

# Conference report: “Citizens of Ukraine in the Polish social insurance system. Legal, demographic, economic and social aspects”

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## Opening of the conference

On 27 November 2018 an academic conference “Citizens of Ukraine in the Polish social insurance system. Legal, demographic, economic and social aspects” was held at the Headquarters of the Polish Social Insurance Institution [Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych, ZUS].

The conference was opened by Prof. Gertruda Uścińska, Ph.D., President of the Polish Social Insurance Institution. She noted that we live in extremely dynamic times, something reflected in the negotiated agreement on the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union, as well as in other issues related to the free movement of EU citizens and the right to social security for migrants. When discussing the ongoing processes in a broader perspective we should also tackle demographic processes, including those relating to the currently observed ageing population in Europe. Prof. G. Uścińska pointed out the need to focus on cooperation with third countries, as well as on the legal and formal basis for such cooperation. This task is also part of the broadly defined guarantees of security, which should be provided both on the labour market and in the area of social security, having regard to payment of benefits in cash and in kind. Polish-Ukrainian relations should be perceived through taking into account various elements, including the geopolitical, sociological and social. However, the main task should be to map out the various formal and legal regulations in the field of social security. In this context, the key document governing Polish-Ukrainian cooperation is the Social Security Agreement of 2012, which sets out the rules for acquiring the right to benefits, their transfer and the posting of workers. As a member of the European Union, Poland is bound by EU law, to which it must refer. Prof. G. Uścińska also identified, as one of the problems in the current research, the lack of statistics that would take into account the situation of third-country nationals in Poland. In this respect, a centralised system is needed that would collect various statistical data relating both to economic and non-economic issues. According to estimates, 1.8 million Ukrainian citizens currently reside in Poland. 570,000 foreign nationals are registered with ZUS, including 420,000 Ukrainians. Foreigners work in Poland on the basis of an employment contract or mandatory agreement. Not all foreigners working in Poland are registered with ZUS (some of them are, for example, employed under a specific-work contract, which does not entail a contribution payment obligation) and therefore their exact number is not known.

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## Presentations and discussions

After the official opening of the conference, Dr Marek Benio of the Krakow University of Economics initiated and moderated the first part of presentations.

Dr Beata Samoraj-Charitonow, Deputy Director of the ZUS President’s Cabinet and a representative of the University of Warsaw, discussed the changes in the quality of work

in Poland given the context of the inflow of employees from Ukraine. She pointed out that the multithreaded nature of the issues discussed at the conference requires the cooperation of representatives of a wide range of research fields. ZUS will also make efforts to contribute even more actively to research on migration issues. So why is this subject so important for us? Contemporary Ukraine is a country with a very high dynamics of political events as well as being our eastern neighbour. In addition, Ukrainian citizens are the most numerous group of foreigners working in Poland; we are currently also experiencing the greatest dynamics in their registration with the Polish social insurance system.

With the entry into force of the agreement on social security between Poland and Ukraine on 1 January 2014, a growing number of applications from persons entitled to social insurance was noted. The admission to work of persons from outside the European Union is very limited, and they must first obtain a work permit in Poland. Starting from 2007, there has been the possibility of access to the national labour market in Poland under a simplified procedure – an employer's declaration of intention to entrust work to a foreigner. This formula was designed mainly for the nationals of Eastern countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. According to research, the declarations are a kind of legal fiction – they had been issued by employers *en masse*, then they were forwarded to Ukraine and on this basis Ukrainians have been given the right to enter Poland and to take up employment here. Practice has also indicated that declarations were very often issued by farmers who owned multi-hectare farms. As it turned out later, the recipients of such declarations were being employed to a large extent in completely different industries than those that appeared in the documents.

Another issue raised in Dr B. Samoraj-Charitonow's paper was the problem of employment legalisation. The Social Insurance Institution actively promotes legal work by participating in an information and education campaign initiated by the National Labour Inspectorate [Państwowa Inspekcja Pracy, PIP]. The most important objectives of the campaign are to promote the choice of legal work, to make people aware of the advantages of such a form of employment, to stigmatise prohibited practices, as well as to inform about opportunities of substantive assistance provided by both PIP and ZUS. Dr B. Samoraj-Charitonow noted that the conference would give rise to many questions and would be a place to discuss the most important problems related to the implementation of the social security agreement and to the impact of Ukrainian migration on the Polish labour market, and more broadly on the Polish economy. There is more and more information in the media indicating that the Polish economy may slow down in the case of any departure of Ukrainian employees westward to Germany.

