


Minimum Wage & Collective Bargaining in Poland 2025

Latest update on 05/05/2025

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 Poland

Statutory Minimum Wage ✓

Monthly Min. Wage

1010.00€

Hourly Min. Wage

7.08€

60.00%

• MW as % of Median Wage

52.00%

• MW as % of Gross Average Wage

Gender pay gap

7.80%

13.00%

• Collective bargaining coverage

Process of transposition:

Draft Legislation published

↔ Compare with other countries



Minimum wage system in Poland

The minimum wage has a long tradition in Poland, dating back to the mid-1950s. However, it only gained particular political significance in the course of the political and economic changes in the early 1990s and later. The statutory minimum wage was first introduced in Poland in 1956, under communist rule, and its setting was the responsibility of the Council of Ministers. Minimum wage setting was part of a complex wage grid system, affecting the wage dynamics of better-paid workers. In 1990, at the outset of the political and economic transition and the departure from the authoritarian system, a new principle of minimum wages was adopted., It became a separate amount not linked to any wage grid. In 1997, the new Constitution was adopted, which guaranteed the existence of the statutory minimum wage in the new sociopolitical reality. Article 65 of the Constitution states that ‘a minimum level of remuneration for work, or the manner of determining its level, shall be established by law’. The minimum wage is uniform throughout the country and is independent of a worker's age. It is not differentiated by region, industry, economic sector, occupational group or qualifications.

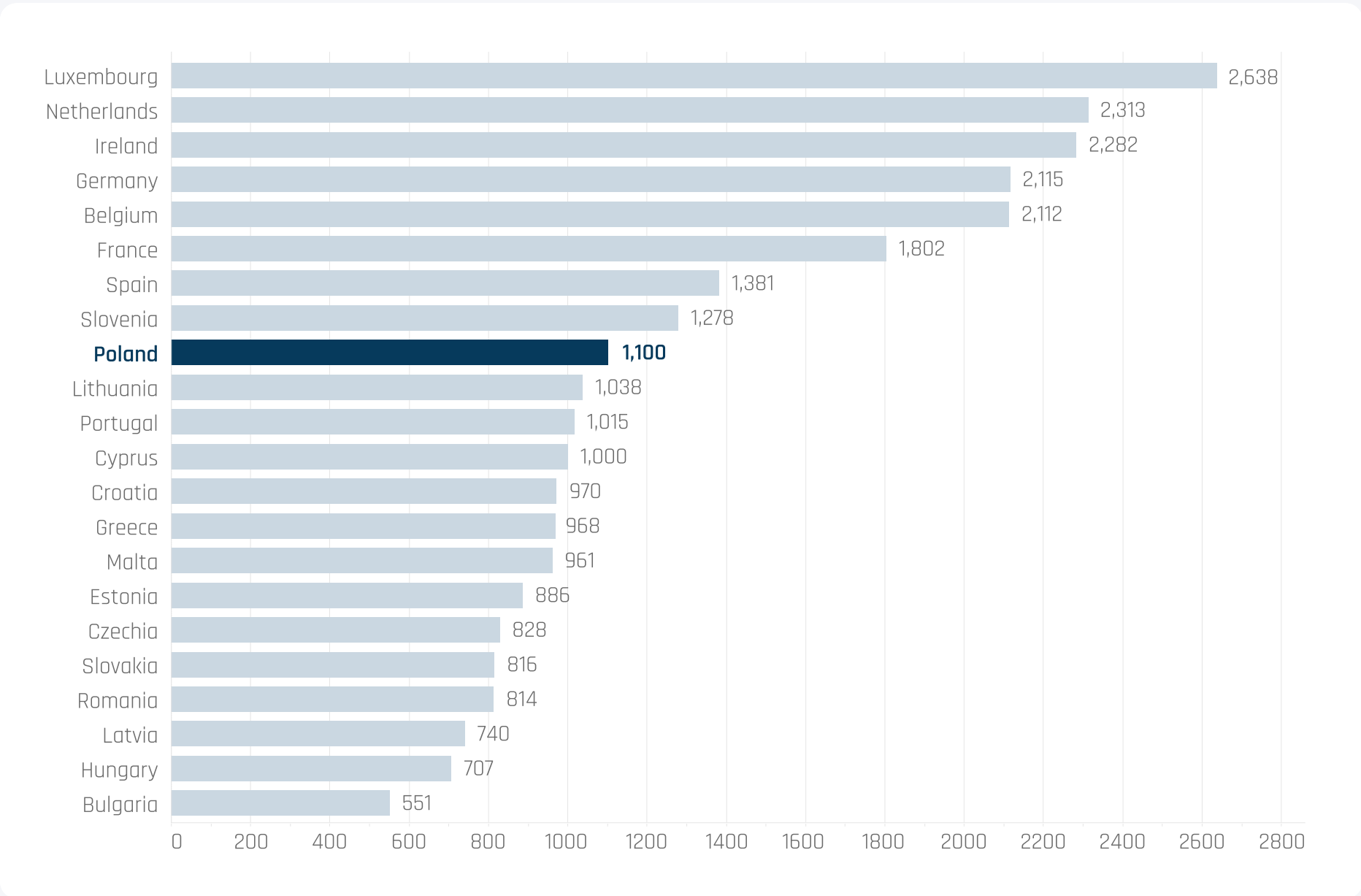
The legal basis of the Polish minimum wage system is the Act on the minimum wage for work of 10 October 2002 (Ustawa o minimalnym wynagrodzeniu za pracę).

