



European Construction Sector Observatory

Policy fact sheet

Poland

Construction Safety Agreement

Thematic Objectives 2 & 4

September 2020



In a nutshell

Implementing body	Chief Labour Inspectorate & Signatories ¹ of the Construction Safety Agreement
Key features & objectives	The Construction Safety Agreement is a joint collaboration between government and a growing number of construction companies. It aims to achieve zero accidents in the sector by introducing systemic occupational health and safety solutions on construction sites.
Implementation date	2010 – ongoing
Targeted beneficiaries	Construction sector employers and employees
Targeted sub-sectors	All sub-sectors
Budget (EUR)	Not published
Good practice	★★★★☆
Transferability	★★★★☆

A safe and healthy working environment is especially important in the construction sector, where construction workers face high exposure to harmful materials and dangerous situations. In 2017, the construction sector accounted for the highest share (20%) of fatal accidents at work in the EU-28². The sector also accounted for 11.3% of non-fatal accidents in the EU, which was the third highest share after manufacturing (18.7%) and wholesale and retail trade (12.5%)³.

In contrast to the situation at European level, the Polish construction sector recorded the 8th highest share of accident rates in 2017, out of 19 national sectors analysed⁴. In addition, the Polish construction sector is not currently among those

with the most fatal and non-fatal accidents registered. The main causes of accidents in the sector are defects or inappropriate technical and ergonomic solutions of the material agent⁵ (49.3%), inappropriate use of the material agent (24.4%) and material defects (19.9%, mainly hidden defects - 12.7%)⁶.

The sector has made significant progress in recent years. Between 2008 to 2013, for example, there were an average of 120 fatal accidents on Polish construction sites every year⁷. A lack of qualified construction workers and non-compliance with OSH legislation were some the main causes of accidents⁸. In addition, the diversity of construction company processes and procedures hindered the uptake of uniform measures to improve the safety of workers in the sector.

To reduce the accident rate in the Polish construction sector and to work towards a zero-accident goal, the Chief Labour Inspectorate developed the Construction Safety Agreement (*'Porozumienie dla Bezpieczeństwa w Budownictwie'*). The agreement was initially signed by seven general contractors in 2010. A further six contractors joined the Agreement at a later stage. The agreement is a joint collaboration between government and leading construction sector companies. It was established to develop and drive the adoption of occupational safety and health (OSH) solutions in the construction sector.

To date, the Construction Safety Agreement (CSA) has not yet achieved the zero-accident end goal; however, it has been largely successful. Key results thus far include the introduction of 18 OSH standards and 200 advanced OSH procedures, the delivery of OSH training to over 7,000 construction employees, and approximately 2,300 fewer accidents registered since 2010.

With some improvements going forward, such as increased reach across the whole sector, wider participation and the scale up of the initiative, the CSA has the potential to achieve further success.

1.

General description

The Construction Safety Agreement⁹ (CSA) was signed in 2010 by seven general contractors. Its purpose is to reduce the number of accidents on construction sites by promoting a safety culture, by raising awareness of the dangers on construction sites and by preventing risks and accidents. To reach the goal of ‘zero accidents’, the signatories cooperate to implement safety standards, introduce systemic occupational safety and health (OSH) solutions and provide OSH training.

Six priority areas of activity were established to achieve the objectives of the CSA.

1. OSH training

The OSH training framework provides basic knowledge on health and safety at work. Training content covers general OSH information, the CSA, OSH planning, environmental requirements, OSH coordination on construction sites, construction site development planning, threats on a construction site, how to respond to accidents and incidents, first aid, fire and evacuation. OSH training is mandatory for all construction sector employees.

2. Qualified workforce

Three types of qualifications are provided under the CSA:

- Qualification to perform hazardous works on a construction site (e.g. work at height, heavy equipment, chemicals);
- Qualification as a construction site supervisor;
- Qualification as an OSH expert in construction.

3. Cooperation in the construction process

The main goal of cooperation is to standardise the provisions for the most frequent contracts used in the construction sector. Some examples of documents developed in relation to the CSA include¹⁰:

- Rules for the prequalification of subcontractors, in terms of health and safety;
- Guidelines for the development of safety instructions for transport works;
- Annex on OSH requirements for tower crane or self-erecting crane services.

