

KEY JUDGEMENTS

APRIL 2023

Title: Labour Exploitation of Latin Americans in Poland

Location: Latin America (Colombia, Mexico) and Poland

Issue Number: 001

Date: 02.05.2023

INTRODUCTION

People in Latin American countries, mainly male and in the 20-35 age range, are being tricked into taking job opportunities in Poland and exploited when they get there.

In many ways a reverse of an exploitation scenario prevalent in the pre-Covid period where Polish people were tricked into taking 'good jobs' in the U.K. and found themselves in exploitation in just the same business sectors. (Operation Fort: West Midlands Police 2019 - 2022).

WE ASSESS AS FOLLOWS

RECRUITMENT

- a) Advertisements for jobs are placed by recruitment agencies on social media platforms, such as Facebook and on job sites in Latin American countries, particularly Colombia and Mexico by a number of 'agencies' based both in Latin America and in Poland.
- b) The Ads promise jobs with good money which include 8-hour days which is untrue as most workers are expected to work 12+ hours a day / 7 days a week with few breaks.
- c) In some instances, the worker pays the recruitment agency between \$1000 - \$2000 to find them a job. Alternatively, the agency pays for the worker to travel to Poland, that money is deducted from their salary amongst other deductions.
- d) Victims fly from Latin America to arrive in Europe at intermediary locations such as Madrid, Amsterdam and Germany. They are expected to travel onward to Warsaw, Poland where they are met by a Polish representative of the factory or business in which they will be deployed.
- e) The victims are accompanied to accommodation which is very overcrowded and of poor standard. Other residents are either Latino, Romanian or from SW Asia. Polish or sometimes Ukrainian supervisors are on site and will control all activity including deciding on additional 'fines' for those who are non-compliant or lazy. Money is deducted directly from salary for food and accommodation.

DEMAND

- a) In Poland the victims are largely deployed in large food production companies, often in the butchering and packing of meat products. The timber product sector is also a high-profile sector where workers are exploited.
- b) Once in work victims are not paid until the end of month 2 at the earliest, thus accumulating a list of debts.
- c) Victims cannot communicate due to language barriers, which are utilised as a control mechanism.
- d) The contract promised by the agencies never materialises. Any challenge to work practices is met with bullying and sometimes violence. Those victims who are non-compliant for any period are thrown onto the street as an example and left to fend for themselves.
- e) If this is challenged, it results in verbal/physical abuse and dismissal.

MONEY (REVENUE)

- a) Payment is made in cash in most circumstances and by the building supervisors.
- b) The exploited workers tend to have no direct financial relationship with the businesses they are employed in.
- c) On occasion a victim will be accompanied to open a bank account. Control of the account and possession of the bank card is retained by the 'supervisors'.

INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

- a) Names of any agencies who are targeting Latin Americans in Poland
- b) What industries/Companies are recruiting Latin Americans
- c) What banks are associated with these Industries/Companies

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