It stipulates that the minimum wage shall be set once a year. By 15 June each year, the government must submit to the Social Dialogue Council (Rada Dialogu Społecznego, RDS) a proposal for an adjustment of the minimum wage based on general economic data, such as economic growth, inflation or the development of the average monthly wage. The Social Dialogue Council then has one month to agree on an increase in the minimum wage. If the trade unions and employers' organisations represented in the Social Dialogue Council cannot reach agreement, the government shall decide unilaterally to adjust the minimum wage, which shall be the rule rather than the exception. In the absence of an agreement between trade unions and employers' organisations the government cannot raise the minimum wage less than the proposal sent to the RDS. However, it can raise it higher than that, for example, for political reasons (proximity to elections) or in response to trade union arguments. This has happened relatively often in recent years. It should be noted that the Act refers to the setting of two types of minimum wage. A monthly minimum wage is set for employees. On the other hand, a minimum hourly rate was introduced in 2017 for work performed under certain civil law contracts (mandate contracts, applied to natural persons who do not perform an economic activity) and for the solo self-employed.

The minimum wage includes not only the basic salary, but also other pay components, such as bonuses and awards. It is therefore the total remuneration of an employee for the nominal working time in a given month. The following categories of employees are exempted from the minimum wage. First, persons performing simple agricultural work, so-called ‘harvest helpers’ (harvest assistance contracts). The legislation does not indicate any reference point for determining their remuneration. Second, young workers (persons under 18 years of age) combining study with occupational training. The remuneration of young workers is set by regulation. In the first year of apprenticeship no less than 8 per cent of the average wage, in the second year no less than 9 per cent and in the third year no less than 10 per cent. Third, people employed within the framework of active state policy measures against unemployment (traineeships for the registered unemployed). Their remuneration during the internship period is 120 per cent of unemployment benefit.

If the minimum wage is lower than 50 per cent of the average wage in the national economy, a special algorithm is applied, specifying that the minimum wage in a given year shall be increased at least in line with projected inflation and additionally increased by two-thirds of the projected GDP growth.

Monthly Minimum Wage (€) per Country



Wage inequality (inter-decile Ratio P90/P10)
3.50

Gender Pay Gap
7.80%

Nominal Growth rate of Wages
10.00%

In-work poverty rate
9.00%

Real Growth rate of wages
6.20%

% of workers covered by minimum wage
21.00%



Minimum wage system in Poland

If the price index forecasted for the following year (that is, the average annual price index of total consumer goods and services adopted for drafting the budget law) is at least 105 per cent, the minimum wage and the minimum hourly rate will be increased twice a year on 1 January and on 1 July.

The criteria taken into account when setting an increase in the minimum wage include: the level of inflation from the previous year, the inflation forecast, the amount of the average wages in the first quarter of the year in which negotiations take place, information on household spending in the previous year, information on national economic conditions (for example, the size of the budget), and the rate of real projected GDP growth.

