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Potential of Employers from Lesser Poland in the Use of Flexible Forms of Employment for the Aging Staff

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POTENTIAL OF EMPLOYERS FROM LESSER POLAND IN THE USE OF FLEXIBLE FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THE AGING STAFF

Introduction

The challenge for Lesser Poland is to create conditions for sustainable development of the region and enhance economic and social cohesion. Centres of development in Lesser Poland are the cities: Cracow, Tarnów and Nowy Sącz, but Cracow is growing most rapidly. The driving force of the development is the numerous foreign investments, which make the distance to other cities in the region growing. Differences in the level and rate of economic growth are also visible at the level of districts. Districts of eastern Lesser Poland can be characterized by higher level of unemployment, often of a structural nature, lower level of entrepreneurship and poor communication network, which make it difficult to attract investors.

Another imperfection of the Lesser Poland province are communication difficulties, a small number of railway connections, the lack of synchronization, poor quality and, at the same time, a small network of roads, which leads to limited mobility of citizens – commuting is unreasonably expensive compared to the low pay for the work. The effects of performed actions are lower than expected. This confirms that the existing disparities and previous underinvestment in the regions are structural in nature, and their reduction requires intensified and long-term actions. They should be aimed at supporting entrepreneurship, particularly family businesses including persons 50+, together with promoting mobility within the region.

Nationwide comparison shows that in Lesser Poland long-term benefits can be observed – paradoxically high proportion of young people currently inactive in the structure of the region's population and the tendency to continue their education, bode well for the future. Population growth and the inflow of graduates into the labour market will increase the number of employees in the region, and the development of the education market will cause the migration of young people to the region of Lesser Poland. Developing region needs more people with years of experience, and these are people in the study program '50+'. Flexible forms of employment in the labour market are the opportunity for an aging population¹.

Residents of Lesser Poland, as well as most Poles, who started work in the previous political system – the Polish People's Republic, were and are still waiting to retire, which can put them in a space where and when 'they can do nothing to me now and I don't have to do anything'. Employees before retirement are just thinking about it. They do not have to take care of anything because they are just about to retire. This is partly understandable, because this generation is tired, diseased. When they started their jobs or careers, it was clear that after some years they would go into retirement and have time for garden, grandchildren and relax. Myth of young, talented employees appeared in the times of transformation to legitimize or justify the dismissal of older workers. Another difference is that the younger generation would not bind to the company as much as the older one. For the younger generation work is not the most important area of activity. In the past people were asked 'Who are you?' because the profession completely defined the man – they were doctors, lawyers or workers. For life. Now you can finish some studies, work in some other profession, and after a few years change it into another. One should not fall into hurray-optimism, a young worker also has got 'defects'. He must be trained for years. And in addition, because of the increasing mobility, frequent transformations and other changes, he can be expected to leave for another company after a few years, as the competition 'does not sleep'.

The analysis of the questionnaires, surveys, literature and experience shows that employers often do not appreciate the valuable features that characterize a person over 50 years of age. Such features as the experience, ability to cope with unexpected events, more tact, intuition, familiarity. It obviously does not concern one hundred per cent of the population, but the advantages that are visible and easy to verify should be used by employers when recruiting staff.

¹ M. Dobrowolska, (red.), *Rozwiązywanie problemów społecznych – wytyczne dla zwiększania integracji zawodowej 50+*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe KMB Press, Katowice 2010; M. Dobrowolska, *Flexible form of employment in view of unemployment problems in middle age*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2011; M. Dobrowolska, *Employee and flexible forms of employment – a theoretical analysis and empirical studies*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2012.

Generally, it is estimated that an older worker can be a role model, teacher and mentor to young people who are just beginning to work.

The issue of employment after fifty years of age is seen not only in the surveyed Lesser Poland province, but it is a worldwide matter. The problem with identification of advantages and disadvantages of working in flexible forms of employment, job opportunities, skills development and promotion at work, the role of the employee and other non-business roles is a global problem. In this study, the survey covered only employers and employees from Lesser Poland region. Respondents were asked to determine the level of job satisfaction – with a description of the factors determining satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction of employers and hiring managers who employ such a group is also presented. Relationships between older workers, being fifty years old, and young workers, graduates with small or moderate experience were also analysed and tested. The relationship of older workers with supervisors and co-workers – employed on the basis of traditional – legal form and those operating in flexible forms of employment are also taken into account. A problem of possible stigmatization of workers in the framework of flexible employment is identified (in past and present times). The collected qualitative material FLEXIBLE 50+ was enriched with quantitative material, assembled on the basis of the research.

