

A1 Certificate authenticity confirmation service

Poland

| GENERAL INFORMATION | |
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| Name of the organisation | Social Insurance Institution (Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych – ZUS) |
| Type of organisation | Other National social security institution |
| Address | Centrala Zakładu Ubezpieczeń Społecznych, Departament Rent Zagranicznych, ul. Szamocka 3,5, 01-748, Warszawa, Poland |
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| Member State | Poland |
| GOOD PRACTICE - GENERAL INFORMATION | |
| Title of the good practice | A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service |
| Topic of the good practice | Preventing social security fraud |
| Geographical focus | Nation-wide |
| Duration | April 2022 - Ongoing |
| Summary of the good practice | The A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service ¹ is an online tool designed to accurately check the authenticity and validity of any A1 certificate issued by the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS). |

¹ The A1 Certificate Confirmation Service can be accessed at the following link: <https://lang.zus.pl/en/about-zus/a1-certificate-authenticity-confirmation-service>

| OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES | |
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| Background/context | <p>ZUS (Polish Social Insurance Institution) has issued 722 560 A1 certificates in 2022 to individuals or companies. Each year the number of issued certificates is growing by 5-10 %. These certificates serve to confirm that workers are covered by Poland's social security system while temporarily working in another country. Among this substantial number of certificates issued, only a few hundred fraud cases are reported by institutions of other Member States. However, each case may involve a considerable number of employees.</p> <p>The launch of the A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service was prompted by need to combat cases of fraudulent and invalid A1 certificates, particularly among individuals from Poland working in Belgium, France, and Germany.</p> <p>The labour inspectorates of these countries dealing with an extensive workforce from Poland, have to review a large number of documents and have limited time to perform comprehensive checks. With the online tool, they can effortlessly ascertain the legitimacy of an A1 certificate and promptly detect potential fraud cases.</p> |
| Objectives | <p>General objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Decrease the number of fraud cases related to invalid or not authentic A1 certificates. <p>Specific objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Check the authenticity and validity of the A1 portable document issued by ZUS concerning the social security legislation which applies to the holder. ► Prevent frauds associated with the authenticity and validity of A1 certificates. |
| Main activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► The A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service offers a straightforward method of validation by inputting key details on the A1 certificate holder into the online tool, including the personal identification number, |

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| | <p>the name and surname, the starting and ending date, and the issuance date of the certificate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Using the data provided, the system cross-references the ZUS database, yielding one of three distinct return messages based on the status of the A1 certificate under check: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The A1 certificate exists in the Social Insurance Institution's records and is valid. 2) The A1 certificate exists in the Social Insurance Institution's records, but it has been revoked. 3) No A1 certificate in the records of the Social Insurance Institution. ▶ Since A1 certificates typically become visible in the database after a 24-hour interval, it is important to note that if the A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service shows that the A1 certificate under examination does not exist, this outcome might be attributed to the timing factor. In this case, the inspection services using the service are recommended to contact ZUS and directly check if the A1 is valid or not. ▶ When approached on potential invalidity or inauthenticity of an A1 certificate, ZUS contact the branch that should have issued the A1 certificate. ▶ If it confirmed that the A1 certificate is invalid or not authentic, the case can be sent to the regional court, which states whether it constitutes a fraud. ▶ Users' manuals with instructions for using the A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service were prepared in Polish, English, German and French and circulated via e-mail to the labour inspectorates of Belgium, France, and Germany. ▶ ZUS is currently preparing a video (both in Polish and in English) showing how the A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service works. |
| <p>Did you previously provide information about this particular good practice under the European</p> | <p>No</p> |

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| Platform tackling undeclared work? | |
| Funding/organisational resources | <p>The A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service is funded by ZUS and was developed using internal resources.</p> <p>There are at least 12 staff members from ZUS involved in the work of the tool (including 6 IT specialists) 6 from the business side and 6 IT staff members, supported by ASSECO Poland, an external company that was contracted by ZUS.</p> |
| PARTICIPATION | |
| Stakeholders involved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► In Poland, ZUS informed the Ministry of Family and Social Policy and the National Labour Inspectorate about the A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service, as well as the internal departments of ZUS and the ad-hoc group on the applicable legislation, which consists of representatives from the social insurance institutions across the EU. ► Abroad, ZUS sent information about the service to the colleagues from National Social Security Office (<i>Office nationale de sécurité sociale – ONSS</i>) in Belgium, the Centre of European and International Liaisons for Social Security (<i>Centre des Liaisons Européennes et Internationales de Sécurité Sociale - CLEISS</i>) in France and the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (<i>Abteilung Deutsche Verbindungsstelle Krankenversicherung – DVKA</i>) |
| Target groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Labour inspectorates from the countries that are receiving workers from Poland (in particular Belgium, France and Germany) and all other relevant institutions/competent authorities in the receiving Member States. ► Employers hiring workers from Poland. ► Polish employees being posted abroad. |

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| Final beneficiaries | The Labour inspectorates and all other relevant institutions/competent authorities in Member States receiving workers from Poland. |
| GOOD PRACTICE CRITERIA | |
| Achievements/ Results and outcomes (Alignment of good practice with the priorities of the Call (if not applicable, alignment with the field of EU labour mobility)) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service streamlines the process for swiftly identifying fraud cases. ▶ Approximately 60-70 messages about potential invalidity of A1 certificates were received after getting negative answer while checking the A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service. They all came from Belgium. ▶ The use of the service strengthened the cooperation between the central offices of ZUS and the local territorial branches, to conduct the check once messages regarding a possible fraud are received. |
| Recognition (has this good practice been recognised on regional, national or EU level) | This practice was mentioned during an EU-level mutual learning workshop on seasonal work (ELA Seasonal work pilot project) in Venice (17-18 October 2022), Sofia (7-8 November 2022) and in Bratislava (23-25 January 2023). The practice has met with warm regards, especially from the German institution ZOLL, during the workshop in Sofia. |
| Cost effectiveness (the degree to which the practice was successful in reaching objectives and producing clear and measurable outcomes at the lowest possible cost) | The A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service is cost-effective as it allows any user to check the authenticity or validity of A1 certificates independently, without the need to contact ZUS directly or to use additional resources. |
| Transferability (how the experience from this practice could be transferred to other contexts i.e. what would another Member State/group/sector need to have or put in place for this measure to be successful in their country/group/sector) | In order to transfer the practice to another setting it is important to establish high standards in terms of data protection. This is done by creating a system that confirms the authenticity and validity of the A1 certificate, based on the information provided by the user, but does not provide additional personal data compared to those entered by the user. |

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| Sustainability (how the practice is sustainable from a social, financial, or environmental perspective) | The A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service is linked to other databases and updates automatically based on those in a financially sustainable way. |
| Innovativeness | The A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service is an innovative tool, which for the first time allows any user to check an internal database autonomously without sending a request. |
| Digitalisation | <p>The A1 Certificate Authenticity Confirmation Service is fully digital.</p> <p>The Service was designed as an independent national tool that in the future could also be linked to the European Social Security Pass (ESSPASS)².</p> |

² Additional information on the European Social Security Pass can be found at the following link:
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1545&intPagId=5540&langId=en>