4. Risk management

A common risk management plan provides guidelines on how to identify and assess work-related risks and how to work safely on construction sites. It includes, for example, an OSH checklist for different areas (e.g. protective helmets, warning vests and power line security).

5. OSH culture

OSH training and qualification for the construction sector is designed to help employers and employees to create an OSH culture in the workplace. To support cultural change, the CSA has also established The Safety Week as an important awareness raising initiative. Its purpose is to promote a culture of health and safety at work. It is now the largest initiative of its kind in Poland.

6. OSH preventive measures

Based on their extensive experience, the CSA signatories have collectively developed a compendium of OSH standards to ensure health and safety at work. They are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: CSA OSH standards

Standards
1. Particularly dangerous works
2. Work at height
3. Earthworks
4. Work on equipment and energy installations
5. Work on the move
6. Work in closed and dangerous spaces
7. Hazardous materials
8. Work in active plants

Standards
9. Construction site
10. Preparation of construction in terms of health and safety
11. Installation work
12. Work at industry sites
13. Work of specialists
14. Machines and devices
15. Tools
16. Temporary and demolition works
17. Emergency and dangerous situations
18. Protective equipment
19. Subcontractors and suppliers

Source: Construction Safety Agreement website¹¹

Since its launch in 2010, the number of signatories of the Construction Safety Agreement¹² has grown to 13. Three associated members¹³ and three partners¹⁴ have also been brought on board, as well as a number of supporting organisations.

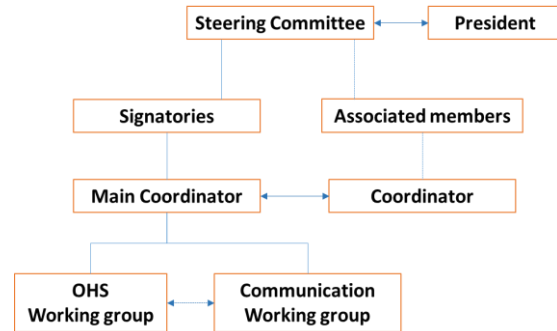
Examples of supporting organisations include the Chief Labour Inspectorate, the Central Institute for Labour Protection, the Polish Social Insurance Institution, the Association of Civil Engineers and Technicians, the Polish Chamber of Civil Engineers, the Construction Trade Union, the Polish Association of Construction Employers, the Polish Association of Occupational Safety and Health Service Employees, and the National Construction Secretariat.

The **CSA governance structure**, as shown in Figure 1, is composed of a two-year presidency, a steering committee, two working groups, a main coordinator and a coordinator linked to the associated members.

The President is nominated by the Steering Committee and is responsible for the organisation of CSA activities. Each president operates with a two-year mandate. The Steering Committee’s main role is to supervise the activities of the Agreement. It consists of the Managing Directors of the signatories. The working groups, whose structure and features depend on the ongoing projects, are

responsible for implementing CSA activities. The Coordinator coordinates the activities of the working groups and is responsible for the communication strategy. Meetings between the company presidents take place every quarter. Working group meetings are held once a month.

Figure 1: CSA governance structure



Source: Construction Safety Agreement Regulations¹⁵

The **targeted beneficiaries** are contractors and subcontractors and other organisations within the construction industry. They have the option to join the CSA as signatories or members.

To become a CSA signatory, a company needs to fulfil the following criteria:

- Carry out construction projects in the form of general contracting;
- Operate in Poland;
- Have an annual turnover of at least EUR 111.8 million (PLN 500 million);
- Have a separate OSH structure;
- Have a certified security management system.

To become a CSA member, a company needs to meet the following criteria:

- Employ a minimum of 50 employees;
- Have a separate OSH structure.

Once a candidate submits an application form¹⁶ and it is accepted, the candidate is then required to implement solutions developed under the framework of the Agreement during a one-year candidacy period.

2.

