

Work permits for foreigners in Poland in 2021¹

20.05.2022

 **24.0%**

An increase in the number of work permits issued compared with 2020

In 2021, more work permits for foreigners were issued in Poland than in the previous year. A similar situation took place in the years 2015–2019, when a systematic increase in the number of permits issued was observed in Poland. The exception was 2020, when an annual decrease in the number of work permits issued was observed, which could have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, 504.2 thousand work permits for foreigners were issued in Poland. There were 97.7 thousand more of them than in 2020 and 438.4 thousand more compared with 2015. They were still most often issued to Ukrainian citizens.

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

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

Work permits for foreigners by voivodship of issue

In 2021, 504.2 thousand work permits for foreigners were issued in Poland. There were 24.0% more of them than in 2020 and nearly 8 times more than in 2015. Compared with 2020, 13 voivodships saw a decrease in the number of work permits issued to foreigners, while in the voivodships: Pomorskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Zachodniopomorskie a decrease in their number was observed. The highest increase compared with 2020 occurred in the Podlaskie Voivodship (by 74.3%), whereas the highest decrease was observed in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship (by 18.6%). In the analysed year, the greatest number of work permits for foreigners were issued in the Mazowieckie Voivodship. The share of permits issued in this voivodship in the total number of permits issued in the country amounted to 20.8%, 4.0 percentage points more compared with the previous year, but 28.6 percentage points less compared with 2015.

¹ This news release was prepared on the basis of the data of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy concerning work permits for foreigners

Table 1. Work permits for foreigners by voivodship of issue

VOIVODSHIPS	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
POLAND	65 786	127 394	235 626	328 768	444 738	406 496	504 172
Dolnośląskie	3 388	10 880	12 284	19 158	23 907	22 069	26 662
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	3 347	4 998	6 504	25 682	37 976	29 206	40 948
Lubelskie	1 615	2 782	5 254	8 043	12 981	15 684	16 399
Lubuskie	2 666	3 581	7 452	10 748	16 395	13 823	14 199
Łódzkie	1 305	3 577	19 345	32 423	41 993	41 428	53 202
Małopolskie	6 291	1 5138	22 162	27 534	37 389	39 386	42 994
Mazowieckie	32 502	48 126	75 271	79 670	86 348	68 228	104 843
Opolskie	1 218	2 794	5 798	9 584	11 578	11 353	13 894
Podkarpackie	936	1 754	3 730	5 378	8 551	6 656	7 845
Podlaskie	643	1 011	2 898	5 339	9 796	12 481	21 750
Pomorskie	4 133	7 889	12 480	20 929	30 409	23 431	21 692
Śląskie	2 003	7 175	23 160	21 924	39 077	34 469	48 736
Świętokrzyskie	603	1 765	3 252	4 177	6 166	4 759	4 931
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	506	1 483	5 228	6 936	10 504	6 674	6 602
Wielkopolskie	3 608	10 231	21 036	36 464	49 069	50 330	57 878
Zachodniopomorskie	1 022	4 210	9 772	14 779	22 599	26 519	21 597

