

POLAND



Key policies to promote longer
working lives

Country note 2007 to 2017

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KEY POLICIES TO PROMOTE LONGER WORKING LIVES IN POLAND¹

(From 2007 to mid-2017)

Poland could do more to raise its effective retirement ages, which are well below the EU average: in 2016, 62.6 for men and 59.8 for women compared with the respective EU averages of 63.4 and 62. (See more indicators in Table 1). In particular, as indicated in Table 2, Poland should take action to raise the statutory age of retirement, as a priority by gradually aligning the retirement age for women with that of men at 65. Poland should also facilitate phased retirement; implement age-neutral measures in employment protection by abolishing the hiring disincentive of special protection rules for older workers; review the use of seniority wages; and facilitate job mobility. That said, the country has taken substantial action to launch public awareness campaigns promoting the socio-economic potential of older workers, and action to provide employment/hiring subsidies to firms.

1. Rewarding work and later retirement

Introduction

The first pillar of the pension system in Poland is based on an actuarial notional contributions pension scheme established in 1999. People under 30 (born in 1969 and after) at the time of the reform must also participate in the funded scheme (second pillar); people aged 30-50 (born between 1949 and 1968) could choose the funded option. However, the choice had to be made in 1999 and once made it was irrevocable, except for those who could retire early. Since 2014, participation in the funded scheme is voluntary. The third pillar consists of voluntary supplementary pension saving in collective pension schemes or individual retirement accounts.

1.1. Enhancing incentives to continue working at an older age

Raising the statutory age of retirement

In 2016 the government decided to rescind as from October 2017 the 2013 reform that would have taken the retirement age to 67 in stages for both women and men. The 2013 reform gradually raised by four months per year the statutory retirement age, starting with men born in 1948 and women born in 1953. For men, the target age was being increased from 65 years in 2013 to 67 years in 2020. For women, the convergence period was longer and a pension age of 67 would be reached in 2040 from an age of 60 in 2013. The law enacted on 16 November 2016 reduced the retirement age back to 60 for women and 65 for men from 1 October 2017 onwards. According to OECD (2017), Poland is one of only three OECD countries that will retain different normal retirement ages for men and women with no attempt at eventual convergence, the others are Israel and Switzerland.

1. This note has been produced by the Ageing and Employment Policy Team.

This change will have negative effects on employment and long-term GDP growth, according to OECD simulations (OECD, 2016). Malec and Tyrowicz (2017) see the lower retirement age slashing future pension benefits and at the same time increasing the incidence of minimum pension and the related pension, both of which would entail fiscal cost. Therefore, the OECD (2018) recommends that Poland evaluate the effects of the 2016 reform in the near future and make corrections if necessary, such as gradually aligning the retirement age for women with that of men at 65. It is also recommended that the country clarify to the public the impact of working longer on pension income through high-quality information and financial literacy training.

Facilitating phased retirement

The lowering of the retirement age in 2017 invalidates the partial pension scheme enacted in 2012. The partial pension had been introduced simultaneously with the increase of the retirement age in 2013. The right to the partial pension was granted to those who reached the former established retirement age but could not retire due to the increase. Women who reached the age of 62 and had at least 35 years of contributory and non-contributory periods, and men of 65 years of age with at least 40 corresponding years, had the right to withdraw a partial pension equal to 50% of the full pension. Take-up of such partial pensions could have been combined with work as one element of a more flexible route from work to retirement.

Better combining of pensions (or partial pensions) and work income

It is possible to both work and receive a pension. However, an existing employment contract has to be ended before withdrawal of a full pension is possible. The pensioner can thereafter continue to work on the basis of a new contract and receive the full pension. There are a number of restrictions that apply to combining the income if a person is working and receiving a pension before reaching the statutory retirement age. For instance, the ceiling to contributions and pensionable earnings is set at 1.3 times the average wage in the preceding year. There is also a second income limit that decreases the amount of the pension; it equals 70% of the average wage in the preceding year. If the income from work is higher than this limit, then the old-age pension is decreased accordingly.

Rewarding longer careers

It is possible to defer both the notional and the funded, defined contribution pension component without any age limits. According to OECD (2017), each year of working longer and deferring a pension results in a benefit increase of around 6%.²

1.2. Towards restricted use of early retirement schemes

Restricting access to publicly funded early retirement schemes

A reform in 2009 eliminated the early retirement system and replaced it with the so-called bridging pension system, which covered a much narrower range of professions and established much more restrictive conditions for accessing early retirement. The 2009 reform mainly affected men born after 1948 and women born after 1953. Bridging pensions are temporary instruments with many conditions to be satisfied, and will lapse around the year 2040.

