

Poland had contained COVID-19 until recently, and Maciej Zabojski shares his country's experience. Maciej works as a manager at KPMG Poland, CEE Risk & Actuarial Services.

#### Highlight of Disease Status:

Population as at Mid 2020 <sup>1</sup>	38,352,000
Population Density per Sq km <sup>2</sup>	1,826
First Official Case	8-Mar-20
Lockdown	13 March 2020 to 11 April 2020
Number of Days	29
Did Lockdown reduce New Cases?	First wave yes, second wave no
Sufficient Capacity in Healthcare System	First wave yes, second wave no
Cumulative Cases as at 30 Nov 2020	985,075
New Cases in Nov 20	644,241
New Cases Per 000 Population	16.8
Case Fatality Ratio	1.7%

#### Poland's Initial Response

The first confirmed case of SARS-CoV-2 infection in Poland was diagnosed on 8 March.

Already on 11 March, the government decided to close educational facilities<sup>3</sup>, and on 15 March we learned of the first death in Poland of COVID-19.

#### Lockdown Imposed

On 20 March 2020, the state communicated about further restrictions in Poland. Theatres were closed, shops in galleries were banned, events and gatherings were banned, access to parks and beaches was restricted, and maximum limits on the number of customers in shops were set.

On 30 March, the number of people infected with coronavirus in Poland was close to 2,000. By 3 April, there were more than 2,800 (and 55 dead).

On 16 April, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announced the relaxation of restrictions across the country in four phases<sup>4</sup>. The first phase began on Monday, 20 April. More people could enter into shops. It also allowed for recreational mobility, i.e. entering forests and parks, as well as running or cycling, as long as people maintain social distance and cover their faces.

Meanwhile, on 22 April, the number of people infected exceeded 9,700 (and 399 dead).

At a press conference held on 28 April, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announced that shopping centres and hotels would open on 4 May with a limit on the number of people. Museums and libraries have resumed operations.

<sup>1</sup> <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/other-studies/informations-on-socio-economic-situation/statistical-bulletin-no-92020,4,117.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/statistical-yearbooks/statistical-yearbooks/demographic-yearbook-of-poland-2020,3,14.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20200000410>

<sup>4</sup> <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20200000674>

Since 4 May, sports facilities including pitches, stadiums, and golf courses have reopened. On 6 May, nurseries and kindergartens were opened.

By 4 May, more than 13,631 people had fallen ill due to COVID-19 and 676 had died.

The third stage of lifting the restrictions was introduced in two subphases - on 18 May and 25 May.

- barber shops, cosmetics, and restaurants reopened 18 May with sanitation measures.
- grades 1-3 of primary school and some other school activities reopened 25 May.

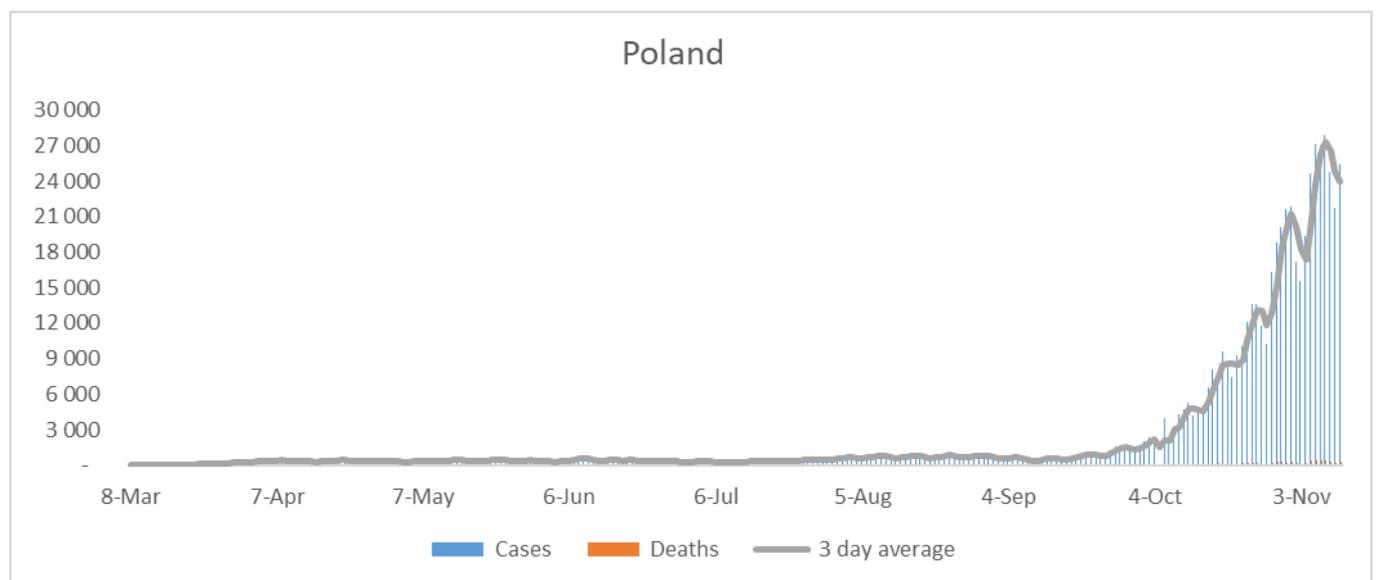
Since 30 May gatherings have been allowed in open spaces with social distance or in buses and trams, shops, cinemas and theatres with masks. Weddings and other family celebrations up to 150 people have been allowed starting on 6 June. Since then people can start visit swimming pools, gyms and fitness clubs in hotels.

At the end of the May, 23,509 had fallen ill, and 1,059 people died.