Then the floor was taken by Dr Sabina Kubiciel-Lodzińska, of the Opole University of Technology, who discussed three groups of Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland: employees, students and entrepreneurs. An analysis of data concerning the number of work permits for Ukrainian citizens indicates that they are one of the most numerous groups using this form of employment. According to wage surveys conducted in more than 260 companies employing foreigners, most of whom were Ukrainian citizens, the gross average remuneration offered to foreigners is over PLN 2,700. The highest wages

were in medium and large companies – over PLN 3,000, while the lowest were offered by the smallest companies. The average monthly gross wage proposed in the Opolskie Voivodship was about PLN 600 higher than the average wage declared by employers. The following should be considered as the most important factors with the greatest impact on the increase in the number of immigrants from Ukraine: the on-going labour market segmentation, unfavourable demographic changes causing an increase in the demand for care services for the elderly and an increase in health care costs.

Katarzyna Andrejuk, Ph.D., Professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences, started her speech by emphasising that the main theses of her presentation “Entrepreneurship of Ukrainians in Poland” were based on the book *Przedsiębiorcy Ukraińscy w Polsce. Struktura i sprawstwo w strukturze osiedlenia* [Ukrainian Entrepreneurs in Poland. The structure and governance of the settlement],<sup>1</sup> published in 2017. The speaker has carried out qualitative research on a sample of 51 Ukrainian citizens living in Poland, who are independent professionals and run companies with their own capital. All the interviews were conducted in the years 2014–2017 and were accompanied by an analysis of official data and of state policy concerning immigrant self-employment. Recent years have seen increased activity amongst Ukrainians in the Polish labour market, including an increase in the number of migrants who run their own businesses. The activity of Ukrainian citizens in this branch of Polish entrepreneurship can be divided into three phases. At the beginning of the 1990s, it was mainly an activity related to the petty trade of an illegal or semi-legal nature. The next phase, referred to as the entrepreneurship of settled immigrants, was associated with the legal stabilisation of conditions for running a business in Poland. During this period, well integrated and permanently resident people started to develop their own businesses in Poland. Another category of entrepreneurs has also emerged – young people, less burdened with the socio-cultural heritage of the Soviet period. The incomers were also interested in permanent residence in Poland. Thanks to their cultural distinctiveness and life in a specific ethnic community, employees from Ukraine gained an advantage over other national minorities in starting up own businesses in their chosen country of residence. They use their cultural capital by offering specific services, *e.g.*, they set up translation agencies or Ukrainian restaurants, and then use their network of mutual contacts within the immigrant community, which is especially important in those sectors that deal with the import and export of goods. Ethnic employment, *i.e.*, looking for employees among other Ukrainian citizens, is also a way of using resources. This results both in the reduction of labour costs and in the creation of specific bonds between an employee and an employer. A very popular trend nowadays is to employ relatives within family businesses, thus basing the business on relationships with an increased level of trust. The basic strategies for creating and developing business activity by Ukrainians in Poland should be mentioned here. The first of them is self-employment aimed to obtain residence status. The second trend observed is self-employment and exercise of an

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<sup>1</sup> K. Andrejuk, *Przedsiębiorcy Ukraińscy w Polsce. Struktura i sprawstwo w strukturze osiedlenia*, Warszawa 2017.

independent profession (within it) or gainful employment in addition to a full-time job. This strategy usually concerns prestigious industries where high qualifications are needed, often requiring certificates for additional courses and exams. The third strategy is running a business as empowerment, which applies to people performing simple jobs in the first period, but who have managed to become independent and start their own business in Poland. The fourth strategy is the forced self-employment imposed by a quasi-employer who forces his/her employees to do so. The fifth and last of the observed strategies is running a business in order to multiply professional opportunities – *e.g.*, a business run in several countries simultaneously.

As the greatest challenges, Ukrainian entrepreneurs indicated, among others, significant labour costs, high taxes and language problems (especially with regard to specialised official language). Other examples mentioned included the stereotypical thinking of Poles about the low quality of an average, unskilled Ukrainian worker and frequent amendments to the laws on the conducting of business activity. On the other hand, the mentioned advantages most often included: ease and trouble-free registration of individual business activities, lack of corruption, the predictability and transparency of state authorities. Other values indicated are independence from an employer, a greater sense of responsibility and economic certainty. At the same time, business activity plays an integrating and activating role within the Ukrainian community in Poland. The entrepreneurship of Ukrainians in Poland is advantageous from the economic point of view. From the perspective of the sending country, however, we are dealing with a drainage of entrepreneurship and a loss of the most operative individuals who consequently remain in emigration.