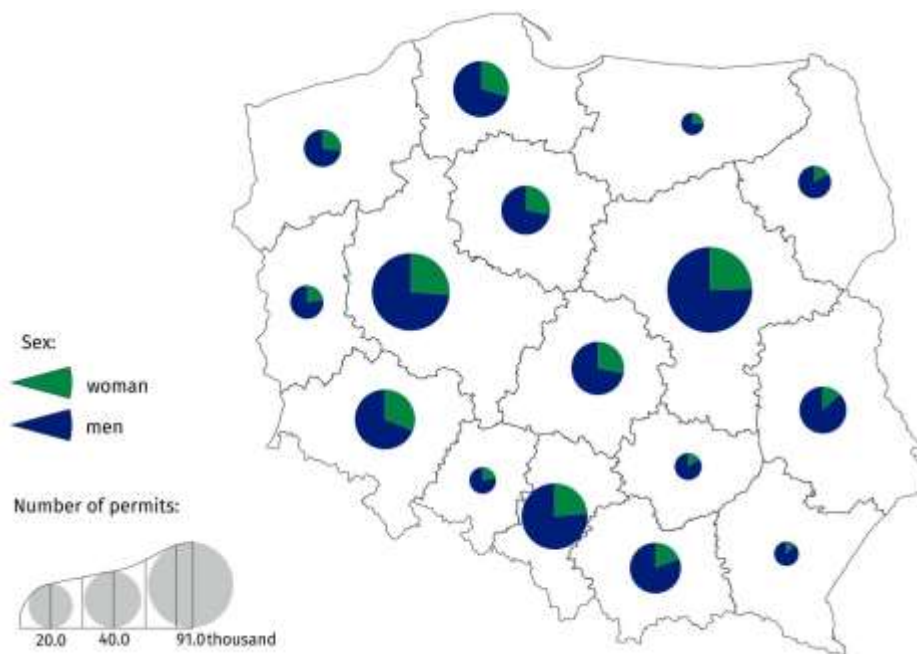
In 2021, the largest number of permits after the Mazowieckie Voivodship were issued in the Wielkopolskie Voivodship (11.5% of the total number of positive decisions). In this voivodship, in 2021 compared with 2015, the number of work permits for foreigners increased 16 times. In the analysed period, the highest increase in the number of permits occurred in the Łódzkie Voivodship (41-fold increase).

The smallest parts of the total number of work permits for foreigners were issued in the following voivodships: Świętokrzyskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Podkarpackie (below 2% in each of the voivodships mentioned).

Work permits for foreigners by voivodship of work performance

In 2021, out of 504.2 thousand permits issued in Poland, most of them concerned the Mazowieckie Voivodship as the target place of work – 18.0%. A significant share of work permits was also observed in the Wielkopolskie (14.8%) and Śląskie (10.8%) voivodships.

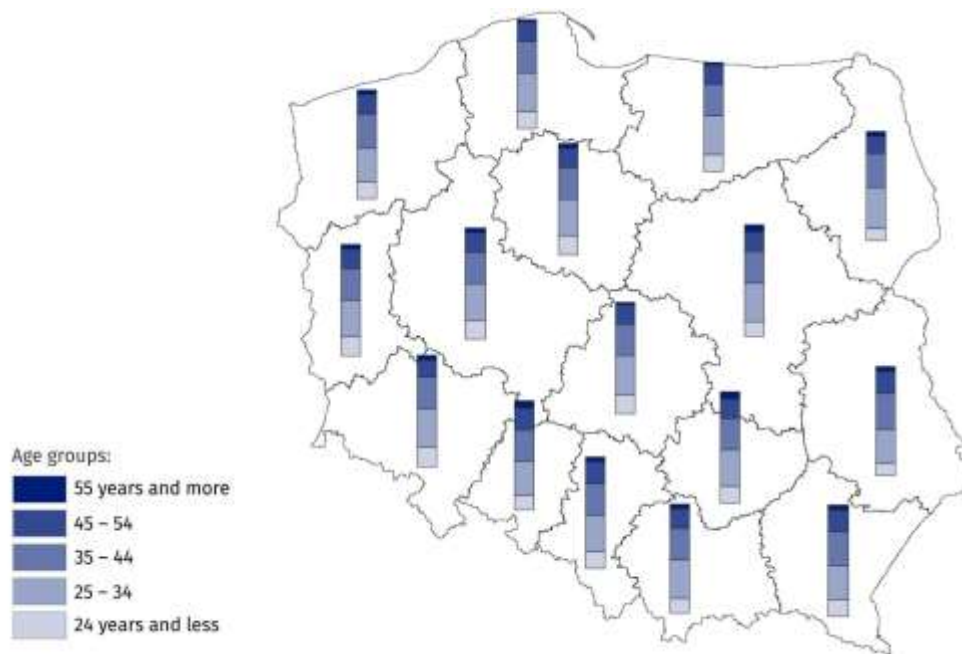
Map 1. Work permits for foreigners by sex and voivodship of work performance in 2021