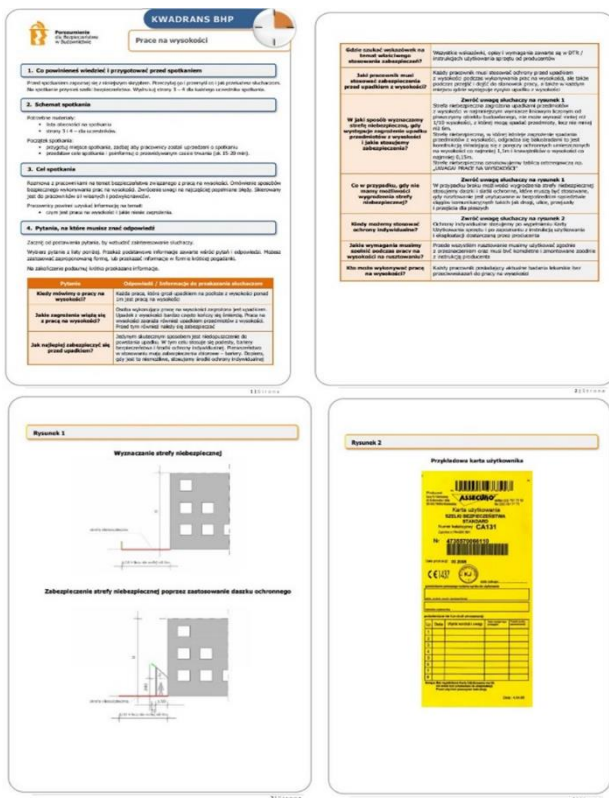
Achieved or expected results

Several projects have been implemented since 2010 in each of the CSA priority areas. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a set of guidelines has been developed to guarantee worker protection¹⁷.

OSH training

In 2016, 7,000 construction workers were trained in Poland in a joint project with the Polish Social Insurance Institution, based on the CSA training framework¹⁸. Figure 2 provides an example of the training material developed for work at height.

Figure 2: Training material for work at height



Source: Construction Safety Agreement, Training materials¹⁹

Qualified workforce

Based on the success of the framework for certifying CSA qualifications, one of the main participants in the certification of qualifications under the Agreement is implementing a project to establish

the Sectoral Council for Competences in Construction in Poland²⁰.

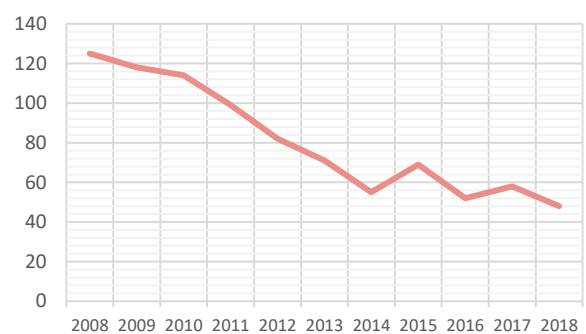
Cooperation in the construction process

The project under this priority area has already been implemented and all CSA signatories now use standard contracts in their activities. Currently, standard contract provisions are being developed for vertical transport services based on the new legal requirements for OSH²¹. In addition, standard information, and safety and warning signs have been created²².

Risk management

According to the figures published on the Construction Safety Agreement website²³, there have been 2,300 fewer accidents in Poland since the CSA was launched. National statistics also indicate that the number of fatal accidents registered annually between 2008 and 2018 have more than halved over a ten-year period, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Number of fatal accidents in the Polish construction sector, 2008-2018



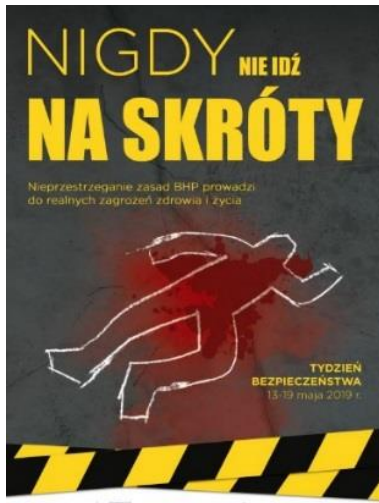
Source: Data from Statistics Poland²⁴

OSH culture

Six editions of the Safety Week event have been organised to date. Each edition brings together thousands of national and international participants from across the national construction sector, as well as investors, suppliers and subcontractors. The most recent edition, which used the slogan ‘Don’t take

shortcuts. Never!', took place in May 2019. Figure 4 presents a poster that was used to promote that event.

Figure 4: Safety Week 2019 - Poster



Source: Construction Safety Agreement website²⁵

OSH preventive measures

A total of 18 standards (listed in Table 1) and 200 advanced procedures²⁶ have been introduced to drive OSH improvements in the construction sector.