The post-presentation discussion was started by Daniel Lach, Ph.D., Professor of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. He noted that the problem of care services does not relate to nursing services, although the care of the elderly is associated primarily with nursing. However, Ukrainians more and more often provide care services, ensuring contact and companionship, and making the experience of old age not so unpleasant. Many European Union countries have developed systems that finance care services. In Poland, such a system is fragmented and does not offer adequate benefits for the carers of older people, and there is a lack of employees willing to work in this sector. Prof. D. Lach also expressed his doubts as to the extent to which the inflow of immigrants from Ukraine to Poland and an attempt to integrate them within the Polish labour market is an antidote to the problems of this market in the years to come.

Prof. K. Andrejuk argued that other sending countries and other immigrant groups, also from the Central Asia, should certainly be considered. We are currently observing an increase in the number of students from these countries and they are the natural base for any future migrant workers in Poland.

Dr S. Kubiciel-Lodzińska noted an increasingly marked problem from the perspective of Opolskie Voivodeship, *i.e.*, the fact that the resources of Ukrainian employees is becoming exhausted of Ukrainian employees and the increase in the number of workers coming from such remote countries as India or Nepal.

According to Dr B. Samoraj-Charitonow, the instruments of migration policy should be used in the demographic context, but at the same time more attention should be paid to cultural differences. In her opinion, the state should introduce wide-ranging tools aimed at returning Poles to their homeland, especially in the context of the negative consequences of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. As regards the immigration of Ukrainian citizens to Poland, the migration streams should be properly managed, to ensure that Ukrainian employees are able to fill the largest gaps in the Polish labour market. Referring to the problem of medical care for the elderly, Dr B. Samoraj-Charitonow noted that migration should be perceived in a comprehensive way.

The discussion was followed by the second part of the meeting, with presentations by subsequent speakers. This part was moderated over by Dr B. Samoraj-Charitonow.

Assistant Professor Agata Górny, Ph.D., from the University of Warsaw presented information about the scale of migration and about the role of the simplified system. She used various data, including those obtained from the Statistics Poland [Główny Urząd Statystyczny], the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Eurostat, but also the data collected at the Centre of Migration Research of the University of Warsaw [Ośrodek Badań nad Migracjami Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego] in cooperation with various institutions. In terms of the demographic situation, permanent immigration is a key element, and in this context, when looking at the registration data, emigration still outweighs immigration. Prof. Marek Okólski, Ph.D., attempted, at the request of the Government Population Council [Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa], to assess the extent to which immigration affects the demographic balance of Poland. We are observing a very rapid increase in immigration to Poland. This is worth mentioning because it is a new phenomenon and many things are still unknown. In recent years Poland has been the region's leader in the number of long-term visas issued to Ukrainian citizens. In the survey, employers were asked how many foreigners were working for them on the basis of declarations and how many declarations they had issued.

In terms of the labour market analysis, it is worth noting that in 2013 declarations were issued primarily for Ukrainian employees with the intention to employ them in agriculture.

It is difficult to predict what will be the inflow of immigrants from Ukraine in the future – this is affected by the temporary nature of migration. It is easy to notice that after the recent armed conflicts in Ukraine there are more citizens from this country in Poland. The liberalisation of the law in 2014, which allowed for easier settlement in Poland, also had an impact on this situation. Prof. A. Górny argued that further legislation developments and migrant integration *via* the labour market would be important.