The majority of work permits for foreigners are granted to men

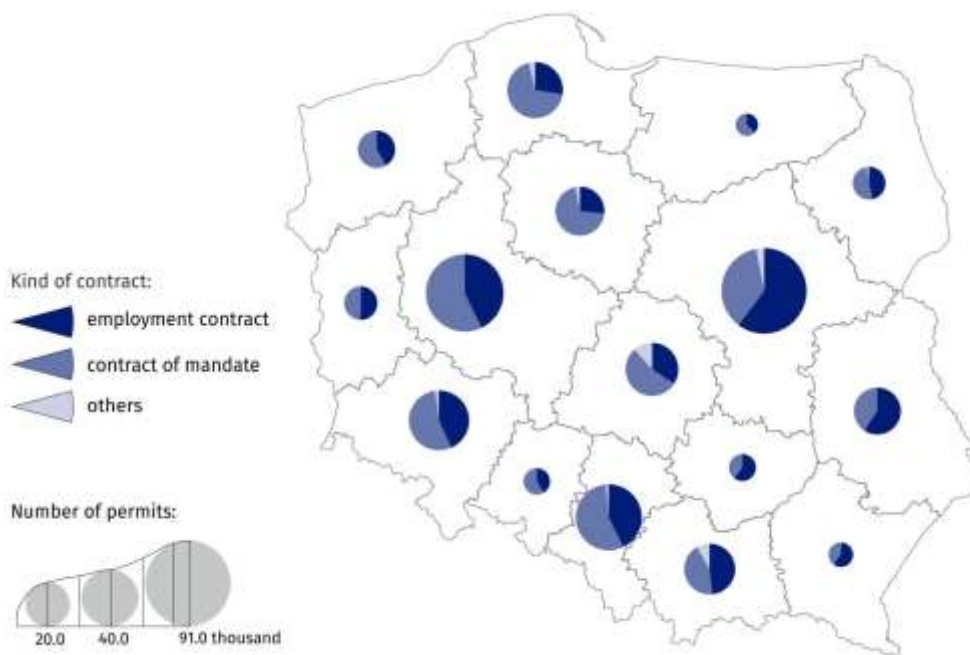
There was an advantage of men in this regard in all voivodships. Higher than the average in Poland share of women among foreigners for whom employers obtained a work permit was recorded in six voivodships, and the highest in the Dolnośląskie Voivodship (31.2%). The smallest percentage was recorded for the Podkarpackie Voivodship, where every 8th work permit was granted to a woman.

Map 2. The structure of work permits by age group of foreigners and voivodship of work performance in 2021



When examining the **age** of people for whom a work permit was granted, it can be observed that in 2021, people aged 25-34 constituted the largest group in Poland – 33.7% of the total number of permits. It was the largest group in 15 voivodships. The exception was the Lubelskie Voivodship, in which the most numerous group were people aged 35-44. This group was the second largest in the remaining voivodships.

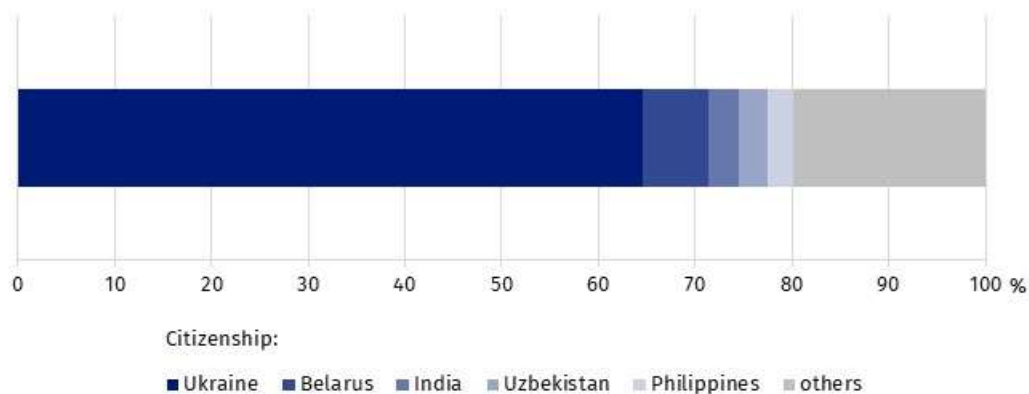
Map 3. The structure of work permits for foreigners by kind of contract and voivodship of work performance in 2021