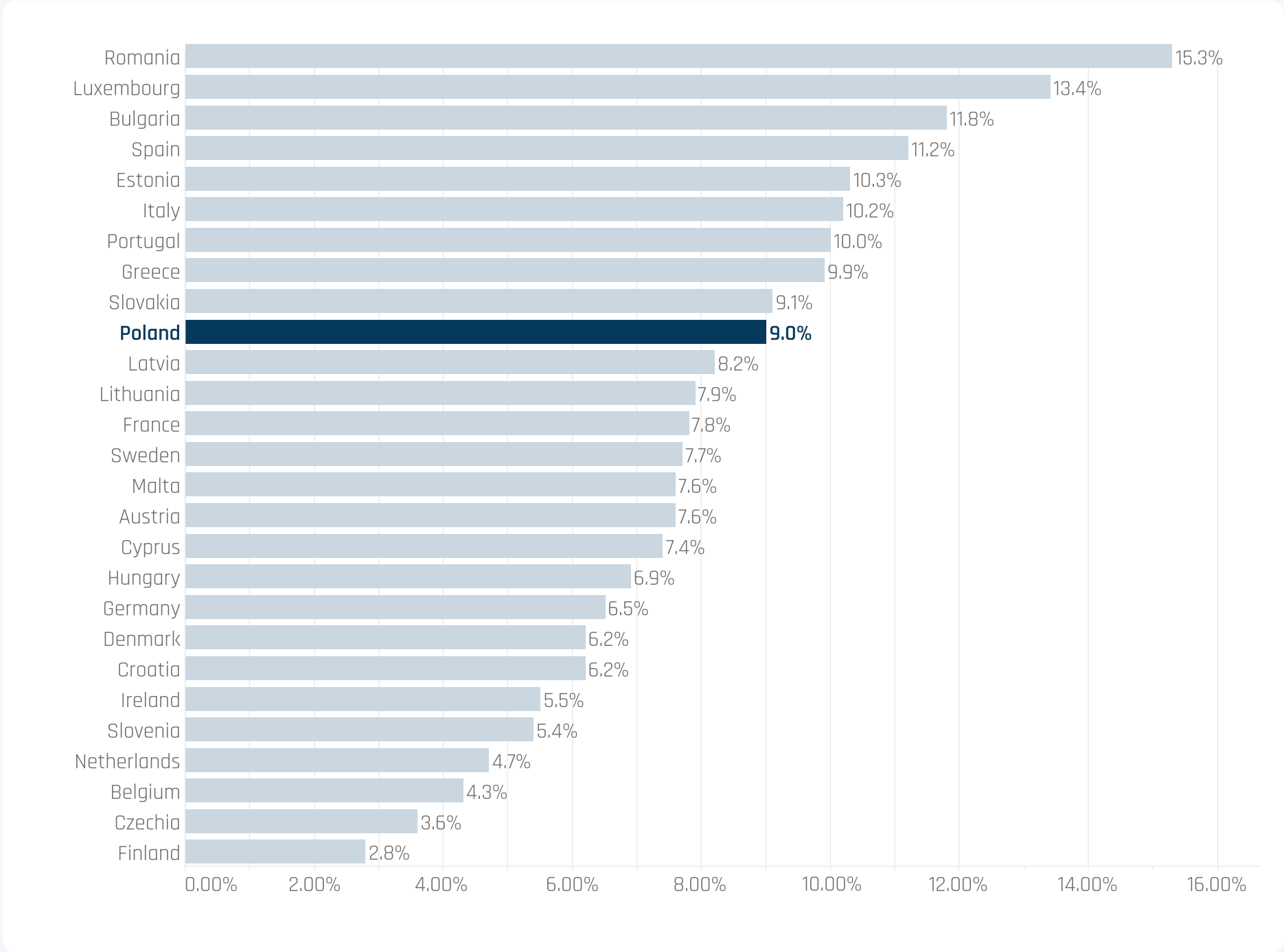
On 1 January 2024, the gross minimum wage was increased to PLN 4242 per month and to PLN 4300 on 1 July 2024. The increase in the minimum wage in July followed earlier inflation, as described above. The minimum hourly rate was PLN 27.70 and PLN 28.10, respectively. On 1 January 2025, the minimum wage was increased by 7.6 per cent to PLN 4,626 and the minimum hourly rate by 7.5 per cent to PLN 30.2. The level of the minimum wage in relation to the average wage has been quite high in recent years. According to the [OECD](#), in 2023 the minimum wage was 54.71 per cent of the average wage of a full-time employee.