Assistant Professor Dorota Dzienisiuk, Ph.D., drew attention to the very diverse status of people coming from Ukraine, those staying and working in Poland. During the conference on the employment of workers in Podlaskie Voivodeship, Prof. Bogusław Cudowski stated that the large number of workers coming from countries of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics affects the level of remuneration in Poland, and this finds

reflection in the standard of living and requirements of Polish citizens. The basic assumption is that Ukrainians migrating to Poland for employment usually come with whole families, *i.e.*, they work, but at the same time support their relatives. As Prof. B. Cudowski has emphasised, social security is currently perceived as one of the basic human rights of every person, regardless of their nationality. Issues important from the legal point of view include the legality of employment, methods of tax calculation, as well as the jurisdiction of courts competent to rule on entitlements to benefits from the social security system or access to the National Labour Inspectorate. In the Polish-Ukrainian agreement, in the Association Agreement concluded between the EU and Ukraine in 2014 there were no provisions directly related to the social safety of Ukrainian workers migrating to Poland. However, there are provisions aimed at a closer harmonisation of legislation and at raising certain standards in order to make them as similar as possible to the EU level. And a careful reading of the explanatory memorandum to the Act ratifying the agreement shows that repatriates should be the main parties interested in the agreement. The explanatory memorandum to the Act also considered the interest of Polish companies in posting employees to work in Ukraine. The assessment of impact of the Act ratifying the agreement referred to Ukrainian citizens in Poland covered by social insurance, including in the specific payment of contributions, contributing to the increased inflow to central social insurance funds, something quite significant in the context of the country's demographic state. The bilateral agreement with Ukraine can be considered flexible, it has a fairly broad scope, because it concerns persons who are or have been covered by the legislation of one of the parties and also includes employees' family members. The speaker paid particular attention to the principle of equal treatment and the principle of the retention of acquired rights, according to which residence in the territory of the other State should not affect the right to benefits, except for unemployment benefits and the aggregation of insurance periods. The material scope of the agreement is very broad, because on the Polish side it includes: unemployment benefit, benefits related to sickness, maternity, pensions, benefits related to accidents at work. Due to a lack of interest on the Ukrainian side, the agreement does not include regulations in the area of the coordination of benefits in kind.

With these words, Prof. D. Dzienisiuk concluded her presentation on the social safety of Ukrainian citizens in Poland. Then the floor was taken by Dr M. Benio, who drew attention to the problem of the posting of Ukrainians from Poland to other EU Member States.

The breakthrough for European Union law relating to the posting of workers is the judgement of the Court of Justice in the VanderElst case. It contributed to the creation of a clear case law stating that the posting of workers includes nationals of third countries who are legally employed by their employer in any EU Member State (where the employer is established). Therefore, in order to legally post such an employee to provide services, it is necessary to make sure that he/she is legally employed by the entrepreneur and that the entrepreneur has a registered office and conducts business activity within the territory of Poland. The VanderElst document is often referred to as a visa, but in fact it is not a visa in the full meaning of this word, because it is only a document confirming

that the conditions for posting a foreigner to the territory of another EU Member State have been met. In the context of the emerging shortages on the Polish labour market and the growing need to employ professionals from Ukraine, posting of workers simply constitutes a different type of labour migration. The traditional model of labour migration most often involves a situation when a young person, after completing studies in Poland, looks for a job abroad, and after his/her situation abroad has stabilised, considers staying permanently outside Poland. The second type of migration is when a company which operates in one country can offer its services in the territory of other Member States, without the need to register another company there. Such is a meaning of the freedom of establishment. According to the labour regulations governing this type of temporary migration, starting from 2020, no person may be employed with remuneration below the compulsory minimum rates of pay in the host Member State. In such a case, the nationality of the employee is not significant, the only important factor being his/her legal residence and work in the territory of one of the EU Member States. Migration based on the posting of workers enables one to carry out work in a place where wages are higher while the scope of the duties performed does not change. At the end of his speech, Dr M. Benio mentioned that only one change has been introduced based on the current proposals of the European Commission and the Council – the “link company” must operate normally in the Member State where its registered office is situated, in order to avoid a situation where the company *de facto* acts only as a “mailbox.”

After Dr M. Benio’s speech, the third conference panel began, moderated by Dr Robert Marczak. The first speaker in this part was Assistant Professor Joanna Konieczna-Sałamatin, Ph.D., who discussed the problem of the cultural integration of Poles and Ukrainians.

