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## Birth-rate increase measures and other social measures concerning family support<sup>1</sup>

Wydatki na rzecz zwiększenia wskaźnika urodzeń i inne środki społeczne dotyczące wsparcia rodziny

The article documents the thesis that in Poland measures to support families and increase fertility rates are an element of many policies and new programmes like Family 500+, Good Start, Large Family Card. They are now a government priority. Expenses for this purpose amount to 4% of GDP. The legal basis for measures in this matter is covered by many legal acts.

**Keywords:** family, state budget, social policy

Autorka artykułu dokumentuje tezę, że w Polsce działania na rzecz wspierania rodzin i zwiększania dzietności są elementem wielu polityk i nowych programów, takich jak „Rodzina 500+”, „Dobry Start”, „Karta Dużej Rodziny”. Stanowią one obecnie priorytet rządu. Wydatki na ten cel wynoszą 4% PKB. Podstawę prawną działań w tym zakresie reguluje wiele aktów prawnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rodzina, budżet państwa, polityka społeczna

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In response to ECPRD Request No. 5326 regarding birth-rate increase measures and other social measures regarding family support, the Bureau of Research provides the following information in relation to the questions:

**What are the social measures in your country to support families?**

**What are the measures taken to increase birth rate?**

**How are the mothers with newly born children supported?**

**What are the measures to support vulnerable categories?**

In Poland the social security system is composed of: the social insurance and welfare system, health insurance system, benefits in respect of unemployment, and family benefits. The publication of the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS): *Social*

<sup>1</sup> Birth-rate increase measures and other social measures regarding family support (ECPRD Request No. 5326) prepared on February 17, 2023 as part of cooperation in The European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (Europejskie Centrum Badań Parlamentarnych i Dokumentacji); BAS-WASiE-201/23.

*Security in Poland* contains a lot of detailed information on benefits provided by ZUS and material support for families, families with children in particular.<sup>2</sup> In general, the system of family benefits currently in force was introduced on May 1, 2004. It is a system financed from the state budget, taking into account the principle that it is parents in the first place who are obliged to provide financial care to children. Three groups of benefits are payable under the family benefits scheme: family allowance with supplements, child birth-related benefit and care benefits. Among family benefits the family allowance has the dominant position. Granting the right to family allowance depends, *inter alia*, on the income criterion. The amounts of income criteria for family allowance, as well as the amount for individual family benefits, are subject to verification every 3 years.

It should be noted that pro-family policy is a priority for the Polish government. Measures to support families and increase fertility rates are an element of many policies and new programmes (like Family 500+, Good Start, Large Family Card). As a result, spending on family-friendly policies has risen to around 4% of GDP in recent years.<sup>3</sup> Parents as employees have a number of rights.<sup>4</sup> Recent developments in this area (extension of parental leave and new rights of employees who bring up children up to 8 years of age) are related to European Union policy and implementation of work-life balance directive<sup>5</sup>. The so-called Polish Deal Programme<sup>6</sup> includes important family-oriented solutions from many areas, *inter alia*, housing, taxation and labour market policies, as well as much more expenditure on developing a network of care institutions for the youngest children (Family Care Capital, Toddler +).

<sup>2</sup> Please see: *Social Security in Poland*, Social Insurance Institution, Warsaw 2022. This publication is available online in English, <https://www.zus.pl/documents/10182/167615/Social+Security+in+Poland/71ffe1b1-c142-48fa-a67b-0c7e1cec6eb6> / Social Security in Poland (zus.pl).

<sup>3</sup> There is an increase in state budget expenditures from 1.78% of GDP in 2015 to approx. 4% in 2020. Please see: *Better standard of living for families*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/family/better-standard-of-living-for-families>

<sup>4</sup> Please see: *Leave and benefits related to maternity and parenthood*. Leave and benefits related to maternity and parenthood | Biznes.gov.pl – Information and services website for entrepreneurs,

<sup>5</sup> Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU L 188/79. New changes to the Labour Code – implementation of work-life balance and transparency directives – Andersen,

<sup>6</sup> *Polish Deal for families*, Polish Deal for families – Ministry of Family and Social Policy – Gov.pl website ([www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl)), The Polish Deal – a real profit for 18 million Poles, 08.01.2022. The Polish Deal – a real profit for 18 million Poles – The Chancellery of the Prime Minister – Gov.pl website ([www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl)); Important changes for families since January 2022 – Ministry of Family and Social Policy – Gov.pl website ([www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl)).