According to Dobrowolska² forms of flexible employment, from a psychological perspective, combine with the specificity of human functioning in the so-called late adulthood, becoming a remedy for the problems of an aging population. Reliefs for employers, training for 45 years old and older people, the elimination of early retirement, effective help for the unemployed in their fifties, age management policies in companies and developing services which allow to combine work and family life – these are some of the ideas of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy within the program ‘Solidarity of generations 50+’, which according to the stipulations will be successfully implemented. Perhaps some of the described elements of the program will be implemented prior to the publication of this study and others may be amended or even cancelled due to economic reasons.

² M. Dobrowolska, (red.), *Być albo nie być czasownikiem. Analiza funkcjonowania pracownika w warunkach zatrudnienia tymczasowego*, Wydawnictwo Śląsk, Katowice 2007; M. Dobrowolska, *Znaczenie tymczasowego kontraktu psychologicznego dla marketingu personalnego*, [w:] J. Stankiewicz (red.), *Koncepcje zarządzania kapitałem ludzkim we współczesnych organizacjach*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, Zielona Góra, 2008, s. 67-78; M. Dobrowolska, *Satysfakcja z pracy pracowników zarobkujących w nietypowych formach zatrudnienia. Na przykładzie pracy tymczasowej*, [w:] M. Gableta, A. Pietroń-Pyszczek, (red.), *Człowiek i praca w zmieniającej się organizacji*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Prace Naukowe nr 43, Wrocław 2009, s. 135-145.

1. Characteristics of the sample

The study involved 300 respondents, who represented 300 companies. $\frac{3}{4}$ of them are private companies, 15% work in the public sector and 3% in the social sector. The remaining 7% of the respondents were not able to classify the sector of activity of the company.

Companies of all sizes – from micro to large companies employing hundreds of workers took part in the research. The largest share in the sample is small firms employing between 6 and 10 employees (49%). The smallest companies, employing up to five workers are 7% of the sample. 19% of companies employ between 11 and 25 employees, another 15% employ between 26 and 50 people, and 9% are large companies with the level of employment from 51 to 100 people. The largest companies, employing more than 100 employees represent less than 2% of the surveyed companies.

Companies that participated in the survey are usually those that have a single owner, their organizational-legal form is the property of the individual (42%).

The study was also attended by representatives of LLCs (16%), civil partnerships (12%) and partnerships (5%). Other companies have different organizational-legal forms (24%).

Most companies whose representatives took part in the study are engaged in wholesale and/or retail (23%). 14% of companies operate in the manufacturing sector and 11% in education. One in ten surveyed companies operates in the construction industry, and 9% are the hotels and / or restaurants. 15% of companies operate in a different industry, not included in any of the categories mentioned above.

The vast majority of companies, whose representatives took part in the survey, operate in urban areas (80%). Only one in five companies operates in the country. Urban companies operating mainly in large cities with a population of 200 to 500,000 constitute 28%. 17% of the surveyed companies are located in major metropolitan areas (over 500 thousand inhabitants), and the rest are located in smaller cities: 15% in urban areas with 100-200 thousand residents, 10% in urban areas with 50-100 thousand residents, 14% in urban areas with 20-50 thousand residents, and 17% operate in the smallest towns of up to 20 thousand residents. When it comes to companies operating in the country, 29% of them exist in small villages with less than 1000 inhabitants, 24% in the villages slightly larger than the 1000 to 2000 people, and 26% in rural areas from 2000 to 4000 residents. 21% of companies are located in rural areas that exceed 4,000 inhabitants.

The surveyed companies operate mainly in the local market (45%), in the premises of their registered office or in the near proximity to it. 29% of

companies run their business in the Lesser Poland region, and 21% are active throughout the country. Only 5% of companies operate on the international market.

The majority of the surveyed companies (70%) required a good state of health. The remaining 30% did not have such requirements. Only one in five companies employ workers with disabilities, and the remaining 80% do not have such persons among its employees.

The respondents in this study were the owners or persons in managerial positions of Lesser Poland companies. They will be called managers or employers. The study involved 157 (52%) women and 143 (48%) men. The subjects are of all ages, among them are the young and the elderly.