Until 2023, it was difficult to establish the real relationship of the minimum wage to the median, as the latter was reported by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) only once every two years for a selected month (October). As of October 2023, the GUS began to publish monthly data on median wages for the first time. Only when the averaged index for 2024 is officially published will it be possible to establish the ratio of the minimum wage to the median.

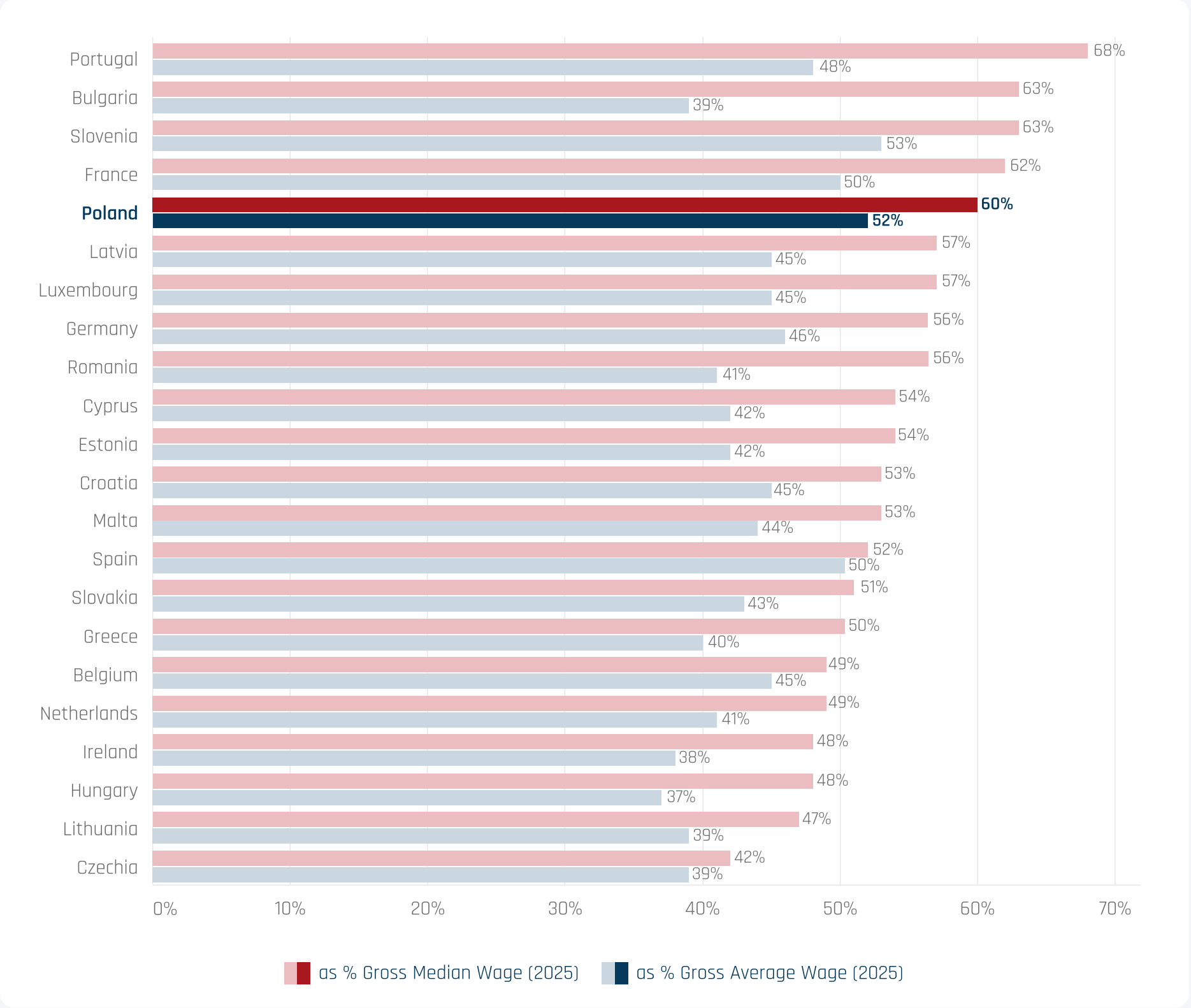
However, data published for the following months of 2024 suggest that it could be as high as 66 per cent. Thus, the reference values of 60 per cent of the median wage and 50 per cent of the average wage specified in the Adequate Minimum Wage Directive are both met.