A catalogue of good practices²⁷ has also been elaborated. Based on the extensive experience of the signatories, visual and illustrative A4 documents have been produced for use on construction sites. An example is shown in Figure 5. Good practices cover a range of important topics such as protective equipment (e.g. defibrillator, nets, rescue basket), material agents (e.g. steel crane, platforms) and procedures (e.g. scaffolding assembly or unloading vehicles).

Figure 5: Example of good practice from the Good Practice Catalogue



Source: Construction Safety Agreement, Good Practices Catalogue²⁸

3.

Perspectives and lessons learned

Cooperation between social partners is essential to ensure the implementation of a safe and healthy working environment, in line with the legislative framework for safe and healthy working conditions established by the Polish Constitution and the Labour Code.

Cooperation is the basis for success²⁹, according to the General Director for National Roads and Motorways at the Polish Ministry of Transportation, who has recently signed a declaration of cooperation with the Construction Safety Agreement. The Central Institute for Labour Protection also contends that construction stakeholder cooperation is the very essence of the CSA³⁰.

Meetings between CSA members provide an important forum in which stakeholders can share best practices and success stories with the aim of guaranteeing safe and healthy working environments in the sector³¹.

These meetings provide the basis for the standards developed under the CSA. According to the current President of the CSA, the committed cooperation of CSA signatories, associated members and partners, coupled with the successful results achieved to date, is having a very positive multiplier effect. It helps encouraging a growing number of construction sector stakeholders to join the CSA³².

Establishing safe and healthy working environments requires more than the development of standards. To ensure they become common practice in the sector, it is also essential to promote and establish an OSH culture in the workplace.

According to the President of the last company to join the Agreement (Eiffage), the CSA has done a great job over the last nine years in developing OSH standards and in creating a culture of health and safety³³. However, he also makes the point that the health and safety of workers on construction sites is not just the responsibility of employers. It is also the responsibility of individuals working in the sector.

Adapting to change is key to guaranteeing safety in working environments.

Construction workers often face high exposure to harmful materials and dangerous situations. The COVID-19 pandemic has added an additional risk to the working environment for construction workers. In response to this latest risk, the current President of the CSA has stated that “we care about protecting workers at construction sites against coronavirus infection”³⁴. A set of guidelines has therefore been developed and published within a very short period of time to guarantee the protection of the workers against the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.

Conclusion and recommendations

With the aim of reducing the number of accidents at construction sites to zero, the Construction Safety Agreement (CSA) is in line with the main objective of the Polish National Programme for the Improvement of Safety and Working Conditions. In particular, it is designed to reduce the number of workers that are exposed to harmful and dangerous situations and to reduce the number of work-related accidents³⁵.

The CSA has been largely successful to date in bringing together key construction sector contractors to cooperate and design and implement OSH preventive measures that have helped to significantly reduce the number of accidents in the sector. Nonetheless, challenges remain.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most recent challenge that the CSA is facing. To address that challenge, OSH standards will need to be strengthened. The growing number of companies that are joining the CSA is another challenge, as well as an opportunity. Whereas increased participation will help to increase the impact of the CSA, it may also make it more difficult to maintain the current unanimity³⁶, according to the current President of the Construction Safety Agreement.

One of the main obstacles faced by the signatories is the role of subcontractors, as the majority of the accidents that occur at construction sites involve subcontractor employees³⁷. As part of the CSA framework, OSH rules for the prequalification of subcontractors, as well as other guidelines and requirements³⁸, have been developed. To achieve the zero accidents target however, it is essential to bring subcontractors on board and ensure their involvement and commitment. In the words of the main promoter of the CSA, the Chief Labour Inspector, 'together we are certainly able to do more'³⁹.

Looking forward, four recommendations are suggested to help improve the impact of the CSA:

- Strengthen communication and awareness raising activities to make the initiative's OSH messaging more effective and to increase its reach throughout the sector. It is particularly important to target smaller companies in the sector, including sub-contractors, to increase their awareness of OSH issues, and the value and benefits of improved safety, in terms of cost savings, greater productivity and better health;
- Consider strengthening the CSA governance structure and coordination mechanisms to ensure the needs of the growing number of signatories are met;
- Scale up the initiative to achieve industry-wide impact, ensuring engagement with the widest possible number of stakeholders;
- Consider engaging with the education sector (secondary schools and higher education) to promote safe working in construction and to inform young people that may wish to join the sector about good practices and their benefits. This could enhance the appeal of the sector to new entrants and support the long-term sustainability of a zero-accident safety culture.

