age was approximately five years lower than the statutory one. It has been emphasised, that further reduction in labour supply instead of an activation of the unemployed may lead to a crisis of the public funds system due to funding so many retirement benefits. Restriction in granting the pre-retirement benefits took place in 2004 by the Act of 30 April on retirement benefits⁷. Service of these benefits was transferred from the Labour Fund to the Social Insurance Institution (Stasiak, 2008).

M. Szyłko-Skoczny brought the attention to the institutional transformations of the labour market service. She named the first system of the labour offices created in the 1990s a special government administration. This model has been replaced by a government – self-government model (Baron-Wiaterek, 2008) in 2000, and then a public – non-public model (Szyłko-Skoczny, 2014) in 2004.

At the end of the 20th century (1990-1999), the organisation of employment institution was of hierarchic, linear nature. It included the minister responsible for employment, National Labour Office, Provincial Labour Office and Regional Labour Office (Ziomek, 2007).

The change in organisation of the Labour Offices in 2000 was dictated by former self-government reform of the state, under which the number of provinces was reduced, districts were established and a three-level territorial division was introduced. In that moment, the Provincial and Regional Labour Offices were no longer subordinate to each other (Firlej, 2002).

Organisational system of employment institution after the reform in 2000 is presented by the scheme below.

⁷ Act of 30 April 2004 on pre-retirement benefits, uniform text Journal of Laws of 2020 item 252 as amended.

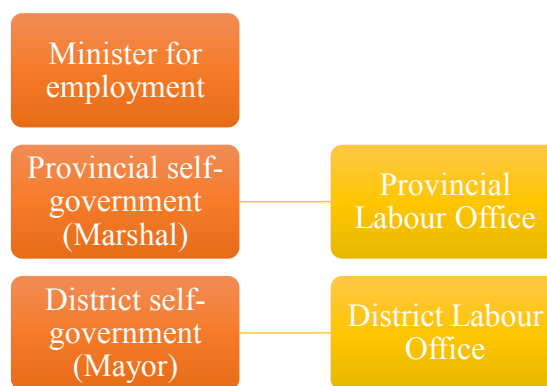


Figure 1. Government - self-government model - horizontal system of the Labour Offices in Poland (since 2000). Source A. Ziomek, *Wybrane problemy rynku pracy w Polsce w okresie transformacji*, Agencja Artystyczna PARA, Katowice 2007, p. 60.

An important change in organisation of work in the Offices was abolishing the mutual dependence of the Provincial and District Offices. Instead, they began performing advisory functions to each other. Labour Offices were incorporated into the district's combined administration and provincial self-government, and they were subject to: Provincial Labour Office - to the Marshall of the Province, District Labour Office - to the Mayor.

This system of organisation of the Labour Offices functions to this day. The reform conducted in 2004 did not change it, but joined in cooperation the public subjects (Labour Offices) and non-public subjects (employment agencies, job placement services, voluntary labour corps). An Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions (2004) has begun a new approach to the labour market policy in Poland, which is no longer focused on social security of the unemployed, but it helps them to return to the labour market. The 2014 amendment, which deepened the cooperation between public and private subjects, also expanded the meaning of professional activation. The aim of the changes was to adjust the employment service to the implemented labour market policy, that is „moving away from a benefit state to a labour state” (Szytko-Skoczny, 2014). The process of this transition is reflected by a changing number of the unemployed who register in the Labour Office and have the right to the unemployment benefit.

Also, in 2014, under the Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 14 May 2014 on profiling an aid for the unemployed⁸, the so called profiling of the unemployed was introduced. Everyone registering in the Labour Office went through a process of defining the profile of offered help. Profile I was attributed to self-reliant and active persons, who were then addressed to the job placement services. The unemployed who obtained profile II, defined as less self-reliant, were given a wide range of support (excluding Activation and Integration Programme). Whereas long-term unemployed were defined as profile III. In their case, the Office could apply the activation and social integration programmes. In practice, the persons

⁸ Journal of Laws of 2014 item 631.

from the third group were to be more affected, because they did not have the possibility of using all the instruments related to counteracting unemployment (Żebrowski, 2019).

The Supreme Audit Office, in the report on profiling the unemployed, came to conclusion that „profiling of the unemployed was limiting the possibilities of the offices’ actions and discriminated the unemployed depriving them equal rights“ (Żebrowski, 2019). The Ombudsman also spoke on this matter. The problems were also noticed by the Labour Offices themselves, whose view was that rigid forms of profiling did not allow for effective activation of the unemployed.

Finally, in June 2018, the Constitutional Tribunal repealed the regulation, and in 2019, an Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions was changed and profiling has been completely discontinued⁹.

The Individual Action Plan is still available to the Offices and the unemployed. This Instrument, also implemented in 2014, allows to customise an aid provided by the labour institutions to the needs, possibilities, education and skills of the unemployed. This Plan includes both the actions taken by a district Labour Office, but also the unemployed themselves, e.g. by browsing the offers. Customer advisor chooses activities for the unemployed, their completion dates and conditions for completing the plan. The progress is monitored at least once every 60 days¹⁰.