According to the [latest estimates](#), the number of people earning the minimum wage has risen to 3.6 million, which is more than 21 per cent of the almost 16.9 million employed in the national economy. This trend is leading to a progressive flattening of the wage structure.

In-work poverty rate (%) per Country



Minimum Wage as % of Gross Median and Gross Average Wage per Country





Collective Bargaining system in Poland

The first law on collective bargaining was adopted in Poland in 1937. Despite the introduction of an authoritarian political system based, among other things, on a centrally managed economy after the Second World War, it formally remained in force until 1974, when labour law was codified. Throughout the period of the authoritarian system, collective agreements existed in name only, as they were intended de facto only to organise the working conditions of particular industries or occupations and were under the full control of the communist authorities. After the political breakthrough of 1989 and the adoption of the [Trade Union Act](#) and the [Employers Organisations Act](#), the [Labour Code](#) (Kodeks Pracy) was thoroughly amended.

In 1994, Section 11 was introduced into the Labour Code, regulating the conclusion of collective agreements at two levels: company and supra-company. At the same time, collective agreements became a source of law in their own right. Collective agreements are negotiated on the employee side exclusively by trade unions and their associations, and on the other side, by individual employers and their organisations. In the case of a sector financed directly from the state or local government budget, the relevant minister or local government, respectively, can be a party to a supra-company agreement.

Collective bargaining has erga omnes effect; in other words, a negotiated and signed collective agreement covers the entire workforce, regardless of whether individual employees belong to a particular trade union. Poland is characterised by highly decentralised collective bargaining conducted mainly at the level of individual companies. Over the past 20 years, the number of sector-specific, supracompany collective agreements has declined dramatically.

Collective bargaining coverage has never been very high in Poland. This is because the majority of employees (around 70 per cent) are employed in SMEs, and almost half of them in microenterprises. This means that the lack of established effective sectoral bargaining also results in low coverage of collective bargaining in general. The vast majority of the more than a dozen national sectoral agreements that emerged immediately after the system transformation were transformed agreements from the communist era. They have been gradually terminated by the newly established sectoral employers' organisations. As a result, the number of such agreements has shrunk to a minimum, leading to a decline in collective bargaining coverage from around 30 per cent in the 1990s to 13 per cent today. The declining number of company agreements has also contributed to this decline, with fewer than 8,000 of the approximately 14,000 or so ever concluded still in force.

There are many reasons for the collapse of the collective bargaining system in Poland. The influx of FDI means that transnational corporations have become serious players in many sectors of the Polish economy. Acting in employers' organisations (sometimes several at the same time) they try to block sectoral bargaining initiatives. This approach is welcomed by domestic businesses, which generally do not take collective bargaining very seriously. On the other hand, for years no ruling political leaders, regardless of their ideological inclinations, have tried to promote the benefits of collective bargaining and, moreover, the state shows no interest in being a party to such sectoral agreements for the so-called budgetary (public) sphere, even though it is itself the employer there. This has been described by [researchers](#) as 'hostile state neutrality'.

The situation is not helped by the excessive bureaucratisation of the whole process of negotiating and concluding collective agreements. This is one of the reasons why a draft of a new law on collective bargaining has emerged, which is partly intended to help remedy the situation, while also contributing to the implementation of Article 4 of the Adequate Minimum Wage Directive.