In 2021, work permits authorising to work under contracts of mandate prevailed in Poland

When analysing the structure of work permits by **kind of contract** and voivodship of work performance, it can be observed that in Poland, in 2021, the majority, i.e. 51.9% of the total number of work permits, were permits for concluding a contract of mandate. Most often, the permits for concluding this type of contract were issued in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship, where they constituted as many as 70.7% of all work permits. On the other hand, employment contracts prevailed in six voivodships, with the largest share in the Mazowieckie Voivodship (60.2%).

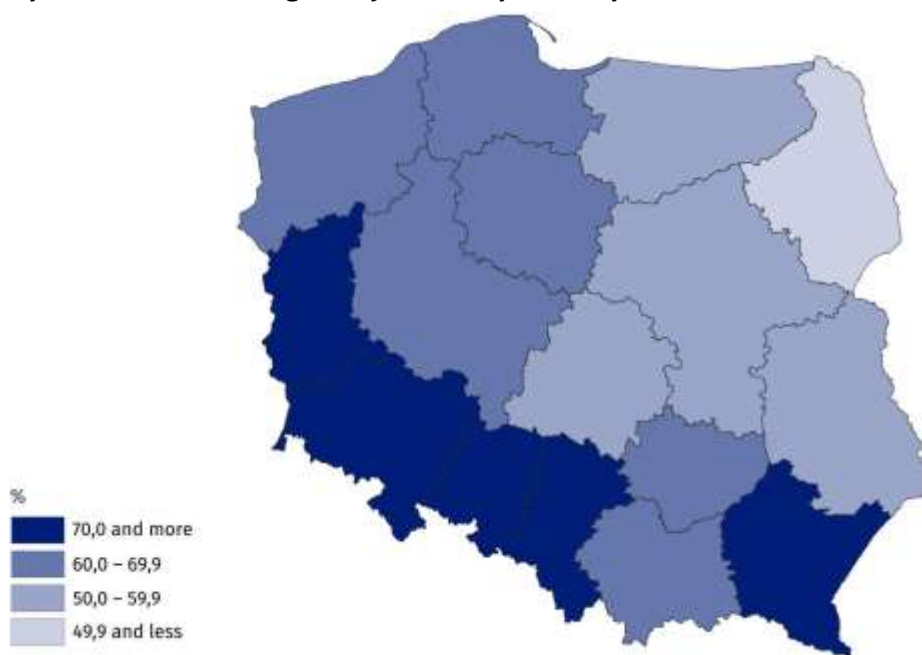
Chart 1. The structure of work permits for foreigners by citizenship in 2021



In 2021, in Poland, work permits were issued to citizens of 146 countries

In 2021, in Poland, work permits were issued to citizens of 146 countries. They were most often granted to citizens of **Ukraine**. Permits granted to them accounted for 64.5% of the total number of work permits issued. The labour market was to the greatest extent dominated by Ukrainian citizens in the Opolskie Voivodship, where 75.4% of work permits were issued to them. Only in the Podlaskie Voivodship, the share of Ukrainians among foreigners who obtained a work permit was lower than 50%. In the country, the second largest group of foreign nationals receiving work permits were Belarusian citizens (6.9% share in the total number). Their largest shares were recorded in the Lubelskie Voivodship (26.8% of the total number of permits in the voivodship) and Podlaskie Voivodship (22.2%).

