

The research project '**Legal Status of Domestic Workers in Poland – Current State and Proposals for Changes (WORK-DOM)**' carried out at the University of Lodz aims to contribute to changes in Polish law in order to ensure decent work conditions for domestic workers, while respecting the legitimate interests of persons employing them, and to reduce the scale of illegal work in this sector in Poland. Its aim is to propose legislative changes to distinguish domestic workers as a special category of employed persons whose legal situation is to some extent regulated by specific provisions of labour and social security law. The claim of the project is that these changes will enhance the effective protection of domestic workers against breaches of law and irregularities at the workplace.

This project is of important social significance due to the increase in the number of domestic workers providing, in particular, care or cleaning services. This type of work is done in Poland mainly by women, often migrants from countries outside the European Union, especially from Ukraine. Violations of the law are recorded in the domestic work sector concerning the lack of legalisation of work, and noncompliance with labour and social insurance regulations. In Poland the proper instruments to control working conditions in households are missing.

The research carried out under this project focuses in particular on the following problems: the personal scope of the concept 'domestic worker', taking into account the different legal bases of domestic work, the significance of the international and European Union legal instruments for the improvement of the legal status of domestic workers, the identification of working conditions which require particular regulation including employment through temporary work agencies or digital platforms, protection of domestic workers against discrimination, in particular on grounds of gender, age, nationality, ethnic or racial origin, and against violence.

The research will also concern the prevention of risks related to health and safety, problems with regard to employment of migrants, the effective control of working conditions of domestic workers, principles concerning the coverage of domestic workers by social security system, as well as the role of trade unions and non-governmental organisations in the improvement of working conditions of domestic workers. The search for optimal legal solutions in the sphere of domestic work also takes into account the protection of the legitimate interests of persons employing domestic workers.

In the course of the research, Polish law will be analyzed to determine the need to bring it in line with international standards, particularly with the ILO Domestic Workers Convention No. 189 of 2011 and the European Union law. The project also includes comparative legal research on legislation and court rulings, as well as the role of trade unions in shaping the conditions of employment of domestic workers, which will be carried out in selected EU countries, especially in Spain, Germany, and Italy. In all of these countries, unlike in Poland, the ILO Domestic Workers Convention No. 189 (2011) has been ratified and the relevant regulations concerning their working conditions are in force. The solutions of other countries will be analyzed in terms of the inspiration they may provide for the Polish lawmaker, especially in a similar social context, concerning the "aging" of societies, the shortcomings of institutional care for the older people or persons with disabilities or requiring long-term care, the increase in women's professional activities and the rise in the number of foreigners employed in the domestic work sector, including persons coming from non-EU countries.

An important aspect of the project is the analysis of incentives for persons employing domestic workers, the introduction of which would serve to reduce the scale of the informal economy in the domestic services' sector. This analysis will be based, in particular, on good examples from EU member states. The results of the project will be presented in articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, in papers prepared for international conferences, and in the form of recommendations addressed to the Polish lawmaker on desirable legislative changes.