

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest issue of our HR Perspectives newsletter. This month we explore several key developments currently shaping the workplace:

- **Reduced working hours** - is this the answer to employers' needs?
- **AI in workplace is more than just technology** - how will AI transform relations with employees, employee representatives, and trade unions?
- **Sick leave under new rules** - what are the changes?

We have also included a timetable of upcoming events organised by PCS.

We hope you enjoy this issue!



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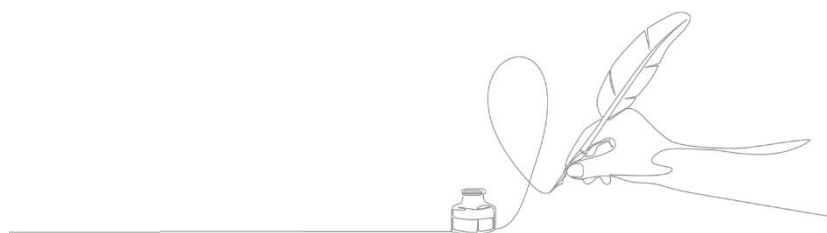


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Please let us know if there is a specific topic you would like us to cover in future issues. If you have any questions or thoughts regarding our latest publications, please do get in touch.



Send us a message



Reduced working hours - update of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy pilot

Joanna Czyżewska, trainee attorney-at-law, lawyer, joanna.czyzewska@pcslegal.pl

The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy has launched a pilot scheme for reduced working hours. This initiative addresses employees' needs for work-life balance, personal development opportunities, and the prevention of burnout. Conversely, for employers, shorter hours may lead to increased productivity and enhanced competitiveness in the labour market. Involving nearly 5,000 employees and almost a hundred businesses, this scale establishes the pilot as one of the world's most significant projects of its kind.

The objective is for employers to evaluate various working time reduction models, including shorter working weeks, reduced daily hours, or additional days off granted monthly or annually. This project aims at identifying effective, sector-specific models that could inform future legislative changes. As a bottom-up initiative, entrepreneurs and staff are tasked with developing and testing solutions tailored to their specific workplaces.

Eligibility for the programme required employers to maintain staffing levels at no less than 90% of the baseline, ensure wages remain at least at the level applicable on the project's start date, and guarantee that working terms and conditions do not deteriorate. These criteria ensure that working hours are reduced without a corresponding drop in pay. After all, cutting pay alongside hours is simple; the real challenge is to maintain full earnings while granting staff more time away from work. The testing phase will run throughout 2026. The programme consists of three stages:

- Stage one: preparation for the introduction of reduced hours, concluded on 31 December 2025.
- Stage two: testing the implementation in the workplace, began on 1 January 2026 and will continue until 31 December 2026.
- Stage three: the final summary of the pilot, will conclude by 15 May 2027 at the latest.

To ensure the pilot's success, the Ministry established a dedicated Reduced Working Hours Team, which met for the first time this April. Its role involves ongoing monitoring, implementation support, and drafting legislative recommendations.

We are keen to see the conclusions of this project, as we know these issues are vital for today's employers. We regularly assist our clients with such implementations, recognising them as both a significant staff benefit and a way to enhance overall efficiency.

AI in the workplace: it is not just about technology but also about employee relations

Mikołaj Wilczek, paralegal, mikolaj.wilczek@pcslegal.pl

Discussions regarding AI in HR often begin with questions about regulatory compliance, documentation, provider liability, or risk of penalties. This is only natural, given that the AI Act introduces a new layer of regulatory obligations. From an employer's perspective, however, this topic cannot be reduced solely to compliance. The implementation of an AI system

in the workplace can very quickly pivot around relations with individual employees, as well as their representatives - such as employee councils or trade unions.

To an employee, AI is not just a new tech fad. If a system helps plan tasks, assess performance, or recommend promotions, employees will see it as something that directly impacts their careers. Even if the employer's sole intention is to streamline processes, the workforce may raise questions about control, transparency, the scope of data processed, and the actual role of humans in decision-making.