2. See that publication's country note on Poland at www.oecd.org/poland/PAG2017-POL.pdf (accessed 29 January 2018).

The pre-1999 pension system (applicable to persons born before 1949) allowed various forms of early retirement for specific groups, such as miners, railway workers, teachers, people working in special conditions and women. The 1999 reform postponed eligibility for early retirement until the end of 2008. From 2005 however, miners had their early retirement pension system reinstated according to the pre-1999 rules.

Previously, members of the social insurance system for farmers (KRUS) who ceased their agricultural activities were eligible for early retirement, which became available to women (at the age of 55) and men (at the age of 60) who had made contributions to pension insurance for at least 30 years. According to a regulation passed in 2013, this possibility of early retirement will gradually be eliminated.

Police officers, uniformed public employees and soldiers are also covered by special pension schemes. These generally incorporate more generous conditions and benefits than the general public scheme, although there is some alignment with the general rules. People who enter these services as of 2013 are able to retire when they reach the age of 55, provided that they have at least 25 years of contributions. Those who took up services before 2013 have the possibility of retiring in accordance with the previous set of rules, whereby people could be entitled to retirement after 15 years of service.

Introducing specific provisions for arduous/hazardous work

The 2009 bridging pension system covers people working in special conditions,³ based on a new, medically approved. The right to a bridging pension is granted only to those engaged in arduous/hazardous work at least one year before 1999. Workers receive a bridging pension for up to five years (ten years for some occupations⁴) before retirement age. This benefit is financed from the state budget (and, since 2010, additionally from contributions paid by employers).

From July 2009, compensation benefits are also possible for teachers, from the age of 55 for women and 55 increasing to 57 by 2018 for men if the covered work period is longer than 30 years (which can include 20 years of part-time work) and they terminate their employment.

Preventing welfare benefits are from being used as alternative pathways to early retirement

Unemployment (insurance and assistance) benefits

The unemployment benefit in Poland is a low, flat-rate payment, independent of previous wage and social security contributions but differentiated according to the number of years in employment. While the standard maximum duration of unemployment benefits is 180 days, the duration is in certain cases prolonged to 365 days; such is the case for example for those unemployed above the age of 50 with at least 20 years of social security contributions. However, all those receiving an unemployment benefit, regardless of their age, must be ready to take up full-time jobs; refusing job offers or participation in active labour market programmes (ALMPs) entails sanctions, (see Section 3.2 for a discussion on activation measures).

Moreover, the older unemployed can, under certain conditions, be eligible for pre-retirement benefits at the level of the minimum guaranteed amount. Termination of the work contract must be due to reasons firmly

3. The legislation in Poland refers to “jobs of a special nature”. These are jobs that require particular responsibility; the ability to perform them properly, in a manner that does not pose a threat to public safety as the result of a decline in particular psychophysical aptitudes.

4. Ten-year recipients include pilots and those performing work on airplanes; steelworkers; fishermen; workers in commercial seaports and in the metallurgy industry; and those working with material containing asbestos.

linked to the employer⁵ and the worker has to have been employed at least six months prior. The pre-retirement benefit can also be granted to a person registered as unemployed who has received benefits for at least six months directly preceding application for the allowance, and who meets certain conditions concerning the number of years in work. According to present legislation beneficiaries must, in most cases, have reached the age of 56 for women and 61 for men, and they can combine pre-retirement benefits with work (just the opposite of the case with unemployment benefits). However, the pre-retirement benefit is suspended if the income from work is higher than 70% of the average wage in the preceding year as calculated by the Central Statistical Office.

The total number of pre-retirement recipients depends heavily on the labour market situation and changes in legislation. The number fell to a minimum in 2009 due to the cessation of early retirement but has been increasing in 2012-14 with the global financial crisis. Since 2014, the number of recipients has remained stable but is expected to decrease in 2018, as several thousand become eligible to retire.

Disability benefits

The rules concerning eligibility for disability benefits in Poland were tightened in 1997. Disability is currently defined on the basis of inability to work, instead of (as previously) on the basis of health conditions. Disability rights are granted for a limited period: no longer than five years, except in cases where the disability is most likely permanent or of long duration. Tightening of the criteria has substantially reduced the inflow; the stock has halved over the past decade. However, recent years have seen a renewed increase in the take-up rate of disability pension benefits for those aged 55 and older. In 2016, about 20% of new disability pensions were granted to men between the ages of 55 and 59. In addition, the European Commission is concerned (in 2017) by the fact that the employment rate of disabled people has hardly changed in recent years, further widening the gap with the gradually increasing employment rate of people without disabilities (EC, 2017).

