



Weekly Briefing

**Poland Social briefing:
Social Changes in 2017
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The social changes in Poland has become the serious problem for the post-1989 governments. After Poland joined the European Union more than two and half million people emigrated from Poland to Western European countries. In the second point there is a need for discussing the issue of immigration to Poland. The third important point for the further development of Poland is depopulation of the Eastern part of Poland and the domestic demographic processes till 2030.

According to the results presented by the Polish Statistical Office, at the end of 2016, there were temporarily around 2,5 million Polish citizens temporarily outside of Poland. Majority of Polish inhabitants emigrated to Europe and were about 2,2 million people, the vast majority - about 2,1 million emigrated to the EU member states. In 2016 this number increased by 113 thousand compared to 2015. Among the EU countries, the largest number of Polish emigrants resided in the United Kingdom (788,000), Germany (687,000), the Netherlands (116,000) and Ireland (112,000). Compare to 2015 there was a significant increase in the number of Poles staying in Great Britain and in Germany, and those two countries are the main destination of emigration from Poland in recent years. In the case of Great Britain, compared to 2015, the number of Poles increased by 68 thousand (9.4%), while in Germany, the number of Poles staying increased by 32 thousand (about 5%). Moreover Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland and Sweden became the important destinations of emigration from Poland. A slight decrease in the number of Polish emigrants compared to the previous year was recorded in Spain and Italy. Norway became the non-EU country, where in 2016, more than 85 thousand Poles were registered. Majority of Polish citizens considered that the higher salary than in Poland was the most important reason for emigration (77.8%), the higher standard of living (58.9%) was considered as the second reason. The third reason pointed by the respondents was opportunity to travel and explore the world (44%), 37,3% respondents considered emigration for

better social conditions, and better career prospects. More than 31% emigrated due to the lack of proper job in Poland. The last four reasons pointed by respondents were more favorable tax system, more friendly public administration, safer geopolitical location and family (relatives living or intending to live abroad).

In the first half of 2017, foreigners paid 89 thousand applications for a residence permit in Poland. It is an increase of 42 percent and compared to the first half of 2016, compared to 2015 - by 87 per cent. 87 percent of them applied for a temporary stay, only 11 percent - permanent, but only two percent applications were submitted by EU residents. Majority of applications were submitted by the citizens of Ukraine (65%). The growing interest in settling in Poland also occurred in the case of Belarussian citizens (who are more likely to apply for permanent residence) and people from India (more often apply for temporary stay). At the moment more than two million of citizens of Ukraine work in Poland. Introduced by Polish government new regulations for making easier to work for citizens of six countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine made Polish market more popular among the citizens of above pointed countries.

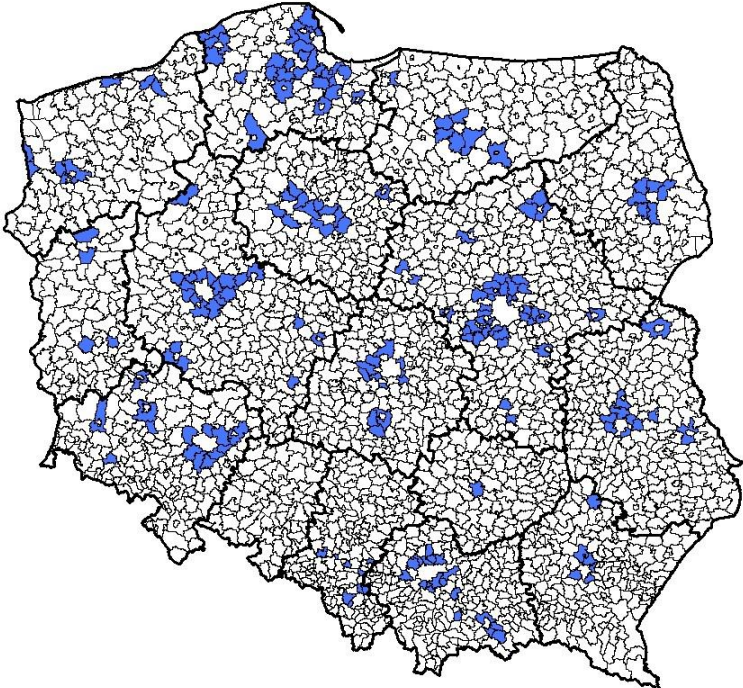
According to the Office for Foreigners in the first half of 2017 2 553 people applied for international protection in Poland. The country of origins was mainly from the countries of the former Soviet Union: 84% of all applications were submitted by citizens of three countries neighboring Poland: Russia (1 769 people, 69% of the total), Ukraine (378 people, 15% of the total) and Belarus (24 people, 1%).

From the above mentioned processes and from the point of view of financial transfers, i.e. money sent by citizens, Poland became an immigration country. Over the years, Poland was an émigré state. In the simplest terms, more funds are now sent abroad from Poland than to Poland from other countries.