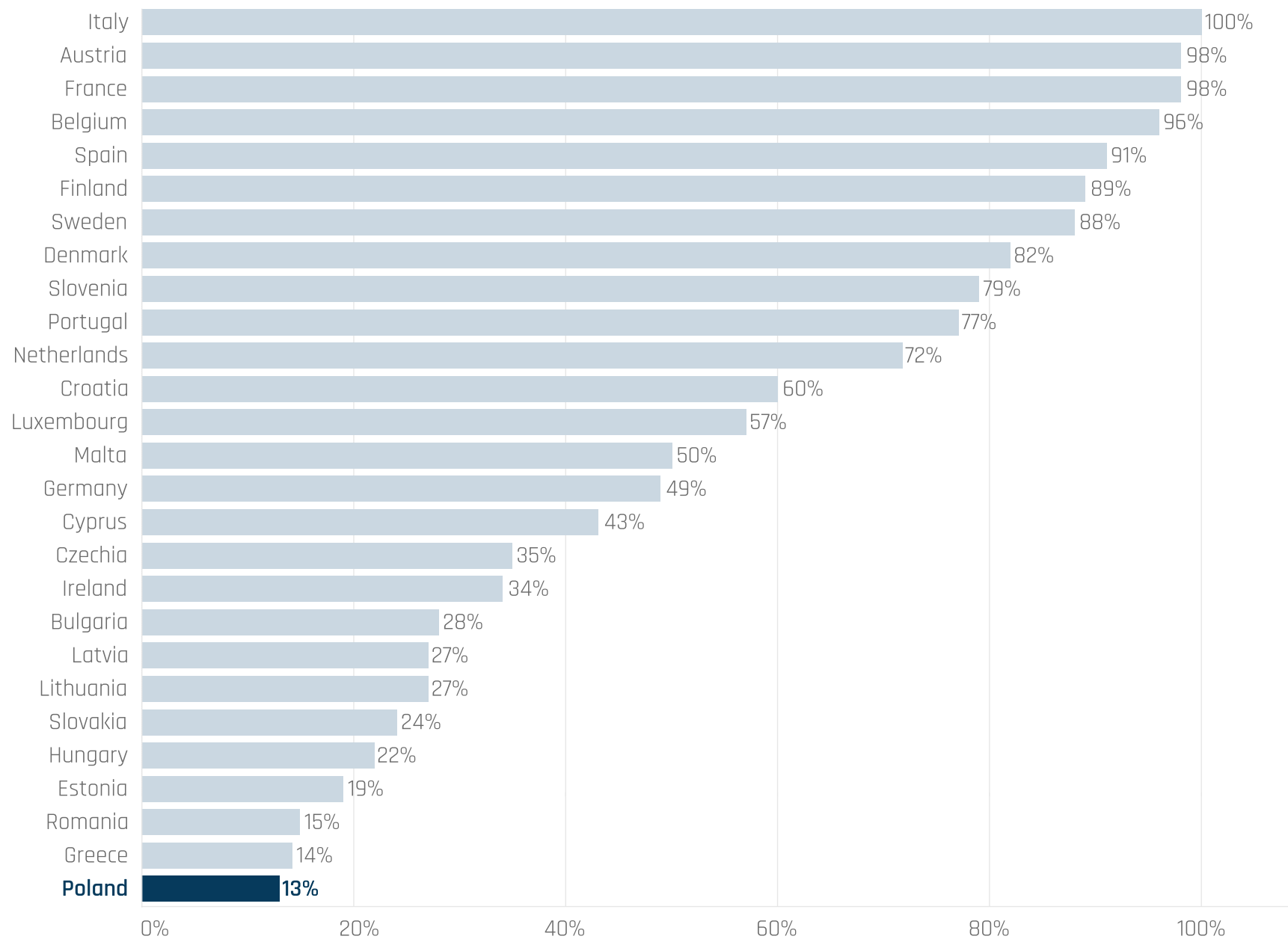
Collective Bargaining Coverage
13.00%

Trade Union Density
13.40%

Call to introduce or strengthen sectoral system of collective bargaining
Ongoing discussions

Valididy of Collective Agreements after expirations?
Yes

Collective Bargaining Coverage per Country (%)





Collective Bargaining system in Poland

It should be noted that the Labour Code contains extensive and fairly comprehensive regulation of working conditions (in many cases dating back to communist times), which limits the interest of trade unions in developing collective agreements.