2. Encouraging employers to retain and hire older workers

2.1. Preventing discrimination in employment on the basis of age

Launching public awareness campaigns

Poland struggles with traditional views of older people as “tired”, “old-fashioned” and overly attached to family and community life. Various campaigns in 2012 and 2013 have attempted to counter these stereotypes, in order to instil a more positive image of older people (OECD, 2015, Boxes 4.1 and 5.2). In addition, a nationwide information campaign promoting awareness of the socio-economic potential of women and men aged 50+ in society was carried out among potential employers in 2014. A website has been created that presents best practices and practical information.⁶ In 2015, four regional conferences were organised with about 600 participants to discuss these issues. As a result, a short report on best practices has been prepared.

Some firms include in their job offers the logo “50+ friendly”. For instance, a large chain of supermarkets, in co-operation with a local labour office, implemented a programme with that logo as title: “50+ do pracy”. The programme’s aim was to encourage unemployed people over 50 to start working in the

5. For example, bankruptcy or insolvency; heavy violation of the employees’ rights by the employer; liquidation of the workstation due to economic, organisational or technical factors; or the death of the employer.

6. <http://50plus.gov.pl/> (accessed 29 January 2018).

company. Also a company dealing with book distribution indicated in their job ads for telemarketers that older people are welcome.

In May and June of 2017, an information campaign titled “Worthy choice. Restoration of the retirement age” was conducted with the aim of creating awareness that retirement is a right, not an obligation. The campaign was supported by the Social Insurance Institution.

2.2. Taking a balanced approach to employment protection by age

Implementing age-neutral measures

Poland has a highly segmented labour market, with a high share of temporary workers in all age groups. While permanent, fixed-term and temporary contracts are all regulated by the Labour Code, employment relations can also be regulated by the Civil Code. Civil Code contracts are cheaper for employers, since they contain fewer social protection requirements. Some types of these contracts are not subject to payments of social security contributions – even for pensions –and the contracts are not covered by minimum-wage regulations.

In response to this trend, the Polish Government took action to tackle labour market segmentation. An act adopted by Parliament in October 2014 came into force on 1 January 2016. It broadens the basis for the calculation of social security contributions by introducing an obligation for employers to make those contributions on all contracts up to the amount of the minimum wage. This is a step towards creating greater convergence in the regulation of Civil Code and Labour Code contracts. The amendment to the Labour Code that came into force on 22 February 2016 also reduces flexibility in the take-up of temporary contracts, by introducing an increase of social security contributions connected to certain civil law contracts and, most recently, a minimum hourly remuneration for those working under civil law mandate contracts.

Hiring with open-ended contracts remains discouraged for certain categories of workers, in particular for older workers protected against dismissal during the four years until retirement age. The OECD (2015) recommended abolishing the special protection rules for older workers in order to align employment protection across all age groups. This should, however, be combined with reinforced ALMPs for older jobseekers, to facilitate their quick reintegration into employment.

2.3. Discouraging mandatory retirement by employers

By law in general and by sector/occupation, private/public sector, region

There is no legislated mandatory retirement age in the Polish social insurance system. Employers cannot require their older workers to go into retirement, except in some occupations that have special rules regarding a maximum age for performing a particular job. These limitations are related to specific kinds of work, for example in jobs that require particular physical abilities. Nevertheless, these rules do not prohibit going on to work in other occupations, so they cannot be described as general mandatory retirement rules.

2.4. Encouraging the social partners to implement better retention and hiring mechanisms targeted at older workers

For all older workers

The Codification Committee, which includes representatives of the government, experts and the social partners, has been created by the Prime Minister and set up in September 2016. The committee consists of

two working groups: one works on individual labour law and the second on the collective labour law. Its aim is to prepare, within 18 months, drafts of the new Labour Code and Collective Labour Code.

The Social Dialogue Council has been operating since October 2015, and is the main forum for tripartite dialogue in Poland. One of its tasks is to present an opinion on the drafts of new laws prepared by the government. The council also has the right to initiate the legislative process. Its chairmanship is rotational – in 2015/16 it was held by a representative of trade unions, in 2016/17 by a representative of the employers' organisations and in 2018/19 by the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy. In 2016 the working group on social insurance of the Social Dialogue Council discussed widely different issues concerning the old-age pension system – among others, restoration of the retirement age, conditions for old-age pensions, the second and third pillar of the old-age pension system, the level of the pension, and the financial stability of the old-age pension fund.