Younger managers, up to 29 years of age are 13% of respondents. 29% are aged 30-39 years, and 30% are aged 40-49 years. 50+ managers represent 27% of the sample. The respondents have very good education, which is obvious from the point of view of the occupied position. Half of the surveyed managers have higher education degree, and 7% higher vocational education. 38% of respondents have secondary education and only 6% of respondents completed lower education level.

The vast majority (79%) of the respondents has children and 21% do not have children. Every fourth respondent has one child, 40% have two of them, and 12% have three children. The remaining 4% of the respondents have four or more children.

More than half (53%) of the respondents live in cities with more than 50 thousand residents. 19% of respondents live in smaller towns, while 28% in rural areas.

The age structure of the population is still changing, the number and structure of the working-age population determines the supply of manpower in the labour market. In the presented state of the population people who have temporarily emigrated abroad are taken into account and although they are registered for permanent stay in Poland, they are no longer Polish residents if their period of stay abroad is at least one year.

The vast majority of these people are of working, mobile age. The demographic changes that have been observed in recent years, like the increase in the number of births and marriages, may indicate a breakthrough in the development of the population. However, the chance to improve the poor demographic situation in Poland is still quite distant. Polish women's fertility is at the lowest level among the EU countries and one of the lowest in the European countries. At the same time, more and more people are leaving Poland and declare the will to stay abroad for a long time. Perspectives for population growth in the coming years are settled. Demographic low from the 90s and the continued high emigration (especially temporary emigration of young people

which continues since 2004) will cause more and more difficulties in demographic development, labour market and social security system.

2. Employment of 50+ workers in Lesser Poland companies

The aim of the study was to diagnose the potential of Lesser Poland employers in the use of flexible forms of employment that could be suitable for workers after fifty years of age. However, it was reasonable to first check whether the company is currently employing such workers and if they are already using some flexible forms of employment.

According to the survey only 39% of managers of Lesser Poland companies have some knowledge of flexible forms of employment after the age of 50. The remaining 61% of the respondents declared that they do not have such information. Size of the company or its form of ownership does not change these proportions. More than a half of Lesser Poland companies (57%) employ workers over the age of 50. However, in 43% of the surveyed enterprises 50+ persons have not found employment. 50+ employees work for state-owned (91% of them) than private companies (47%). Workers over 50 years of age often find employment in large firms rather than in small firms.

Companies that employ 50+ employees have an average of six people in their team. The minimum is one employee and the maximum is 50, while the median is 3.5. Most companies with 50+ employees employ only one such person (22%). Another 18% of the companies in the group employ two workers in their fifties. 9% of companies employ three such workers, the next 9% employ four 50+ workers and 4% employ five such workers. Other companies (37%) employ more than five 50+ workers. The larger the company, the greater is the chance for 50+ workers to be employed. State-owned companies employ more 50+ workers (average 8) than private (average 5). This refers to the companies that in general employ 50+ workers (n=171).

However, if we take into account all the surveyed companies, the average employment of 50+ is different. The surveyed companies in Lesser Poland employ 3 such workers on average. Average number for the state-owned companies is 7 employees, and for private companies two employees.

Managers of the surveyed companies were also asked how many 50+ candidates would like to be employed in their companies. Only 36 respondents answered this question. The others have not commented on this issue, perhaps because they were unable to determine the number of people willing to work in their company, or they did not want to answer this question. The average of the responses of the 36 respondents was 8, with a median of 5, a minimum was 0 and a maximum was 50.

Only 25% of the surveyed companies use temporary employment of 50+ workers – 16% of them do it in the case of increased demand for their products / services, 8% in case of sudden employee leaves, and 1% to replace a permanent worker for some time. Other companies do not benefit from the employment of temporary 50+ workers. In the past, the temporary employment of 50+ workers was practiced by 17% of the surveyed companies, but now this solution is not applied very often. Previously this form of employment was used in case of increased demand for products / services of the company, to substitute a permanent employee or for seasonal work. Other companies did not benefit from a temporary employment of such age group because, as they argue, there is no such need (84%). 6% of them answered that they only employ young workers, and 5% admitted that they only offer permanent job positions. 4% of the respondents in this group said that they wanted to hire temporary 50+ workers, but there were no candidates.