From Saturday 13 June people have been able to travel freely and cross the internal borders of the European Union<sup>5</sup>. Travellers were granted the right to free entry, exit and transit through the territory of Poland. They didn't have to be quarantined.

Meanwhile, two holiday months (July and August) brought record increases in infections. There were 10,877 cases of infections in July, compared with 21,839 in August. The biggest daily increase during the holiday was on August 21, with 903 new cases recorded.

### COVID-19 Progression in Poland



On 7 August<sup>6</sup>, the country was divided into green, yellow and red zones. The aim of the introduction of zones was to predefine the level of government restrictions with respect to each zone. The state bodies are responsible for introduction of each of the zones.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/koronawirus/13-czerwca-otwieramy-granice--kontrola-tylko-wyrywkowo>

<sup>6</sup> <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20200001356>

The first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic did not overwhelm to the same extent that was experienced in other countries like Italy and Spain.

A yellow zone has been introduced across the whole country since 9 October due to a large increase in cases of the disease<sup>7</sup>. Some of the counties with the highest number of cases fell into the red zone. Among the most important rules are the obligation to cover your nose and mouth across the country in public spaces – in the shop, on the bus, on the street.

As of 9 October 111,537 had fallen ill, and 2,865 people died.

All over the country, restaurants have to make sure that the tables are kept with a safe distance of at least 4 square meters per person. In addition, venues in the red zone are open during certain hours – from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Under the new rules, there is a limit of 75 people at special events and only 50 in the red zone. These rules have been in place from 17 October.

### **Current Situation**

From 17 October until 6 November there was a massive increase in the number of noticed cases to 316,776 with 3,534 deaths. On 6 November the Polish government decided to announce the red zone restrictions nationwide. This means that it is not allowed to organize any special celebrations like weddings, consolations. The maximum number of people that can meet is 5, and the distance between each other must be more than 1.5 meters.

Students of all grades of primary schools, all grades of post-primary schools, students of continuing education institutions and vocational training centres, have started to learn remotely.

The functioning of shopping malls and retail parks was restricted. The restrictions also included special opening hours for people with age above 60 (from Monday to Friday from 10:00 to 12:00)<sup>8</sup>. Even with these restrictions, Poland is suffering from a massive shortage of doctors, nursing employees and beds. Special field hospitals are being built to accommodate patients during the pandemic but without any special equipment for ICU beds (intensive care unit). The country's health care system has nearly reached its limits. In order to mitigate this situation the government decided to adapt part of the Polish National Stadium in Warsaw as a hospital. During November, the number of new cases increased by 644,241. The number of COVID-19 deaths increased by 11,678 in November.

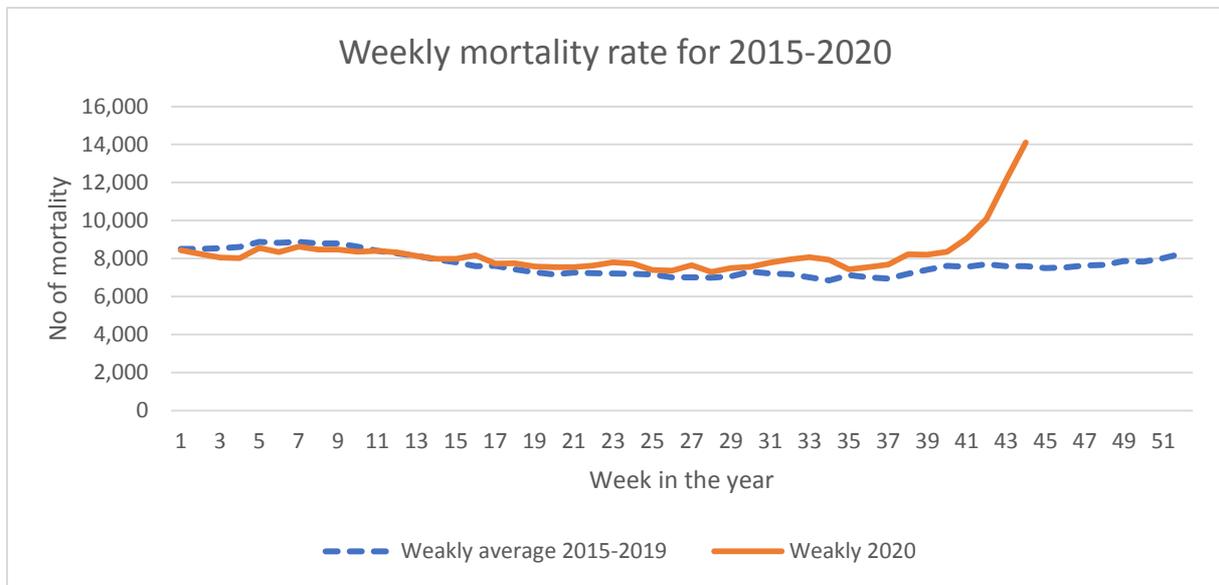
Since Saturday, 28 November, the government introduced new rules and restrictions. In strict sanitary regime, it is allowed to open the shops and services in galleries and shopping parks.

### **Weekly mortality rate for 2015-2020**

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20200001758>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/koronawirus/aktualne-zasady-i-ograniczenia>



All of these factors have had a substantial direct (COVID-19) and indirect (inefficiency of the healthcare system) impact on mortality. Right now, the number of total deaths (for 11 months in 2020) is the highest since 1945.

By 30 November, more than 985,075 people had fallen ill due to COVID-19 and 17,027 people had died.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://data.europa.eu/euodp/pl/data/dataset/COVID-19-coronavirus-data>