Review of the use of seniority wages

Pay practices in the private sector are determined between an employer and an employee, except in large firms where the social partners are involved. The levers of action available to the Polish Government relate to setting the official minimum wage and providing incentives for the social partners to review the use of seniority wages. In particular, public authorities can set an example in public sector wage-setting arrangements by introducing performance pay and limiting automatic rises in salary with tenure. They could therefore do more to encourage the social partners in the private sector to follow their example.

2.5. Encouraging good practice in collective labour agreements and/or by individual employers/industries in managing an age-diverse workforce

Between 2011 and 2013, the project “Evaluation of Actions Undertaken in Polish Enterprises Aimed at Retaining Older Workers” launched a guidebook for employers regarding age management strategies. The project also produced informational and training material on this topic. Between 2009 and 2011, a competition for employers called “Profit from Maturity” awarded companies for implementing age management strategies in order to raise awareness about age management solutions.

Many programmes have been implemented to address active ageing; most of them are co-financed by EU structural funds and the Polish Labour Fund (OECD, 2015). In particular, the programme “Solidarity across Generations” aims to address labour market issues for older workers and to encourage longer professional activity of people aged 50+. The programme was adopted in 2008 and is foreseen to continue until 2020. The focus of the initiative is on increasing incentives for firms to employ people above the age of 50 and to improve the employability of older workers. Activities are carried out at the central, regional and local levels.

In 2013 a special task group, the “50+ Social Council”, was appointed by the government for a limited period to develop recommendations for measures related to the “Solidarity across Generations” programme. A diverse range of points of view are represented on the council, including those of labour market institutions, ministries, NGOs and the social partners. The renewed “Solidarity across Generations” agenda was adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2013. The goals of the updated agenda include:

- i. Upgrading the skills of people over the age of 45, to enable these workers to stay relevant in the labour market
- ii. Developing systems of personnel management and work environments that are friendlier towards workers over 50, and particularly over 60
- iii. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of measures to promote employment and economic activity

- iv. Promoting active and healthy ageing
- v. Developing co-operation for employment growth of people aged 50
- vi. Establishing social transfers supporting the economic activity of people of pre-retirement age.

An ad hoc Advisory Council was temporarily established in December 2014 to monitor the implementation of the renewed agenda. The Labour Market Council – an advisory council to the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy – is currently used as a platform for exchange of views, good practices and results of research into the situation of people aged 50+.

Sharing knowledge and experience across different age groups

These efforts are undertaken in some firms in Poland. For instance, a large Polish company dealing with the production and distribution of medical equipment has implemented a mentoring programme in its production departments; an experienced employee mentors a new employee for six months. In many cases, the mentor is older than the mentee; however, from time to time the situation is reversed. The main criterion is the experience of the mentor, not his/her age. Mentors receive dedicated training on learning techniques. Another example is a project of the Civil Service Department, co-financed by the EU, promoting the idea of “inter-mentoring” in public administration. This notion is defined as a two-way process of knowledge exchange between persons from different age groups. The workshops, very favourably evaluated by the participants, were conducted in 71 public offices in 2014.

3. Promoting the employability of workers throughout their working lives

3.1. Enhancing participation in training by workers in their mid- to late careers

Promoting lifelong learning and development of the adult vocational education and training system

Amendments to the 2004 Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions in 2009 introduced a new possibility of financing from the Polish Labour Fund (through local labour offices from the Public Employment Service, PES) for training, training loans, and postgraduate studies for employees over the age of 45 who are registered as jobseekers and are interested in gaining access to professional development tools and classes.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee for Lifelong Learning was created in 2010 and the Ministry of National Education co-ordinates its work, including on the National Qualifications Framework. In 2013, the Polish Government adopted a strategy document named “Lifelong Learning Perspective”. At present, the Institute of Educational Research (working under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education) is carrying out work on an Integrated Skills Strategy.

The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, together with employers, commissioned the creation/establishment/publication of over 550 vocational qualification/competency standards that are available free of charge in a database. These standards can be used by (e.g.) labour offices and training institutions to prepare training course programmes for both the unemployed and workers. New vocational competency standards will be gradually incorporated into the existing database. In 2017, a new project was launched to deliver up-to-date, attractive materials for 1 000 professions. They will be incorporated into the PES website so as to provide a one-stop-shop for all customers.