Main solutions aimed at supporting families with children are:

- **“Family 500+”** was introduced on 1 April 2016.<sup>7</sup> This programme had two objectives: encourage fertility and reduce child poverty.<sup>8</sup> Under the “Family 500+” programme, families with children are entitled to the child-support benefit of PLN 500 monthly per child until the age of 18. The child-support benefit is granted to parents, legal guardians or actual guardians of the child and in certain cases to directors of residential care homes. As of 1 July 2019, the child-support benefit is of general nature (applies also to a family with one child). It is due for every child under 18 years of age, regardless of family income.
- **Good Start** benefit was introduced on 1 June 2018 by the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 30 May 2018 on detailed conditions for the implementation of the governmental programme “Good Start”. Under the “Good Start” programme, guardians of children between 7 and 20 years of age attending school (in the case of disabled children – up to 24 years of age) receive a benefit of PLN 300 per child once a year – prior to the beginning of the school year. The “Good Start” benefit is granted regardless of income.
- **The Large Family Card** is an instrument supplementing the family policy. Discounts for its holders make it possible to relieve large families whose expenses are connected, among others, with the purchase of food, and take up a large part of the household budget.<sup>9</sup>
- **Family Care Capital**<sup>10</sup> is designed for parents of children between the ages of 12 and 35 months. Parents receive a total amount to PLN 12,000 for the second and each additional child under the program<sup>11</sup>. The scheme is to help families combine work with raising children. The Act on family care capital also provides for the introduction of co-financing for the functioning of care facilities for children below three.
- **Toddler** + subsidy supports the development of child care institutions for children under 3 – crèches, children’s clubs and day care centres. It is a so-

<sup>7</sup> The Act of 11 February 2016 on state aid in raising children (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 1577).

<sup>8</sup> The Family 500+: *Battling Child Poverty in Poland*, 22 2017, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/europeandcentralasia/family-500-battling-child-poverty-poland>.

<sup>9</sup> Large Family Card – new family discounts – Ministry of Family and Social Policy – Gov.pl website ([www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl)). Large Family Card – more partners, more discounts – Ministry of Family and Social Policy – Gov.pl website ([www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl)).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/family/important-changes-for-families-since-january-2022>.

<sup>11</sup> Act of 17 November 2021 on the Family Care Capital (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 2270) Family Care Capital step by step – Ministry of Family and Social Policy – Gov.pl website ([www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl)); Family Care Capital. Parents will have a choice – Ministry of Family and Social Policy – Gov.pl website ([www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl)).

lution aimed at providing parents with the opportunity to realize work-life balance.

- Additional support in mortgage repayment after giving birth to the second, third and subsequent child. The family with a guaranteed loan could receive up to PLN 20,000 of non-repayable co-financing, after giving birth to the third child – up to PLN 60,000 and the fourth and subsequent child – up to PLN 20,000<sup>12</sup>.

The main goal of the Demographic Strategy 2040 adopted in November 2022 is to bring Poland's fertility level closer to guaranteeing the replacement of generations. The strategy indicates that in order to enable Poles to realize their plans to have children, it is necessary to achieve three goals such as:

1. Strengthening the family

- Financial security for families;
- Support in meeting the housing needs of families;
- Support for the sustainability of families;
- Popularization of family-friendly culture;
- Strengthening cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other entities working in favour of the family.

2. Removing barriers for parents who want to have children

- Development of forms of child care;
- Development of a family-friendly labour market;
- Improvement of the quality and organization of education;
- Development of health care;
- Development of infrastructure and services needed by families.

3. Improving the quality of management and implementation of policies at the local and central government levels.<sup>13</sup>

**Legislative framework for family policy measures – the most important acts:**

- Act of 26 June 1974 Labour Code (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 1510);
- Act of 25 June 1999 on cash social insurance benefits in respect of sickness and maternity (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 870);
- Act of 10 October 2002 on minimum wage (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 2207);
- Act of 28 November 2003 on family benefits (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 615);
- Act of 7 September 2007 on assistance for persons entitled to the maintenance allowance (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 808, 875, 1517);

<sup>12</sup> See: *Polish Deal for families* 15.05.2021 <https://www.gov.pl/web/family/polish-deal-for-families>.

<sup>13</sup> The Website of the Government Plenipotentiary for Demographic Policy, <https://www.gov.pl/web/demografia/strategia>.

- Act of 4 February 2011 on the care of children up to age 3 (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 204) – legal base for Good Start programme;
- Act of June 9, 2011 on family support and the foster care system (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 447);
- Act of 5 December 2014 on the Large Family Card (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1744);
- Act of 4 April 2014 on the establishment and payment of allowances for carers (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1297);
- Act of 11 February 2016 on State aid in raising children (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 1577) – legal base for Family 500+ programme;
- Act of 31 January 2019 on supplementary parental benefit (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 303);
- Act of 31 July 2019 on supplementary benefit for persons incapable of independent existence (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1936);
- Act of 17 November 2021 on the Family Care Capital (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 2270) legal base for;
- Act of 20 October 2021 on amending the Act on Personal Income Tax, the Act on Corporate Income Tax and certain other laws (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 2105);
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