The flexible forms of work also include seasonal employment. Therefore managers were asked whether their companies use this form of employment. 21% of respondents answered positively to this question. The remaining 79% of companies do not apply the seasonal increase of employment. Companies that hire seasonal workers do it mainly during periods of increased demand for their products / services. The respondents also answered that the increase in employment by adopting seasonal workers depends on the specificity of the industry, which requires more work in the season. They also said that seasonal employment is related to the end of the academic year, as during the holidays apprentices and trainees are hired and permanent staff often leaves. Almost all managers whose companies do not employ seasonal workers said they do not do it because there is no such need.

Only 28% of Lesser Poland managers declared that they use / would use flexible forms of employment when needed. The rest (72%) do not use such forms of employment and do not observe such a possibility. 40% of state-owned companies and 22% of private employers use or will use flexible forms of employment.

In 75% of surveyed companies respondents reported that if they were to choose between the young, inexperienced workers aged 20-30 years and older workers, in their fifties, with experience, they would choose the former. The remaining 25% of managers would hire the 50+ employees.

Managers were also asked about the situation in which the company would be willing to employ 50+ employees in various jobs.

41% of them answered that such a situation would be possible if the number of orders for products / services of the company increased. Every fifth respondent stated that this might occur if the company's financial condition was better, and 9% felt that they would employ 50+ workers in the event of

a reorganization of the company. Unfortunately, 18% of employers said that the employment of 50+ workers is inconsistent with the personnel policy of the company.

One of the objectives was to see what is the structure of hiring 50+ workers, what jobs they are offered, how many of these workers have been employed in the surveyed companies and what is their education. Here we will talk about all the surveyed companies, not just those whose managers responded that they employ 50+ employees. 59% of companies do not hire women aged 50+, and 55% do not hire men. 36% of companies employ between 1 and 5 men aged 50+. 7% of companies hire 5-10 men in this age, and only 3% employ more than 10 men over 50 years of age. As far as women are concerned, 28% of companies employ 1-5 50+ women. 9% of companies employ between 6 and 10 such women, and 3% hire more than 10. On average, the surveyed companies in the Lesser Poland region employ two men and two women aged 50+. Almost all surveyed managers said that in the nearest future they would not employ men aged 50+ (there is no such need for 95% of the companies) or women in this age (94%). Only seven of the surveyed companies could hire one 50+ woman and five companies would hire one 50+ man. An average planned employment of 50+ workers in the sample was 0.14 for women and 0.18 for men. It can therefore be concluded that finding a job by a person over 50 years of age in the region of Lesser Poland will be very difficult. Managers were also asked to describe the level of education of their 50+ workers.

50+ employees of Lesser Poland companies usually have basic vocational education, secondary or higher degree. 89 companies employ an average of five employees over 50 years of age who have a basic vocational education. 68 companies employ three people with secondary vocational education, and 48 companies hire three people with secondary education. On the other hand, the 74 surveyed companies employ an average of three employees with higher education degree. 50+ employees work in various professions. Most companies employ a person who is 50+ as a blue-collar worker, skilled or unskilled worker, many companies also employ teachers and office workers aged 50+.

Respondents were also asked about the positions occupied by 50+ workers, but almost everyone answered exactly the same as in the case of the question concerning education. Thus, the occupations were grouped into broader categories in order to illustrate what are the tasks of 50+ workers. The respondents also revealed the exact number of people aged 50+ who work in their companies.

Most of 50+ employees work in Lesser Poland companies as unskilled workers, specialists with higher education or skilled workers. Four respondents said that the owner or co-owner of the company is a person over 50 years of age.

Respondents were also asked if deputy managers / executives of their companies are more likely to be young, or rather 50+.

In the vast majority of the surveyed companies (84%) the executives are young people. 50+ employees in the surveyed companies are usually the ones who have been working there for many years (58%). Only 8% are those who found a job after a long period of unemployment, and 11% are working retirees.

3. Difficulties and problems related to the employment of 50+ workers

Employees after fifty years of age are employed in 57% of Lesser Poland companies. Other companies prefer to hire young workers. The aim of this study was, among others, to check what are the concerns related to the employment of older workers, and whether employers are afraid of health problems or lower productivity of 50+ workers.

Respondents were asked if they see any risks associated with the employment of persons over 50 years of age. The vast majority (67%) of respondents did not see such threats. Others have some concerns. They are mainly related to the creativity and innovation of 50+ employees. Respondents also fear frequent sick leaves and the possibility of conflicts between 50+ and younger workers. Risks related to the employment of 50+ workers appear in those companies which do not employ such workers (41%) rather than in those who have them in their staff (20%).