A National Training Fund (NTF) was established in Poland in 2014 to co-finance (from 80% to 100%) employer-paid training and education for managers and employees. NTF resources come from the Polish Labour Fund (2% of the Labour Fund’s total budget) and co-finance job-related education, training and postgraduate studies. The employer chooses the subject of training to better match the company’s needs and

skill gaps of employees. In the first two years of operation (2014-15), the NTF contributed particularly to training and postgraduate studies for employees over the age of 45. Over 87 000 older workers participated in learning activities financed from this fund. From 2016, NTF helps develop the skills of workers – regardless of their age, but with a focus on vulnerable groups. In 2016 55% of beneficiaries were women, and almost one-fifth had low qualifications.

Providing access to training adjusted to their experience and learning needs

All projects financed from the European Social Fund that support employees (including older workers) offer training adjusted to their experience and learning needs. The unemployed/jobseekers can participate in courses offered on the training market and contracted by the local PES, or choose training from the courses available on the market. The cost of training chosen by individuals may be covered from the Polish Labour Fund resources up to 300% of their average salary in a given year, provided that the unemployed justify the usefulness of the training. In 2016, more than 44% of participants in training financed by the PES took part in individual training.

Some firms have improved access to training for older workers. For instance, in a large company providing digital services and systems, it was observed that more experienced (older) workers had more problems with finding time for participating in training. Therefore, part of the training was transmitted through the company's own Intranet allowing employees to take part in the training when they are available.

In line with the “Solidarity across Generations” programme, the Civil Service Department implemented a project called “Support of Employees Aged At Least 45”. Its aim was to equip older officials with competences that would maximise their potential. Approximately 2 000 officials aged 45+ have been trained in foreign languages, computer skills, soft/interpersonal skills and leadership abilities. These training courses were based on analysis of the employees' training needs, identified by means of tailor-made questionnaires. The project, co-financed by the EU, was implemented in 2010 and 2011.

Educators and adult learning professionals can exchange practices through the Polish version of the European Electronic Platform for Adult Learning (EPALE). Support for older workers is one of the main topics on the platform.

Beginning in Q2 2017, the Ministry of National Education launched new initiatives for adult learning for those with low skills. As part of the project, financed from the Knowledge and Education Development Operational Programme, approximately 45 Local Knowledge and Education Centres (LOWE) will be created in Poland. Their aim is to motivate adults who so far have been passive and did not participate in any form of education or training. The project uses schools as local centres for delivery of non-formal adult education.

Setting up mechanisms for recognising and validating skills

In Poland, the Integrated Qualification System (IQS) was introduced in January 2016. IQS encompasses qualifications from education and higher education as well as from the labour market. The system permits recognition of prior learning and validation of skills acquired on the job. More and more stakeholders (employers, trade unions, training institutions) recognise the potential of IQS, and are engaged in its development. It is assumed that by the end of 2018, at least 40 labour market qualifications will be included in IQS.

3.2. Providing effective employment assistance to older jobseekers

Promoting an all-age mainstreaming activation approach

It is important to strengthen activation policies for all jobseekers – including older workers – and recent PES reforms in Poland are a welcome development in this regard. The reforms introduced profiling procedures to help tailor services, such as an Individual Action Plan (IAP), to the specific needs of jobseekers and established the possibility of outsourcing certain activation services. The labour office is obliged to monitor implementation of the IAP and to contact the unemployed at least once every 60 days.

Targeting workers most at risk of long-term joblessness

As from 2014, the unemployed aged 50+ are classified as a group in a special labour market situation (along with the unemployed below 30 years of age; the long-term unemployed; unemployed recipients of social assistance; unemployed parents of a child below 6 years of age, or 18 years of age in the case of a disabled child; those disabled and unemployed). It means that they are accorded priority access to standard activation measures available for all unemployed (vocational counselling, job brokerage, support in acquiring qualifications – trainings, apprenticeships, loans for starting economic activity as self-employed, as well to special forms of activation (co-funding of wages, reduced social security contributions, etc.) and so-called special programmes, tailor-made to the needs of a group of recipients. Special programmes are based on diagnosis of the labour market and analysis of the social situation of a chosen group of unemployed. Activation measures are supported by other measures aimed at reducing barriers to employment, and can be organised in partnerships with other institutions and employers.

Following a 2014 amendment to the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions, recruitment agencies may be commissioned to activate the long-term (older) unemployed. In particular, the regional labour office in Cracow has begun a project to investigate whether outsourcing back-to-work services for the long-term unemployed to private providers can be used to supplement their own services. The core goals of the project are to bring the long-term unemployed back into the labour market and to support them in their employment for a period of six months. Payments to the provider are made based on results.