In order to present the transformation of the Labour Offices’ work, the following table includes data concerning the entire discussed time period, that is 2000-2021, during which the legal-institutional changes were taking place in the handling of unemployment. The number of the unemployed with the right to the benefits among the total number of the unemployed registered in the Labour Offices was presented in the form of a numerical value as well as a percentage.

Table 1.

Share of the unemployed with the right to the benefits among all those registered in the Labour Offices

Year	The unemployed registered in the Labour Offices in thousands	Including the right to the benefits in thousands	Percentage of the unemployed with the right to the benefits
2000	2702.6	548.6	20.3%
2001	3115.1	624.3	20%
2002	3217.0	538.7	16.7%
2003	3217.7	478.1	15.1%
2004	2999.6	425.8	14.2%
2005	2773.0	374.3	13.5%
2006	2309.4	310.8	13.5%
2007	1746.6	250.7	14.4%

⁹ *Koniec procedury profilowania bezrobotnych – zmiany od 14 czerwca 2019 r.*, Kadry.infor.pl, <https://kadry.infor.pl/wiadomosci/2945471,Koniec-procedury-profilowania-bezrobotnych-zmiany-od-14-czerwca-2019-r.html>, 4.06.2020.

¹⁰ *Indywidualny Plan Działania*, Departament Rynku Pracy MRPiPS, Psz.praca.gov.pl, <https://psz.praca.gov.pl/dla-bezrobotnych-i-poszukujacych-pracy/abc-bezrobotnego-i-poszukujacego-pracy/indywidualny-plan-dzialania>, 4.06.2020.

Cont. table 1

2008	1473.8	271.3	18.4%
2009	1892.7	380.0	20.1%
2010	1954.7	326.6	16.7%
2011	1982.7	326.5	16.5%
2012	2136.8	358.3	16.8%
2013	2157.9	297.8	13.8%
2014	1825.2	242.4	13.3%
2015	1563.3	217.3	13.9%
2016	1335.2	186.7	14%
2017	1081.7	159.6	14.8%
2018	968.9	153.3	15.8%
2019	866.4	142.5	16.4%
2020	1046.4	167.8	16%
2021	895.2	19.3	13%

Source: Own study from 2013 to 2021 with the use of: K. Siuprzyńska-Rudnicka, *Zmiany w zasadach przyznawania zasiłku dla bezrobotnych i ich wpływ na realizację funkcji dochodowej w motywacyjnej tego świadczenia*, Nauki Społeczne 2(8), Wrocław 2013, p. 151; oraz *Roczniki Statystyczne Polski 2010-2021*¹¹; <https://psz.praca.gov.pl/documents/10828/18302263/2021%20Bezrobocie%20rejestrowane.pdf>, 15.07.2022.

Beginning of the 21st century was characterised by a large number of the unemployed with the right to the benefits. The tightening of requirements in the granting of benefits resulted in a decrease in the number of benefits between 2002 and 2007. In the following two years, the number of unemployed people with the right to the benefits has increased. The reason behind that was a global economic crisis. Subsequently, an improving situation of the labour market, increased number of jobs and modified employment administration, contributed to systematic decline in the number of the unemployed with the right to the benefits from 2010 to 2022 (excluding 2012 and 2019). At the same time, the overall number of the unemployed has also decreased. This data proves that methods of the Labour Offices' activity have changed. Throughout the years, the regulations related to benefits have been gradually tightened. As a result of these actions, fewer unemployed people could apply for them (Siuprzyńska-Rudnicka, 2013). It is also worth noticing, that an increased number of the unemployed caused by the pandemic in 2020 did not translate into an increase in the proportion of unemployed with the right to the benefits, instead, it continued its decreasing trend. The amount of the benefit was reduced over the period in question to the extent that it represented between 61.5% and 66.5% of the minimum social security value.

¹¹ *Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2010*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2010, p. 271; *Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2013*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2013, p. 251; *Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2014*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2014, p. 271; *Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2016*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2016, p. 254; *Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2017*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2017, p. 252; *Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2019*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2019, p. 255, *Bezrobocie rejestrowane I-IV kwartał 2019 r.*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2019, pp. 14-15, *Rocznik Statystyczny Polski 2021*, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2021, p. 255; *Bezrobotni zarejestrowani i stopa bezrobocia. Stan w końcu grudnia 2021 r.*, access date: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rynek-pracy/bezrobocie-rejestrowane/bezrobotni-zarejestrowani-i-stopa-bezrobocia-stan-w-koncu-grudnia-2021-r-,2,113.html>, 17.03.2022.

Within 2000-2008, the qualifying requirement for unemployment benefits was a length of seniority of at least 365 days. Moreover, only those periods of employment were included in the required seniority, which monthly wage level was at least as high as the lowest wage in the economy (Siuprzyńska-Rudnicka, 2013). The amount of granted benefit was varied depending on the length of seniority. The unemployed with seniority of 5 to 20 years were granted the basic amount of benefit, the unemployed with seniority of less than 5 years – 80% of the basic amount, and the unemployed with seniority longer than 20 years – 120% of the basic benefit amount (Pasterniak-Malicka, 2015).