Among the risks associated with the employment of 50+ workers there were frequent sick leaves. The study analyses this topic to a greater extent. It turns out that 81% of the surveyed companies examine the health of 50+ candidates before hiring them. Almost all companies (95%) conduct preventive (temporary or permanent) medical examinations of their employees. It can therefore be concluded that the surveyed companies care about the health of workers. This seems to have good results – only 11% of managers responded that their employees often make use of sick leaves. The use of sick leaves is more often observed in the companies that employ 50+ people (16%) than in those who do not hire such workers (6%). However, we cannot say which workers (younger or older) make use of sick leaves.

Managers were also asked about the exemption periods of their workers. The vast majority of them (61%) responded that the exemption period is normally 7 days. In 10% of the companies exemptions last only one day, while in 23% they are longer – up to 14 days. In 5% of the companies sick leaves last more than two weeks.

Recruiting new employees is connected with checking the qualifications of applicants before hiring or rejecting them. Therefore managers of Lesser Poland companies were asked to say what factors they pay most attention to while recruiting. Responsibility was mentioned by 97% of the respondents. For 89% of managers motivation is important. Experience (86% of responses) and caution (85%) are also appreciated. 84% of the companies take into account the availability of the candidate, 72% focus on his training, and 70% put emphasis on education. Interestingly, education occupies 7th place in the rating. 30% of the surveyed companies do not take this factor into consideration when recruiting. Other features are: identification with the workplace which is important for 64% of managers, sensitivity (53%) and the tradition appreciated by 36%. An applicant meeting these conditions is employed. Sometimes, however, those candidates who do not work well and cause some difficulties for employers are selected. Therefore managers were asked what problems are caused by young workers and 50+ employees.

The results show that more problems are caused by younger workers. 71% of respondents said that employees over 50 years of age do not cause any difficulties. The same answer, speaking of young workers, was given by 53% of respondents. The problem of young workers is primarily a lack of preparation and work experience, which was enumerated by 31% of respondents. Only 9% of respondents associate such difficulties with older workers. 14% of managers found that young workers can cause problems because of ignorance of the rules. According to 12% of respondents the same is true for 50+ workers. Problems in the company can also occur due to incorrect completion of the work. 19% of managers associate this problem with young workers and 16% with 50+ workers. Only a few respondents fear of theft or devastation in their companies.

If we consider only the answers of respondents whose companies employ 50+ employees, we can see that they look just like in the case of the whole sample. 75% of respondents employing 50+ workers are not afraid of any problems that might be caused by them. 52% of the respondents have the same opinion concerning young workers.

Hiring new employees is often connected with calculations of the costs associated with an increase of employment. After some time these calculations may be verified by comparing current costs with those that were incurred prior to the increase of employment. According to the study, only 17% of companies that hired 50+ workers have made such a comparison. The remaining 83% did not make such comparisons. However, the respondents hiring 50+ workers were also asked if they incur any costs other than the cost of their salaries.

More than one third of the surveyed companies do not incur any additional costs associated with such workers. Other companies incur additional costs of

employing them. 34% pay for medical care and 32% invested in the training of such persons. 19% of the companies spent the money to organize the workplace for 50+ employees, 12% paid for apprenticeship, 7% for the recruitment, and 5% for the supplementary supervision. Two thirds of the surveyed companies that have recruited 50+ employees incur the additional costs connected with employing them. We decided to check whether these costs can be compensated for example through greater efficiency of 50+ workers. Employers were asked if the employees over 50 years of age are more or less productive than younger workers.

The vast majority (78%) of respondents said they had not noticed any difference in the productivity between the two groups. 12% of respondents believe that 50+ workers are less productive than younger ones, and 10% say the opposite. The former explained that such workers lack the power, they have lower self-esteem and consider themselves not good enough to perform work. However, the latter argued that these people have more experience, which also constitutes a strong incentive to work. The respondents also answered that 50+ employees work better, because they want to be appreciated and work for a long time. Respondents also believe that 50+ workers are afraid of losing their jobs, so they are very attached to it.

Managers who do not employ 50+ workers also answered that question. In this group, 68% of respondents believe that the performance of 50+ workers does not differ from the performance of young people. Others have a different opinion on the subject – 28% believe that people over 50 years of age are less productive than younger people, and only 4% believe that older workers are better than the younger ones. Thus, employers who do not hire people over 50 years of age either have the wrong idea about the performance of their work (as indicated by the distribution of responses in the group which employs 50+ workers), or they have become discouraged by such employees.