Implementation of AI within a company should be treated not only as an IT or HR project, but above all as a communication one. The employer should prepare answers in advance to employees' fundamental questions, particularly:

- why the system is being implemented;
- to what extent it will be used;
- whether it will apply to all employees or only to selected groups;
- what data will be analysed;
- who will ultimately make decisions and what those decisions might be.

Informing employees should not be a mere formality

The AI Act imposes a specific duty to provide information when using a high-risk AI system in the workplace. The employer should fulfil this duty not only towards employee representatives but also towards the specific individuals who will be affected by the system. This marks an important shift in how we approach implementing new technologies within an organisation.

In practice, this should not mean only a brief mention on the intranet or a technical clause in the regulations. If employees are to understand what a specific AI tool is and how it affects their situation, communication must be written in plain language and address their genuine concerns. Otherwise, merely fulfilling the obligation as a formality may exacerbate problems rather than solve them.

The biggest mistake would be to implement an AI system without any explanation, even if done unwittingly. Reacting only once employees start asking questions or when the topic arises in trade union communications will inevitably cause problems and the employer will lose control of the narrative. Instead of a discussion about improving work processes, there will be suspicions regarding hidden monitoring, automated assessment, or the replacement of managerial decisions with algorithms.

Trade unions will look at operational impact, not just data

In unionised companies, AI implementation may open up a new front for collective consultation. Unions may be interested in more than just whether employees have been informed; they will look at the scope of AI operations: whether it will influence performance appraisals, bonuses, promotions, work scheduling, task allocation, or decisions regarding continued employment. Lack of clarity in these areas can lead to disputes, even if the tool meets all technical requirements.

This means the employer should be prepared for questions that are more organisational than technological. It is not enough to state that the AI tool is provided by an external supplier or meets security standards. From the perspective of employees and their representatives, the key issue is whether AI will serve as a supportive tool for humans, or will it have a major impact on personnel decisions.

The greatest risk may be a lack of trust

Proactive communication should precede implementation, not follow it. Irrespective of the content of the communication, it is vital to ensure internal consistency so that HR, managers, and compliance officers are all on the same page. In many companies, it is the quality of communication - far more than the technology itself - that tips the scale, deciding whether AI is embraced as an efficiency booster or resisted as a source of conflict.

Recently, we have been supporting many of our Clients in managing the legal and communicative aspects of AI integration. If your organisation is navigating these challenges, our team is ready to assist.

Updated sick leave rules – what has changed?

Julia Łuszczewska, trainee advocate, lawyer, julia.luszczewska@pcslegal.pl

New sick leave regulations came into force on 13 April 2026. The purpose of the changes is to clarify the rules governing sick leave and strengthen the authorities' ability to verify whether it is used correctly. In practice, new regulations are intended to address a number of issues that have so far created many doubts.

One of the most important changes is the introduction of a statutory definition of paid work. Under the new rules, paid work includes any activity performed for financial gain, regardless of the legal basis. At the same time, the legislator allowed for exceptions in case of occasional activities arising from important circumstances where failing to act could lead to serious consequences. This may include, for example, signing a document on a one-off basis, issuing an invoice, or dealing with an urgent administrative matter. However, the regulations make it clear that such activities cannot be carried out at the employer's instruction.

New provisions also define activities that are considered inconsistent with the purpose of sick leave. This covers any actions that may hinder or prolong treatment or recovery. At the same time, routine daily activities and occasional actions resulting from important circumstances are excluded from this category. Whether a particular activity is acceptable will depend on the nature of the illness and the reasons for which the sick leave was issued.

Amendments also expand the powers of the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS). Individuals on sick leave may now be referred for examinations by doctors or consultants, either at designated medical facilities or at the insured person's place of residence. In addition, ZUS may request medical records directly from healthcare providers. These measures are intended to improve the effectiveness of inspections and streamline the process of verifying of sick leaves.

For employers, effective verification of sick leaves requires efficient use of the available control measures. Abuse of sick leave benefits is not only a breach of employee obligations, but also a real financial burden that, on a larger scale, may become significant and unjustified.