Providing employment/hiring subsidies to firms

Changes made in 2009 to the 2004 Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions Act provide employers with both periodic and permanent exemptions from the obligation to pay social security contributions to the Labour Fund for workers approaching retirement age (at least 55 years for women and at least 60 years for men). Employers are eligible for the periodic exemption for the first 12 months of employment when hiring people over the age of 50 who have been registered as unemployed for at least 30 days before becoming employed. In total, labour costs relating to older employees are lowered by 2.55% of gross remuneration through this change. In addition, since 2014, employers hiring unemployed people above the age of 50 can be entitled to a wage subsidy. The subsidy, which cannot exceed 50% of the minimum wage, can be received over a period of 12 to 24 months, depending on the age of the worker (12 months in case of unemployed persons aged 50-59 years, and 24 months for those aged 60 and over). Thereafter, the employer must continue to employ the worker for at least (an additional) half of the duration of the subsidised period.

The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy prepared a report to evaluate the impact of the changes introduced to the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions in 2014. The wage subsidies for employers hiring unemployed aged 50+ were one of measures considered. Its main conclusion is that an increasing number of unemployed have benefited from this measure. In 2017, 10-12% of the unemployed aged 50+ were employed due to wage subsidies.

3.3. Enhancing job quality for older workers

Strengthening workplace safety and physical and mental health

The Social Insurance Institution co-ordinates a programme of co-financing measures undertaken by employers to allow employees to maintain the ability to work throughout the working life, by improving safety at work (technical solutions) and through various advisory activities in the field of safety and health at work. Lewandowski (2017) recognises that occupational health and safety, workplace ergonomics, and the mid-career identification of health obstacles and risks related to particular jobs are issues that need to be prioritised in Poland.

The Central Institute for Labour Protection and the National Research Institute conducted 15 projects related to safety and health at work in 2014-16. Some of these projects concentrated on workers aged 50+. They dealt with issues of identifying the health risks of different types of work in the case of older workers – for example, their physical and psychological strengths and weaknesses in the face of prolonging working life; strain they may experience due to posture during work and the effect on their health; and the incidence of certain illnesses. For the years 2017-19, other projects are planned concerning specific health risks for workers aged 50+.

Meeting the health challenges represented by population ageing is one of the themes in the National Development Strategy 2020, adopted in 2012, and also appears in the related Human Capital Development Strategy. Both strategies include a number of objectives aimed at helping people stay in work longer, such as increasing access to high-quality health services; helping people to develop healthier lifestyles; reducing the incidence of accidents; placing more emphasis on rehabilitation; and improving support to people with mental disorders and chronic mental illnesses.

The National Development Strategy 2020 was replaced by the Responsible Development Strategy in February 2017. Included in the new strategy is a project titled “Healthier Society”. One of the pillars of the Responsible Development Strategy is human capital accumulation, including health care and access to health care services. The main measures foreseen in the strategy are health promotion and prophylaxis involving healthy nutrition, improvement in physical activity, mental health and stress-related health problems as well as active ageing.

Reducing the incidence of arduous/hazardous work

Poland defines arduous/hazardous work as involving a highly sedentary or hard physical work. These types of work are connected with certain risk factors that are likely to cause a permanent deterioration of health. The legislation also uses the notion of “special working conditions”. These are specified as involving working underground; on and under the water; in the air; in a hot or cold microclimate; in raised atmospheric pressure; and hard physical work.

As part of the National Health Programme adopted in 2016 by the Council of Ministers, there are operational objectives related to limiting the health risk resulting from physical, chemical and biological hazards in the external environment, place of work, residence, recreation area, as well as promotion of healthy and active aging. In addition, as part of the implementation of Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014-2020, activities are carried out through preventive programmes aimed at counteracting conditions that are the most common causes of occupational inactivity for health reasons –

i.e. circulatory diseases, cancer, mental diseases, disorders of the osteoarticular system, and diseases of the respiratory system. Implementation of these activities is foreseen for the period from Q3 2016 to Q4 2023.

The years 2016-17 saw implementation of the European information campaign “Safe at the Start, Healthy at the Finish Line”. This campaign centred on the problems of an ageing society in the work environment. The goals of the campaign were: to promote sustainable work from the beginning of working life and healthy aging; emphasise the importance of preventive health care throughout the employee’s entire working life; support employers and employees (especially in SMEs) by providing information and tools that help in managing work safety for an aging workforce; and facilitate the exchange of information on, and identification and dissemination of, good practices.

Balancing professional and family responsibilities

The Labour Code does not provide for legal solutions addressed directly to older employees that would facilitate the reconciliation of professional with personal responsibilities. However, older employees can reconcile professional duties with other social roles through principles similar to those for younger employees (flexible forms of working-time organisation, teleworking). However, use of part-time employment arrangements is limited in Poland. This limited flexibility may be particularly problematic for older workers or people with care obligations (often women).