Map 4. The share of work permits issued to Ukrainian citizens in the total number of work permits issued to foreigners by voivodship of work performance in 2021

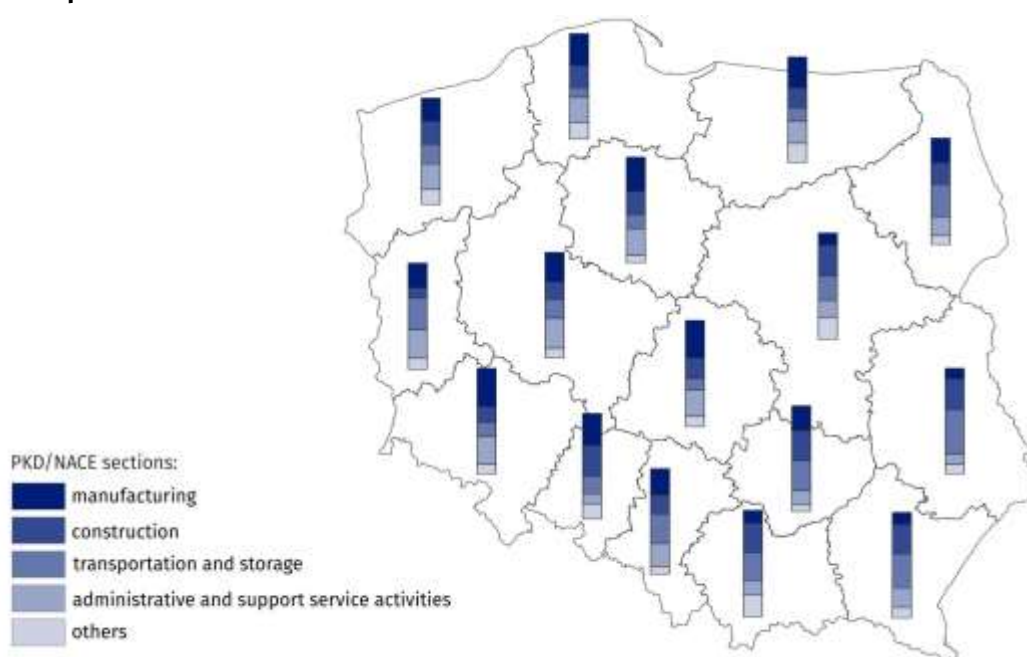


In 2021, in all voivodships, the largest number of work permits for foreigners were issued to Ukrainian citizens

It is worth adding that in 2021, a noticeable percentage of permits were also issued to citizens of India and Uzbekistan (both a 3.0% share in the total number of permits) as well as the Philippines (2.6%). Of all the work permits issued to Indian citizens, the largest share was those issued in the Małopolskie Voivodship (5.0% of permits issued for this voivodship). On the other hand, the most Uzbekistan citizens obtained work permits in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship (4.7%), and Philippine citizens in the Pomorskie Voivodship (5.6%).

In Poland, in 2021, employers who obtained work permits for foreigners were conducting economic activity mainly in the following **PKD²/NACE sections**: manufacturing (23.4% share in the total number of permits), construction (21.9%), administrative and support service activities (21.2%) as well as transportation and storage (20.9%). In 2021, in all voivodships, the total share of permits for the above-mentioned PKD/NACE sections almost 80%.