In our day-to-day practice, we support employers in developing and implementing effective control procedures. We train HR teams and managers on how to respond to potential abuse while respecting privacy standards. Alongside reviewing individual cases, it is equally important to introduce broader organisational measures that help reduce unjustified absences and address their underlying causes within the workplace.



HR Legal Update: AI in HR – new obligations from 2 August 2026

From 2 August 2026, new requirements under the AI Act concerning high-risk AI systems will come into force. These are of particular importance to employers using AI solutions in the HR area. Who exactly falls under the scope of these rules? What will the key requirements for employers be, and what steps should be taken now?

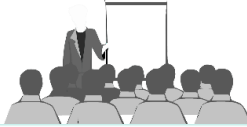
[Read here](#)

HR Legal Update: Equal pay – another step towards Polish legislation

A new bill implementing the EU Pay Transparency Directive replaces the first version published in December 2025. The Act is due to come into force six months after its official publication. The first gender pay gap reports will cover the period from the date of entry into force until the end of the calendar year. Employers with at least 150 employees will be required to submit them by 7 June 2027.

[Read here](#)

Upcoming Events & Publications



Workshop: Workforce restructuring – how to prepare for redundancies?

Date: 21 May 2026, 11:00 – 11:45, online.

Speakers: Sławomir Paruch, Robert Stępień, Michał Bodziony.

Registration form: [here](#).

Webinar: Navigating pay transparency in Poland – local rules and context for employers creating regional, transborder policies to implement the EU Directive

Date: 25 May 2026, 11:00 – 12:00, online.

Speakers: Sławomir Paruch, Marcin Sanetra, Krzysztof Nowak (Partner at Mercer Polska), and Jarosław Ciarka (Mercer Network Consultant).

Organized by: PCS Paruch Stępień Kanclerz, Mercer Polska.

Event in English. Registration form: [here](#).

Webinar: Mother's Day – decisions that may be very costly

Date: 26 May 2026, 11:00 – 11:45, online.

Speakers: Karolina Kanclerz, and Edyta Czarnecka (Czarnecka Holistic Coach).

Organized by: PCS Paruch Stępień Kanclerz, Czarnecka Holistic Coach.

Registration form: [here](#).

Webinar: Rules for using AI tools

Date: 27 May 2026, 11:00 – 11:30, online.

Speakers: Sławomir Paruch, Robert Stępień, Michał Bodziony.

Registration form: [here](#).

HR Lab Wrocław: Mobbing 2.0 & problematic individual dismissals

Date: 9 June 2026, 10:00 – 13:00, Wrocław.

Speakers: Karolina Kanclerz, Sławomir Paruch, Robert Stępień, Paweł Sych, Oskar Kwiatkowski, Zuzanna Janelli.

Registration form: [here](#).

Conference: Labor Law and Compliance in the Hospitality Industry: People – Compensation – Education

Date: 11 June 2026, 11:00 – 14:00, online.

Speakers: Bartosz Tomanek, Mateusz Krajewski, Roman Gołębiowski (GoHotel Roman Gołębiowski Radosław Kuciapiński), and Radosław Kuciapiński (GoHotel Roman Gołębiowski Radosław Kuciapiński).

Organized by: PCS Paruch Stępień Kanclerz, GoHotel.

Registration form: [here](#).

Workshop: Pay transparency – how to adapt your payroll system to the new regulations

Date: 15 June 2026, 11:00 – 11:45, online.

Speakers: Sławomir Paruch, Robert Stępień, Michał Bodziony.

Registration form: [here](#).



Paweł Sych Appointed Head of the PCS Team in Katowice

We are proud to announce that Paweł Sych has been appointed Head of the PCS Paruch Stępień Kanclerz team in Katowice.

As Head of the Personal Data Protection Team, Paweł has an extensive experience in HR law, handling complex matters like collective redundancies, workplace equality, union relations, and privacy law. He stands out as an exceptionally professional, empathetic, and results-driven lawyer.

Congratulations to Paweł and the whole Katowice office!