Social norms in Poland make women more likely than men to leave their jobs from the age of 50 to take care of family responsibilities. Broader measures are therefore necessary to change cultural trends and to relieve women of primary care responsibilities.

A number of steps are in the right direction. Several initiatives are aimed directly at addressing the labour market situation of women in Poland. One example is the project “Socio-Economic Activation of Women at the Local and Regional Level”, which was implemented between 2008 and 2011. The initiative was designed to help remove stereotypes of working women above the age of 45. The three central goals are:

- i. Development of a training model for gender equality. Training in this field is offered to key employees in all labour offices and other labour market institutions.
- ii. Organisation of the campaign “Gender Equality and the Labour Market”, focusing on the identification and promotion of issues related to women in the labour market.
- iii. Creation of an internet portal to provide information, e.g. on the development of socio-economic activity of women; the outcomes of gender budgeting analyses; results from research on women in the labour market, including those over 50; progress made in female entrepreneurship; advice for employers in counteracting discrimination against women; and on existing Polish and European legislation on equal opportunities in the labour market.

Equal opportunities in the labour market for people aged 50+ and age management were discussed in a panel organised and financed by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy during the VII Congress of Women in Warsaw in September 2015.

In 2016-17, the Ministry ran the project “Family and Work – It Pays Off!”, with the aim of recognising good practices as well as challenges in Polish companies in supporting work-life balance, and building an online platform that presents (in a user-friendly way) different solutions and methods for providing work-life balance in the work environment.⁷ The Ministry is responsible for the project “Development of Social

7. www.google.pl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKewibuvjq9rYAhVGCywKHTfcBP4QFggqMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Frodzinaipraca.gov.pl%2Fdocuments%2F14%2FPrzewodnik_Rodzina_i_Praca_ANG.pdf&usg=AOvVaw25TqOsMjh-V5HMx_QUT5A4 (accessed 29 January 2018).

Services in Local Environment” that will among others issues, support the economic activity of caregivers of dependent persons aged over 50.

Facilitating job mobility

Geographical and occupational labour mobility is hampered by factors such as housing policies, transport infrastructure, access to childcare, skill mismatches and preferential sector-specific social security arrangements — in particular the highly subsidised pension systems for farmers.

All unemployed persons may be refunded travel and accommodation costs when taking up work outside the place of residence if the monthly income from work is lower than 200% of the minimum wage. The refund is granted for a maximum of 12 months.

Table 1. Late Career Scoreboard, Poland, 2006 and 2016

	Poland		EU28 ^a		OECD ^a	
	2006	2016	2006	2016	2006	2016
Demographic situation						
-- Old-age dependency ratio ^b	0.21	0.25	0.28	0.32	0.23	0.28
-- Effective labour force exit age ^c (years) Men	61.3	62.6	62.0	63.4	63.6	65.1
Women	57.6	59.8	60.5	62.0	62.3	63.6
Employment						
-- Employment rate, 50-74 (% of the age group)	31.4	40.1	38.3	45.4	47.0	50.8
of which 50-54	59.8	75.0	73.1	77.9	73.8	75.7
55-64	28.1	46.2	43.3	55.3	52.7	59.2
65-69	9.6	9.9	9.1	12.1	20.3	25.5
70-74	4.8	3.9	4.4	5.5	12.0	14.6
-- Gender gap in employment, 55-64 ((men-women)/men)	0.50	0.32	0.34	0.21	0.32	0.25
Job characteristics						
-- Incidence of part-time work, 55-64 (% of total employment in the age group)	20.7	9.9	22.1	22.2	20.3	21.1
of which voluntary 55-64 (% of part-time work in the age group)	92.1	85.4	85.4	78.9	87.3	85.2
Average number of weekly hours worked	17.9	18.5	17.1	17.5	16.6	16.9
-- Incidence of temporary work, 55-64 (% of employees in the age group)	18.1	17.0	6.9	6.7	8.9	7.9
-- Incidence of self-employment, 55-64 (% of total employment in the age group)	38.2	26.1	24.1	19.7	38.0	32.8
-- Full-time earnings, ^d 55-64 relative to 25-54 (ratio)	1.20	1.02	-	-	1.09	1.10
Dynamics						
-- Retention rate ^e after 60 (% of employees t-5)	28.7	44.0	37.1	48.8	40.3	50.3
-- Hiring rate, ^f 55-64 (% of employees in the age group)	7.3	6.4	6.1	5.8	9.2	9.1
Joblessness						
-- Unemployment rate, 55-64 (% of the labour force aged 55-64)	8.5	4.4	6.1	6.4	4.3	4.6
-- Incidence of long-term ^g unemployment, 55-64 (% of total unemployment in the age group)	54.9	45.7	49.8	63.7	26.3	44.3
-- Marginally attached workers, ^h 55-64 (% of population in the age group)	3.1	2.1	2.4	1.9	1.2	1.2
Employability						
-- Share of 55-64 with tertiary education (% of population in the age group)	12.5	13.9	17.2	22.9	20.0	26.2
-- Participation in training, ⁱ 55-74 (% of employed in the age group)	2.9	1.9	-	8.5	-	-
Relative to employed persons aged 25-54 (ratio)	0.40	0.37	-	0.66	-	-