She paid special attention to the importance of the cultural differences affecting Polish-Ukrainian relations. It turns out that these relations are particularly affected by the remembrance policy issues raised in both countries, defined as activities undertaken within the public space, where images from history are used to build a certain community. Analyses of surveys carried out in Poland and in Ukraine in 2018, as part of a grant from the National Science Centre [Narodowe Centrum Nauki] under the direction of Prof. Tomasz Stryjek, and surveys conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs in 1999 and 2013 indicate that in 1999 Poles and Ukrainians had practically no deeper knowledge about each other – the first and dominant group of Poles’ associations with Ukraine referred to recent history, especially the Second World War (39%). The second group of Poles’ connotations concerned the negative personality traits attributed to Ukrainians, especially cruelty and stubbornness. In turn, the survey conducted in 2013, directly before the events of the Majdan revolution, drew attention to aspects of history, as well as to closeness resulting from the geographical proximity and similarity of cultures. Ukrainians associated Poland and Poles mainly with Europeanness, modernity, economic success, while the associations related to mutual history were marginal. Among Poles’ connotations with Ukraine and Ukrainians, history appears equally often (being mentioned by 26% of respondents, Volhynia is again most frequently mentioned),

as well as the reference to proximity, liking and closeness (again, this was the opinion of 26% of respondents – the closeness of culture and language as well as hospitality being the most frequently mentioned).

In another study concerning history in Poland and Ukraine, contrary to the common opinion that Poles look at everything through the prism of past events, it turned out that it was Ukrainians who more often, on a declarative level, indicated interest in their past. This is shown by the results of a nationwide survey conducted in Poland and in Ukraine in 2018 by the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences [Polska Akademia Nauk] and Collegium Civitas – 36% of Ukrainians indicated a “strong interest” in their country’s past. The same answer was given by 13% of Poles. Questions also concerned the attitude to known people – the respondents were presented with 27 figures known in Poland and in Ukraine, as well as persons who are widely recognised in the world, *e.g.* Vladimir Lenin or Joseph Stalin. Analysis of their answers showed that three figures from the country’s recent history, *i.e.*: Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and Lesia Ukrainka are the most liked by Ukrainians, with more than half of the respondents giving such an answer. And among the most negative figures were mentioned Joseph Stalin and Mikhail Gorbachev. Among the Polish respondents, it was noted that the most respected historical figures, indicated by at least half of the respondents, included personalities from all the epochs of over two thousand years of Polish history. It was therefore not possible to find one variable that could differentiate Polish citizens from Ukrainians. The next question concerned any opinion on events that had a positive, negative or neutral impact on the future of Poland and Ukraine. In Poland, the following were mentioned as events with a positive impact: the underground movement in 1939–1945, the Warsaw Uprising, the activity of anti-communist partisans after the end of World War II and the activity of the Catholic Church during the years of communism. In turn, the most frequently recorded answers among Ukrainians were participation in the Red Army and the activity of Soviet partisans during World War II. Another important question relating to the remembrance policy concerned the official interpretation of history by the state and making decisions on past events. The obtained results indicated that Poles and the Ukrainians generally did not differ in their opinions. However, regardless of the survey, two cases may be indicated where both countries interpreted the past in a conscious manner. The first was the resolution of the Supreme Council of Ukraine concerning the Great Famine in Ukraine [the Holodomor], the second was the resolution of the Sejm stating that the Volhynia crime was an act of genocide. Respondents in Poland and in Ukraine were asked to refer to the following two sentences: “There have been situations in the past where Poles (Ukrainians) behaved heroically, as well as situations in which the behaviour of some deserved to be condemned. One should speak openly about both in order to learn from history.” The second sentence was: “If there were any uncomfortable facts, one should not talk about them because it weakens the state.” Respondents from Ukraine more often agreed with the first opinion, while among Poles the view

prevailed that some things are better kept quiet. However, in both countries the prevailing opinion was that uncomfortable facts should be spoken about.