Till the end of March 2000, the benefit was valorised quarterly by the consumer price index and the consumer services index. Up until April 2004, this has been taking place every six months and then (from June 2004) once a year (Siuprzyńska-Rudnicka, 2013).

Collection of the benefit is limited in time. This means that once granted, the benefit is not paid for life, but for a specific period of time. In the early years of economic transformation, the benefit for the unemployed could have been collected for 6 months if you were a resident of a district with an unemployment rate not exceeding that of the country; for 12 months if you were a resident of a district with an unemployment rate higher than that of the country; for 18 months if you were a resident of a district with an unemployment rate at least twice the rate of the country and additionally had at least 20 years of seniority that allows for the benefit, or had at least one dependent child under the age of 15 and a spouse who is also unemployed and has lost the right to benefit.

It can be noted, that receiving of the benefit for the shortest intended period (6 months) did not require many conditions to be met at the same time. The benefit for the unemployed for 6 months was directed toward residents of the districts with better situation on the labour market, where the unemployment rate is lower than that of the country and finding employment should be easier. The benefit granted for 12 months was intended for the unemployed from the districts of worse situation on the labour market, whereas people in a particularly difficult living situation, residing in the districts of a very high rate of unemployment, were granted the benefit for 18 months.

In 2004, only the requirements for the benefit of 12 months were changed. The unemployment rate in the district where the unemployed resides had to exceed 125% of the country's unemployment rate. An additional restriction for the benefit was the impossibility for a registered unemployed person to refuse, without valid cause, a proposal of: a job, professional training, retraining, interventional work, public works, participation in a training or in a practice and professional preparation in the workplace - issued by the Labour Office. Refusal was equal to losing the right to benefit for 90 days (Siuprzyńska-Rudnicka, 2013).

Currently, in 2022, time period of collecting the benefit totals: as a rule, 180 or 365 days. Throughout 180 days, the benefit is collected by unemployed persons residing in the district if the unemployment rate in this area on 30 June of the year preceding the day of acquiring the right to the benefit did not exceed 150% of the average unemployment rate in the country;

throughout 365 days, the benefit is collected by the unemployed residing in the districts if the unemployment rate in this area on 30 June of the year preceding the day of acquiring the right to the benefit did not exceed 150% of the average unemployment rate in the country, or if they are over 50 years old and have at least 20 year-long period that gives them the right to the benefit, or they have at least one dependent child up to the age of 15 and the unemployed person's spouse is also unemployed and has lost the right to benefit due to the expiry of the benefit period after the date on which the unemployed person became entitled to the benefit, or is a single parent of at least one child up to the age of 15.

Poland's accession to the European Union obliged the state to implement the European Employment Strategy, which goal is to create more and better jobs in every country of the European Union. Currently, this strategy is a part of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the member states have to include employment guidelines in their employment policy, prepare reports and assessments of employment outcomes, submit national reform programmes and apply recommendations specific to each country.¹² Each country, adequately to the needs of its own labour market, adjust its programmes and legal basis to the European Employment Strategy.

5. Summary

Beginning with political transformation of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the problem of unemployment, its reduction and prevention and, in the longer term, the promotion of employment, has been an important focus of a social policy in Poland. The first decade of continuous legal changes did not bring expected solution on the matters of unemployment and employment, but new challenges. The situation began to change significantly in the second decade.

The Act on employment promotion and labour market institutions passed on 20 April 2004, as well as its numerous amendments, defined the legal framework for Poland - the member of the European Union - and has allowed a shift in the focus of labour market policy from social security for the unemployed to helping them return to the labour market. This has been influenced by changes in the organisation of the structure of labour offices and including the non-public subjects in cooperation. At the same time, the requirements for the right to the benefit for the unemployed were being tightened. The reason for those measures was not only to achieve an effect of significant relief of the burden on the public finance system, but primarily to motivate the unemployed to find a job quickly.

¹² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=pl&catId=101>, 16.05.2022.

These measures have had the desired effect. Poland's accession to the European Union has initiated a downward trend in the unemployment rate. Global economic crisis in 2008 resulted in a renewed increase in the number of the unemployed people, but a proper system of counteracting unemployment and employment promotion allowed to overcome the crisis quickly. In December 2019, the lowest historical unemployment rate has been noted - 5,2%, and in 2021, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, only 5,4%.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the unemployment and employment in Poland was not as drastic as the crisis in 2008. Nevertheless, the labour market faces another challenge, which is the war in Ukraine and influx of the refugees. Even though the residents of this country have helped Polish economy to fill the deficiency in employment for years, it is unknown if the labour market (still impaired after the pandemic) will be able to receive such a big number of people willing to work. Undoubtedly, institutions counteracting unemployment face new challenges requiring intensification of the use of available forms and instruments of counteracting unemployment and employment promotion.

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