- Weighted averages with the exception of the share with tertiary education.
- The ratio of the population aged 65 and over to the population aged 20-64.
- Effective exit age over the five-year periods 2001-06 and 2011-16. The effective exit age (also called the effective age of retirement) is calculated as a weighted average of the exit ages of each five-year age cohort, starting with the cohort aged 40-44 at the first year, using absolute changes in the labour force participation rate of each cohort as weights.
- Mean gross hourly earnings. Year 2016 refers to 2014.
- All employees currently aged 60-64 with job tenure of five years or more as a percentage of all employees aged 55-59 five years previously. Year 2006 refers to 2008.
- Employees aged 55-64 with job tenure of less than one year as a percentage of total employees.
- Unemployed for more than one year.
- Persons neither employed, nor actively looking for work, but willing to work and available for taking a job during the survey reference week. Data for 2006 refer to 2009.
- Participation in formal and non-formal training in the last four weeks.

Source: OECD estimations from the *OECD Employment Database*, the *OECD Earnings Distribution Database*, *OECD Education at a Glance* and the *Eurostat Database on Education and Training*.

Table 2. Implementing ageing and employment policies in Poland, 2007 to mid-2017

1. Rewarding work and later retirement	
1.1. Enhancing incentives to continue working at an older age	
<i>Raising the statutory age of retirement</i>	?
<i>Facilitating phased retirement</i>	?
<i>Better combining of pensions (or partial pensions) and work income</i>	+
<i>Rewarding longer careers</i>	+
1.2. Towards restricted use of early retirement schemes	
<i>Restricting access to publicly funded early retirement schemes</i>	+
<i>Introducing specific provisions for arduous/hazardous work</i>	+
1.3. Preventing welfare benefits from being used as alternative pathways to early retirement	
<i>Unemployment (insurance and assistance) benefits</i>	+
<i>Disability benefits</i>	+
2. Encouraging employers to retain and hire older workers	
2.1. Preventing discrimination in employment on the basis of age	
<i>Launching public awareness campaigns</i>	++
2.2. Taking a balanced approach to employment protection by age	
<i>Implementing age-neutral measures</i>	?
2.3. Discouraging mandatory retirement by employers	
<i>By law in general and by sector/occupation, private/public sector, region</i>	+
2.4. Encouraging the social partners to implement better retention and hiring mechanisms targeted at older workers	
<i>For all older workers</i>	+
<i>Review of the use of seniority wages</i>	/
2.5. Encouraging good practice in collective labour agreements and/or by individual employers/industries in managing an age-diverse workforce	
<i>For all older workers</i>	+

<i>Sharing knowledge and experience across different age groups</i>	+
3. Promoting the employability of workers throughout their working lives	
3.1. Enhancing participation in training by workers in their mid- to late careers	
<i>Promoting lifelong learning and development of the adult vocational education and training system</i>	+
<i>Providing access to training adjusted to their experience and learning needs</i>	+
<i>Setting up mechanisms for recognising and validating skills</i>	+
3.2. Providing effective employment assistance to older jobseekers	
<i>Promoting an all-age mainstreaming activation approach</i>	+
<i>Targeting workers most at risk of long-term joblessness</i>	+
<i>Providing employment/hiring subsidies to firms</i>	++
3.3. Enhancing job quality for older workers	
<i>Strengthening workplace safety and physical and mental health</i>	+
<i>Reducing the incidence of arduous/hazardous work</i>	+
<i>Balancing professional and family responsibilities</i>	+
<i>Facilitating job mobility</i>	/
<p>++ = Substantial action taken. + = Some action taken, but more could be done. +? = Some action taken, but requires further assessment. ? = Some action taken with negative impact. / = No relevant action taken. ✓ = No action needed.</p> <p><i>Source: Assessment based mainly on OECD (2015) and answers from Poland to several OECD questionnaires.</i></p>	

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