Validity of collective agreements after expiry

The vast majority of collective agreements are concluded for an indefinite period. According to the trade unions, this is intended to ensure their permanence. However, this does not prevent the termination of such agreements and the expiry of their provisions. Until 2002, the Labour Code provided that, once a collective agreement is terminated, its provisions shall remain in force until a new collective agreement is concluded, unless the parties decide otherwise. This provision was challenged by one of the employers' organisations before the Constitutional Court, which ruled that the provision was incompatible with the Constitution and ILO Convention No. 98, as it constituted a restriction on the principle of voluntary bargaining and violated the equality of the parties in negotiating changes to the content of the collective agreement. This jurisprudence was upheld by the Supreme Court. This means that the provisions of the collective agreement expire three months after its termination (unless the parties agree otherwise).

Exclusion of certain groups of employees from bargaining

Collective agreements can cover all employees with the exclusion of certain groups of people, such as state and local government employees who are appointed, judges, prosecutors and members of the civil service corps. In the case of the latter group, NSZZ Solidarność tried (unsuccessfully) to challenge the exclusion before the Constitutional Court. The ruling was that there is a stronger right of association and a weaker right to collective bargaining in the legal system, and the latter may be subject to restrictions because a trade union is also a political organisation, and collective bargaining for the civil service would be contrary to the principle of being apolitical.

Moreover, collective agreements may also cover the solo self-employed and those employed under civil law contracts, as these categories of persons were granted the right of association following the amendment of the Trade Union Act in 2018. In practice, however, these are isolated cases.

Collective bargaining clauses in public procurement

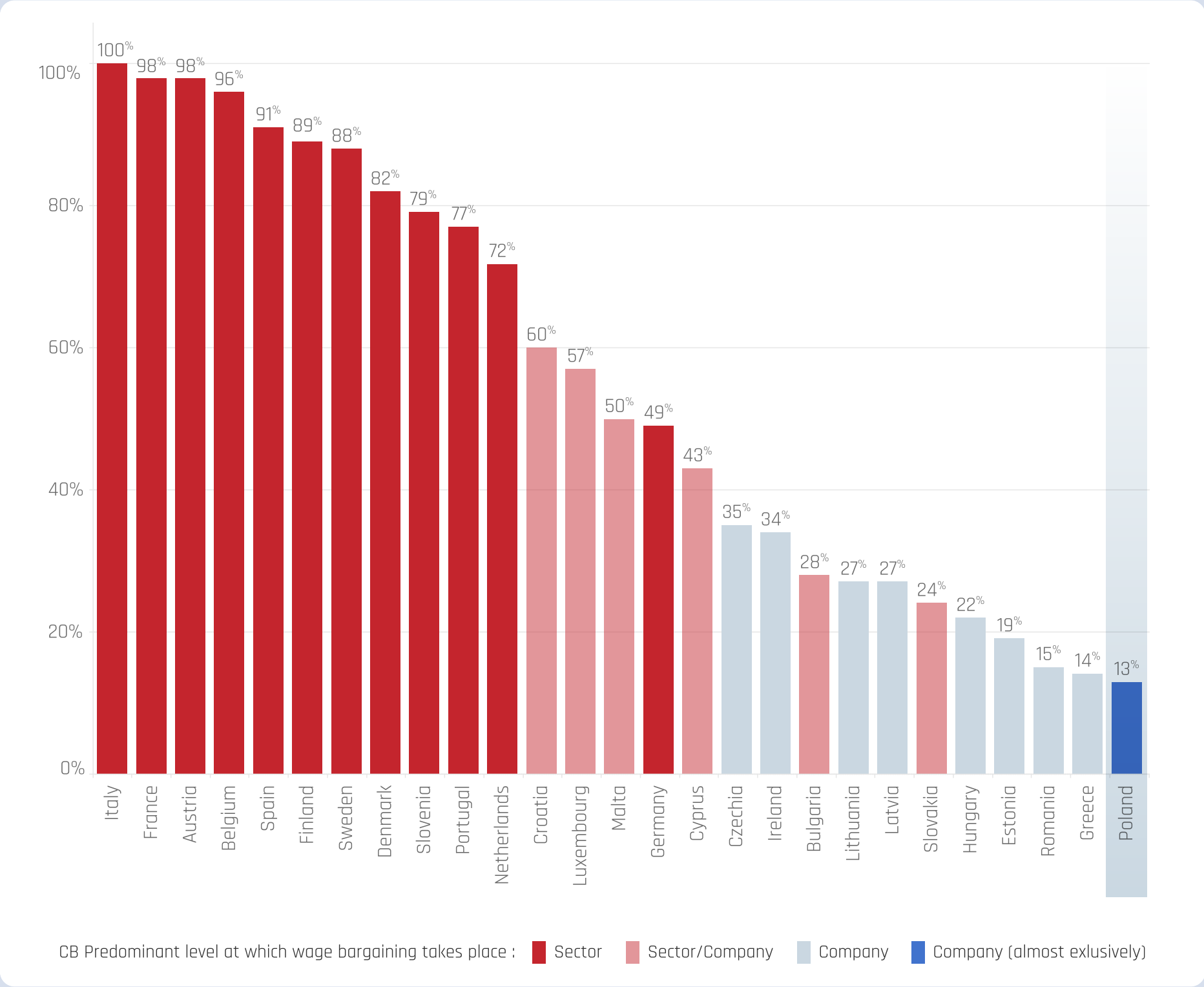
There are no clauses on collective agreements in the Public Procurement Act. The trade unions intend to take up this issue in