Managers were also asked if 50+ workers are as valuable as younger workers. The results show that more than half (53%) of all surveyed managers believe that 50+ workers are definitely valuable in the same way as other workers, and 30% rather agree with this statement. The opposite view is presented by only 8% of respondents.

There were very significant differences between the views of respondents employing 50+ workers and the views of those who do not employ older workers.

In the first group, 74% of respondents strongly agree with the statement that 50+ employee is just as valuable as others. However, among the employers who do not employ 50+ workers, the view is shared only by a quarter. It should be emphasized, however, that among the respondents who do not engage 50+ people almost 20% were unable to express opinion on this issue.

Problems in the workplace may also arise as a result of generation gap between the employees. The respondents were asked about this issue. Only 11% of companies divide the tasks between older and younger workers. Other companies do not use such a division. Most of the companies with 50+ employees seek to integrate them with younger people. 36% of companies do not intervene in labour relations, and only 4% isolate the workers or create groups of young and old.

Respondents were also asked about positive effects of the integration of young workers with 50+ employees. Interviewees' task was to comment on particular statements and explain whether they agree or not.

Almost all respondents (98%) employing 50+ persons agreed with the statement that older workers and young people can learn from each other. Similarly, they agreed with the notion that integration promotes better working atmosphere and thus contributes to a better work (95%) and the thesis that integration allows employees to understand and assess the results of their work in a better way (92%). 86% of managers agreed that integration reduces the dislike of older workers to younger workers, and 73% believed that integration also allows to control expenditure.

Only a few managers asked about the conflicts between younger and older workers confirmed that they appeared in their companies. Only 6 employers (out of 171 who employ 50+ workers) said that they had observed reluctance of 50+ workers to younger colleagues. 8 people noticed the opposite situation – disapproval of younger workers against the older. However, 10 respondents believe that their 50+ employees have a sense of insecurity caused by younger colleagues. According to the managers, who noticed the generation conflict between their employees, disapproval on the part of young workers to 50+ persons is expressed mainly by the differences in opinions and ideas, and by showing dislike. They also said that young workers accuse 50+ co-workers of lower performance. However, employers who have observed the opposite – the reluctance of older workers to young people, often said that older workers have a sense of danger, they are afraid of losing their jobs. The managers also observed differences in views between employees of different ages, and the fact that older workers want to impose their views on the younger ones, who are also perceived by older colleagues as irresponsible.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the majority of the surveyed companies that employ people over 50 years of age do not have problems with them. On the contrary, these are young employees who cause trouble more often. 50+

workers have features desired by employers – they are responsible, experienced and highly motivated to work. However, some employers have concerns related to the employment of such employees. In companies that do not employ 50+ people it is believed that they may expose the employer to trouble. This may be due to stereotypical reception of older people, as well as personal prejudice or ignorance. In general, it should be noted that it is the governmental program's task to counteract the unfavourable situation on the labour market and forestall the demographic changes. Economists and experts who prepared the project '50+' explain that if the situation does not change, then fewer people will be working and more people will use social benefits. It will slow down the reform of public finances, increase labour costs, improve fiscal policy and lead to a decline in economic growth potential. According to its assumptions, the governmental program '50+' shall be divided into several parts. The first part shall encourage companies and individuals to create workplace for as many 50+ workers as possible. The department will try to reduce labour costs associated with employing people in their fifties. Employers are to be exempt from paying premiums to the Labour Fund and the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund. The department also intends to change the employment services (labour offices) so that they could help not only the unemployed but also those over 50 years of age. The whole education system shall contain elements of practical training that engages businesses and local governments. In addition, the program will adapt to the problems of employment services for disabled people and contain other incentives which will be discussed in the following sections.

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Abstract

The fall in employment is associated with lower wages, but flexible forms of employment in the labour market constitute an opportunity for an aging society. The following paper presents the studies carried out in the Lesser Poland province among the employers representing three sectors: public, private and social in branches considered as strategic for the economy, in which there are still no major changes in employment and the use of flexible forms of employment for people over 50, i.e. hotel industry, transportation, communication, companies involved in the development and maintenance of communication lines, roadsides and highways, real estate, etc. The functioning and economic development of these companies should continue to foster the creation of new jobs and modernize the economy, which is increasingly based on services.

Key words: employers, employment.