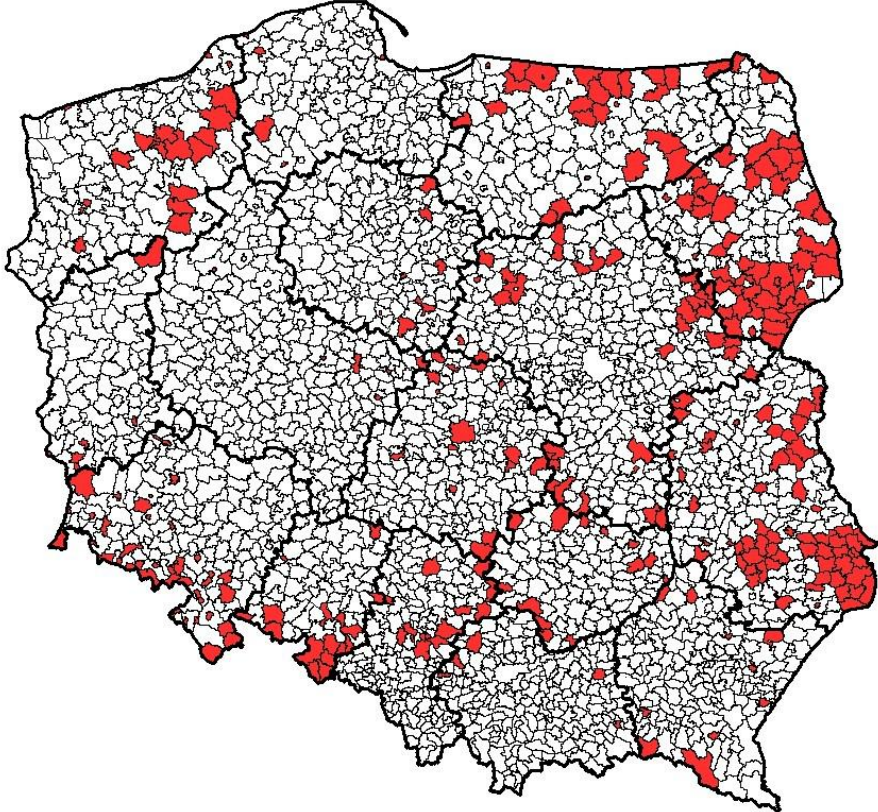
The third important issue is depopulation of Polish communes and counties. By 2030 out of 2478 communes in 1007 the population will decrease above 5%, and in 332 above 10%. Most communes for which a large population drop for above 10% are located in the so-called "Eastern wall" in Eastern Poland. A special concentration of this type of communes takes place in the Podlasie Voivodship (constituting as much as 44% of communes in the voivodship), in the southern part of the Lublin province, areas near the border with Russia, the eastern part of Western Pomerania and mountain areas in the south-eastern part of the country.

The areas located in the Małopolskie, Pomorskie and Wielkopolskie provinces as well as the central part of the Mazowieckie voivodship (the Warsaw agglomeration together with the neighboring communes) will have a relatively good demographic situation. It is also worth paying attention to the Podkarpackie Voivodship, in which, despite its location in the area of the "eastern wall", the percentage of communes with a significant population decline will be relatively small. The population growth will be characterized primarily by municipalities located in the immediate vicinity of the largest urban centers. It should be mentioned, however, that the suburbanization process also applies to medium-sized cities. It is worth noting that the majority of major urban centers will see a decline in population. Out of 39 cities over 100 thousand, only in six will increase population (Rzeszów, Warsaw, Gdańsk, Kraków, Wrocław and Zielona Góra); however, only in Rzeszów and Warsaw it will be above 5% (by 7.2% and 5.1% respectively). The youngest demographics will be located areas in Pomerania and Małopolska, in which municipalities with a high proportion of people in their ages 65 and more years will be relatively small.

Map no 1. Municipalities with a population increase greater than 10% by 2030



Map no 2. Municipalities with a population loss more than 10% by 2030.



In 2016, in 1185 communes in Poland there were more people in the pre-working age (under 18 years of age) than the post-working age (men aged 65 and over, women aged 60 and over). It is expected that by 2030, the number of such communes will decrease to only 160 and they will be located mainly in the Pomeranian Voivodships and Lesser Poland Voivodship.

Conclusions

In the upcoming years Poland will face the high demographic problems. On the one hand the emigration to the Western Europe will continue, and this will provide the very negative impact on Polish labor market. According to the findings a potential Polish emigrant is a person between 24 and 35 years old, living in a village or small town, coming from the eastern region of Poland, with lower education and skills. What should be noticed with astonishments majority of people considering going abroad usually have a job (full-time, part-time, self-employment - a total of 76% of respondents). In addition, as much as 34 percent, those who think about leaving the Poles earn at least 3000 PLN (5800 RMB). Lack of income with the simultaneous desire to go abroad declares 25% respondents. Among the reasons why unemployed or low earners do not decide to go abroad, among others various forms of social support available in our country.

The major problem for the future demographic policy of the Polish government is the trend of emigration from Eastern part of the country. This might leave the space for immigration from Ukraine or Russia or any other illegal activities sponsored by the foreign governments. Due to the above mentioned fact the Polish government started to promote repatriation policy. Five years ago (in 2012), only 1,5 thousand people received a permanent residence permit of the Polish Citizen Card. From January to April 2017, voivodes have already issued 4,3 thousand permits for Poles who came from the East, which in practice means over a thousand a month - in the previous year it

was less than 600. The question of whether those people can stay in most depopulated regions still remains unanswered.

From the economic point demography will shaped the Western and Southern Poland economic development. This indicated that the divisions between more developed and less developed Poland will increased. It is expected that the central government will take special measures to narrow the growing asymmetry. According the Strategy for Socioeconomic Development of Eastern Poland until 2020 the core issue to be resolved are: low labour productivity and unused labour resources, a very high level of concentration of labour resources, in the agricultural sector are poorly equipped with key regional assets, i.e. technological and innovative potential, quality of labour resources, and availability of infrastructure. This gap, as it is mentioned, should be narrowed by the key infrastructure project of Via Carpatia. In 2016 representatives of Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Turkey, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania participated in the meeting. The planned Via Carpatia route is supposed to lead through the territories of these countries, starting from Lithuania and Poland and going straight to Greece. The international link will bring the new opportunities for business and development in the Eastern Poland – as noticed by the Polish government.