discussions with the employers on the Action Plan to promote collective bargaining as referred to in Article 4 of the Adequate Minimum Wages Directive

Right of access to workplaces for trade unions

The Trade Union Act only guarantees employers' obligation to make available the premises necessary for union activities. The details (size, location, equipment) should be agreed through negotiations. An obvious problem at the moment is company trade unions' lack of online access to employees, which is crucial in large workplaces, for example, when a strike ballot is needed. Employers tend to refer to the GDPR as a pretext for denying access. Trade unions consider that the lack of regulation in this regard is a violation of Article 2(1) of ILO Convention No. 135. The access of external trade union representatives and experts (for example, during the negotiation of a collective agreement) to the workplace is also a serious problem. According to the trade unions, this is a violation of ILO Recommendation No. 143 indicating that trade union representatives who are not employed by the company but whose union has members therein should be granted access to such a company.

CB Predominant level at which wage bargaining takes place per Country





Collective Bargaining system in Poland

Protection of workers and trade union representatives from dismissal and discrimination

Protection against discrimination based on trade union membership or trade union activities is enshrined in Article 11.3 of the Labour Code, which states that any discrimination in employment, including on the grounds of trade union membership, is unacceptable. The Trade Union Act introduces employment protection (against dismissal) for a certain number of trade union activists, which depends on the size of the respective company-level union structure. In the case of employees who are union members (as well as non-unionised persons who have asked a company-level union structure to defend their rights) there is an obligation on the employer to consult the trade union before dismissing them.

Obligation for employers to engage in collective bargaining with trade unions

Such an obligation exists in the Labour Code. It applies both to the negotiation of a new collective agreement in a particular company/ industry and to the re-negotiation of an existing one. None of the parties that are legally entitled to conclude an agreement can refuse the other party's request to enter into negotiations. This does not imply a requirement to conclude a collective agreement and, in practice, many negotiations fail, discouraging trade unions from making such attempts. Trade unions with a small number of members do not demand negotiations leading to a collective agreement at all, on the assumption that they are not in a position to exert effective pressure, so the employer will not agree to anything 'attractive' anyway, apart from replicating the Labour Code.

Transposition of the European Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages in the EU

In summer 2024, the Polish government presented two draft laws to transpose the Directive into law. The first was a revision of [the Minimum Wage Act](#), as here it was considered that only minor additions were needed. With regard to Article 4 of the Directive and in connection with the general need to revitalise the collective bargaining system, a draft of a completely new [the Collective Agreements Act](#) was presented. Following consultations in the Social Dialogue Council, both drafts are still awaiting approval by the government and submission to Parliament (as at 30 April 2025). As a result, it is difficult to assess what the key changes will be, although with regard to collective agreements the trade unions consider the government proposals to be far from sufficient.



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WAGE-UP is the ETUC Monitoring Tool presenting information on Minimum Wage setting procedures and Collective Bargaining systems in all EU countries, as well as the progress in EU countries toward the transposition and the implementation of all the provisions of the Directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU (2022/2041).

www.wage-up.etuc.org/



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