Dr Oleksii Polegkyi from the University of Antwerp began his speech with outlining the problem of the perception of the European Union by Ukrainian society and the three key aspects appearing in the Ukrainian public discourse on European integration. The first, often visible aspect, is political negation, according to which Ukraine is part of the great geopolitical game played out between the EU and Russia. The second issue, which is currently of relatively lesser importance, is treating European integration as a certain civilisation challenge. And the third aspect is that European integration is perceived as an instrument that can help in social changes, in the transformation and transfer of certain values leading to internal transformation within Ukraine. Since 2011, there has been a significant increase in the number of Ukrainians in favour of integration with the European Union compared to the number of supporters of the union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. According to the results of the research of 2013, Ukraine's accession to the union with Russia was approved by one fourth of society, while in 2018, after the events at Ukrainian Majdan, only about 10% supported such a union, and over 50% of Ukrainians believed that Ukraine should become a member of the European Union. Individual regions of Ukraine also vary considerably in their opinion on European integration, but most of the EU's opponents are in the south of the country. The obtained results indicate that the greatest advantage of Ukraine's accession to the EU would be the increased standard of living, as the EU is widely associated with economic growth and better living standards. Among the negative consequences of EU accession, 20% of those surveyed in 2015 indicated that Western culture would replace traditional Ukrainian culture. Analyses of the perception of the EU in the Ukrainian media carried out several years ago did not indicate any particular interest in the EU. An increasingly important issue for respondents is the introduction of a visa-free regime with EU countries – 25% of Ukrainians were in favour of such a regime, while in 2016 it was only 12–16%. In the group of young people up to the age of 30, about 60% declared their willingness to go abroad to study, work or for permanent residence. In turn, analyses carried out by the University of Warsaw together with the Polish National Bank on Ukrainian students staying in Poland showed that 22% of the respondents declared their willingness to go to another country in the European Union, 36% wanted to stay in Poland, while only 2.5% did not plan to return to Ukraine. The economic crisis and difficult life situation are conducive to a search for other places of employment. Business trips were mentioned in 56% of answers, but tourist trips also achieved a high score. The choice of direction in which Ukraine will develop depends to a large extent on the age of the respondent. Young Ukrainians are mostly positive about their country's membership of the European Union, while people over 60 are more likely to be in favour of an alliance or union with Russia.

Dr Andrzej Szybkie of the Polish Social Insurance Institution's Foreign Pensions Department focused in his speech on the analysis of particular elements of the Polish-Ukrainian social security agreement. He examined in particular: the purpose and

validity of the agreement, including its subject matter and personal scope, the most important rules for coordination of the social security systems, legal elements concerning ZUS obligation to apply EU law and the provisions of the agreement, as well as administrative cooperation between ZUS and its Ukrainian counterpart. Dr A. Szybkie paid particular attention to the process immediately preceding the entry into force of the agreement. This process started with the participation of ZUS representatives and experts in bilateral negotiations, which have evolved into regular cooperation with the Ukrainian side in the implementation of the agreement. The cooperation mainly involved the determination of procedures to be followed, templates of forms to be used and the scope of data exchanged by the institutions. Preparations to draft the text of such an agreement usually take several years. The bilateral agreement with Ukraine did not provide for any change in internal regulations – it was aimed to reconcile laws, to create a framework enabling the migrant to improve his/her situation. The key rules for the coordination of Polish and Ukrainian legislation include the principle of single legislation, the principle of the export of benefits and the principle of granting benefits by each of the countries in which the person was insured. A very favourable solution contained in the agreement is the possibility for the aggregating of insurance periods completed in third countries with which both states are bound by a social insurance agreement. Problems of a political and formal nature that appeared on the Ukrainian side were due to military operations. They affected particularly people living in the Crimea and Donbass, and were related mainly to customer service, exchange of correspondence in the occupied territories and access to documentation of the Pension Fund of Ukraine. Thanks to cooperation with Polish consular posts, these obstacles have been overcome. The cooperation with the Ukrainian Fund through the ZUS Branch in Rzeszów is very well evaluated. The scale of cooperation, resulting from the agreement, is still limited in scope, with the number of beneficiaries slightly exceeding 800, including 111 persons whose benefits are transferred by ZUS to Ukraine. Finally, Dr A. Szybkie noted that repatriates, although not directly covered by the agreement, are guaranteed benefit inviolability.

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## Conference summary

In summing up the conference, Dr B. Samoraj-Charitonow pointed out that three groups of the papers presented referred to the following: the economic and social area, legal area, and that associated with the cultural context and integration of foreigners in Poland. The conclusions from the papers showed how important Ukrainians are in our labour market, how much this migration affects many areas of life, the economy and law. Along with the growing migration, new challenges have also appeared for ZUS – concerning the right to benefits, their acquisition and payment. In this regard, a problem to be solved may be, for example, payment of one contribution which authorises the use of other social services, although the benefit may amount to only a few groszy.

The final group of papers on Polish-Ukrainian integration discussed the behaviour of these culturally close groups. The study on economic migration did not reveal open conflicts based on nationality, but it is advisable to build effective, multifaceted integration programmes for foreigners.

Finally, Dr R. Marczak distinguished areas requiring further intensive research, such as: the social and financial safety of emigrants from Ukraine, the quality of the work performed by Ukrainian citizens in Poland and their holding of jobs below their qualifications.

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