Overall, the Construction Safety Agreement (CSA) is rated as a '4-star good practice measure' on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

The score is based on the fact that the initiative has not yet achieved its zero-accident end goal, but it has been largely successful to date. The CSA has provided a successful framework for cooperation between different contractors, each of which has its own working procedures and health and safety culture. Cooperation was the rationale behind the creation of the CSA and it has enabled the CSA to achieve significant results⁴⁰, including the introduction of common OSH standards for the Polish construction sector. The importance and impact of the results achieved to date are evidenced

by the growing number of CSA signatories and members, and the decreasing number of accidents in the sector. The CSA also provides an ideal platform for signatories to share OSH knowledge and work together to continuously improve OSH activities and standards.

The Construction Safety Agreement (CSA) is rated as a '4-star transferable measure' on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

This score is based on a view that the CSA concept and approach are both practical and adaptable to other construction sectors that wish to implement

OSH solutions and pursue the zero-accident goal. The CSA has industry buy-in and is being led by leading industry companies, in collaboration with government. The CSA is a comprehensive OSH improvement initiative that provides OSH training and qualifications, OSH standards and procedures, OSH templates, and OSH events and informative materials. Similar zero-accident initiatives are also running in some other EU Member States. This suggests that the CSA and/or its constituent features are potentially transferable to other countries.

Endnotes

- 1 Warbud S.A., Eiffage, Unibep S.A., Strabag Sp. z o.o., Skanska S.A., PORR S.A., Polimex – Mostostal S.A., Mota – Engil Central Europe S.A., Mostostal Warszawa S.A., Karmar S.A., Hochtief Polska S.A., Erbud and Budimex S.A.
- 2 Eurostat, Accidents at work statistics, November 2019:
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Accidents_at_work_statistics
- 3 Ibidem
- 4 Statistics Poland, Accidents at work in 2017, October 2018:
<https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/working-conditions-accidents-at-work/accidents-at-work-in-2017,3,11.html>
- 5 Material agent refers to any tool, object or instrument used in a construction site according to Statistics Poland (see endnote 7)
- 6 Statistics Poland, Accidents at work in 2017, October 2018:
<https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/working-conditions-accidents-at-work/accidents-at-work-in-2017,3,11.html>
- 7 Statistics Poland, Accidents at work:
<https://stat.gov.pl/en/search/?query=tag:fatal+accident+at+work>
- 8 Unibep, Construction Safety Agreement:
<https://unibep.pl/en/csr/agreement-for-construction-safety.html>
- 9 Construction Safety Agreement website:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl>
- 10 Construction Safety Agreement website, Document templates:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/baza-wiedzy/wzory-dokumentow.html#ibwr>
- 11 Construction Safety Agreement website, OSH standards:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/standardy-bhp.html>
- 12 Construction Safety Agreement website, Signatories:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/o-nas/sygnatariusze-porozumienia.html>
- 13 Construction Safety Agreement website, Associated members:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/o-nas/czlonkowie-zrzeszeni.html>
- 14 Construction Safety Agreement website, Partners:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/o-nas/partnerzy.html>
- 15 Construction Safety Agreement Regulations:
http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/images/pliki/Regulamin_Porozumienia_dla_Bezpiecze%C5%84stwa_w_Budownictwie/Regulamin_Porozumienia_dla_Bezpiecze%C5%84stwa_w_Budownictwie_-_12_wrze%C5%9Bnia_2019_r.pdf
- 16 Construction Safety Agreement website, Join us:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/o-nas/dolacz-do-nas.html>
- 17 Construction Safety Agreement website, COVID-19 infection:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/covid-19.html#en-new-recommendations-and-obligations-at-construction-sites>
- 18 Construction Safety Agreement website, Training:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/projekty/szkolenia.html>
- 19 Construction Safety Agreement, Training materials:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/baza-wiedzy/materialy-edukacyjne.html>
- 20 Sector Council for Competence in Construction website:
<http://srkbud.zzbudowlani.pl/o-projekcie/>
- 21 Construction Safety Agreement website, Cooperation in the construction process:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/projekty/wspolpraca-w-procesie-budowlanym.html>
- 22 Construction Safety Agreement website, Health and safety signs for foreigners:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/baza-wiedzy/znaki-bhp-dla-obcokrajowcow.html>
- 23 Construction Safety Agreement website:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl>
- 24 Statistics Poland, Accidents at work:
<https://stat.gov.pl/en/search/?query=tag:fatal+accident+at+work>
- 25 Construction Safety Agreement website, Safety week 2019 poster:

- http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/images/aktualnosci/2019/tydzien_bezpieczenstwa/Tydzien_Bezpieczenstwa_plakat_A2_DRUK_CMYK.pdf
- 26 Construction Safety Agreement, About the Agreement:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/o-nas.html>
- 27 Construction Safety Agreement website, Good practices:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/baza-wiedzy/dobre-praktyki.html#dobre-praktyki>
- 28 Construction Safety Agreement, Good practices catalogue:
http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/images/baza_wiedzy/standardy/Dobre_praktyki_KATALOG_1.1_Stropy.pdf
- 29 Construction Safety Agreement website, News (19/06/2020):
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/materialy-dla-mediow/aktualnosci/generalna-dyrekcja-drog-krajowych-i-autostrad-wzmacnia-wspolprace-z-porozumieniem-dla-bezpieczenstwa-w-budownictwie.html>
- 30 Construction Safety Agreement website, News (22/02/2019):
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/materialy-dla-mediow/aktualnosci/szeroka-koalicja-na-rzecz-bezpieczenstwa.html>
- 31 Muratorplus., 'Porozumienie dla Bezpieczeństwa w Budownictwie. Uwaga podwykonawco – wzrosła liczba sygnatariuszy!' (29/11/2019):
<https://www.muratorplus.pl/biznes/wiesci-z-rynku/porozumienie-dla-bezpieczenstwa-w-budownictwie-minely-2-lata-pod-przewodnictwem-skanska-aa-VtB9-z9m4-qiU5.html>
- 32 PulsHR.pl website, Interview with Jacek Leczkowski (08/05/2020):
<https://www.pulshr.pl/przemysl/na-budowach-wciaz-gina-ludzie-oni-chca-to-zmienic,73467.html>
- 33 Construction Safety Agreement website, News (29/11/2019):
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/materialy-dla-mediow/aktualnosci/porozumienie-przyjelo-w-swoje-szeregi-koleina-firme.html>
- 34 Construction Safety Agreement website, News (20/05/2020):
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/materialy-dla-mediow/aktualnosci/dbamy-o-zabezpieczenie-pracownikow-na-budowach-przed-zakazaniem-koronawirusem.html>
- 35 Central Institute for Labour Protection – National Research Institute website, National Programme for the Improvement of Safety and Working Conditions:
https://www.ciop.pl/CIOPPortalWAR/appmanager/ciop/en?nfpb=true&pageLabel=P26400121511406886174136&html_tresc_root_id=300008569&html_tresc_id=300008552&html_klucz=300008569&html_klucz_spis=
- 36 PulsHR.pl website, Interview with Jacek Leczkowski (08/05/2020):
<https://www.pulshr.pl/przemysl/na-budowach-wciaz-gina-ludzie-oni-chca-to-zmienic,73467.html>
- 37 Muratorplus., 'Wypadki na budowie. Mniej wypadków na budowie i ofiar śmiertelnych - GUS wstępnie podsumowuje 2019' (03/04/2020):
<https://www.muratorplus.pl/biznes/prawo/wypadek-na-budowie-w-2017-wiecej-wypadkow-smiertelnych-aa-WnM2-TDY7-v3MT.html>
- 38 Construction Safety Agreement website, Document templates:
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/baza-wiedzy/wzory-dokumentow.html#ibwr>
- 39 Construction Safety Agreement website, News (22/02/2019):
<http://www.porozumieniedlabezpieczenstwa.pl/materialy-dla-mediow/aktualnosci/szeroka-koalicja-na-rzecz-bezpieczenstwa.html>
- 40 Inzynieria website, Dlaczego na budowach wciąż są śmiertelne wypadki? (05/11/2019):
<https://inzynieria.com/budownictwo/wywiady/56984,dlaczego-na-budowach-wciaz-sa-smiertelne-wypadki>