Map 5. The structure of work permits for foreigners by PKD/NACE section and voivodship of work performance in 2021

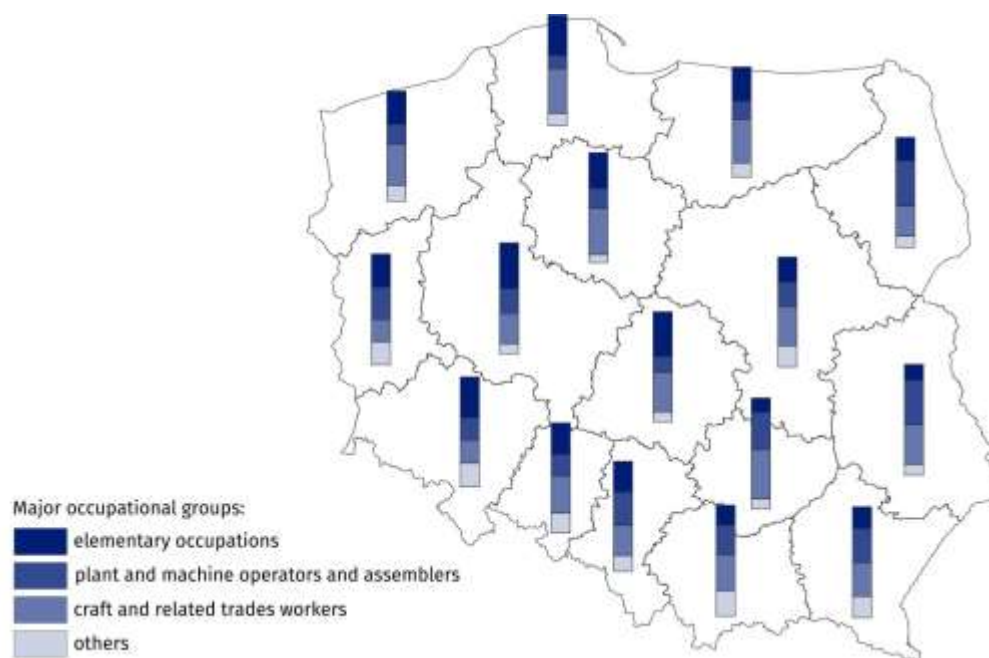


² Polish Classification of Activities – PKD 2007.

When analysing the spatial differentiation of issued work permits by PKD/NACE section and voivodship of work performance, it can be noticed that employers operating in manufacturing section were most represented in the Dolnośląskie Voivodship (35.7% of the total number of work permits in this voivodship). They were least represented in the Lubelskie Voivodship (10.0%), where the construction section dominated – 29.4%. The lowest share of permits to work in construction issued to foreigners were recorded in the Lubuskie Voivodship (9.4%). Employers from the administrative and support service activities section obtained the most work permits for foreigners, i.e. 28.2%, in the Wielkopolskie Voivodship, whereas in the Opolskie Voivodship their share was only 9.9%. In the Lubelskie Voivodship, work permits concerning the transportation and storage section accounted for 41.6% of work permits issued to foreigners. This section was least often represented in the Pomorskie Voivodship (8.7%).

When examining the number of work permits issued by major occupational group according to the **Classification of Occupations and Specialisations (KZiS)/ISCO-08** and voivodship of work performance, it can be observed that in 2021, in Poland, the most numerous group was Craft and related trades workers (32.4% of the total number of permits issued). A significant share of permits was also observed in the case of people in Elementary occupations (29.7%) and Plant and machine operators and assemblers (23.4%). The total share of permits for the above-mentioned occupational groups was at least 77% in all voivodships.

Map 6. The structure of work permits for foreigners by major occupational group and voivodship of work performance in 2021



The largest share of work permits for Craft and related trades workers in the total number of work permits for foreigners occurred in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (44.7%). This occupational group dominated in most voivodships and least frequently it was indicated in permits issued in the Lubuskie Voivodship (20.2%). In the Podlaskie Voivodship, work permits for foreigners in large part were granted to Plant and machine operators and assemblers (41.2%). In turn, in the Pomorskie Voivodship, permits to work in occupations from this group accounted for only 12.0%. Among work permits granted, those concerning elementary occupations were also numerous. In the Wielkopolskie Voivodship, the share of work permits for this occupational group was 40.8%. The group was least often represented in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodship, where 12.9% of work permits for foreigners concerned Elementary occupations.

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Terms used in official statistics

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