

1. “Ich AGs” (self-sufficient business) in Poland

Janusz Karwat put all his eggs in one basket. When the company for which he was working went bankrupt, he plucked up all his courage, took out a loan and purchased a truckster.

Janusz Karwat

It's better being your own boss. That way I am able to determine my own working hours and organize my own finances and decide when to acquire new things. I can make all of the decisions myself.

With his taxi-truck he regularly transports goods for two large Breslau companies. Whenever there are no jobs to be done, he waits together with the other taxi-trucks for occasional customers.

Franciszek Tomaszewski

Sometimes I only make two or three major trips per month. That's just enough to cover the contribution to the public pension scheme. Luckily my wife earns a bit on top of that.

Most of these one-man-entrepreneurs once worked for large companies from which they were dismissed in the course of the companies' restructuring. They were compelled for the first time to learn how to take out their own insurance, where to pay their taxes and how to gain regular clientele.

Robert Pinwowarczyk

The cases may vary from one to another. Some are successful, as they are business-minded. Some barely scrape enough together to live on.

Also many foreign language teachers have become free-lancers, in order to avoid being unemployed.

Anetta Sukienik

We're living in difficult times. Just a few manage to keep their heads above water after having established their own company. It would be much easier to be an employee of a large language school.

Despite that, the small-business entrepreneurs haven't become any less motivated.

Danuta Gluch

As a result of having worked as a self-employed person, I've learnt how many expenses are involved in running a business. It's also become clear to me just how important advertising is. The business will only succeed if you put in extra effort. Without having distributed leaflets or advertised, I wouldn't have any students. I go to folk festivals and fairs and unfortunately, it all costs money.

Just as it is in Germany, outsourcing is an important topic in Poland. Hundreds of employees of Polish Telecom were recently dismissed. Those interested had the opportunity to get a job with one of the smaller, newly founded companies.

Stanislaw Kilszczak

At the beginning I was simply scared. What would happen next? However following talks with the new employers, most of us decided to take up the new positions, even though the basic salaries had been reduced. But what were we to do? We had no choice, and at least we've got jobs.

It wasn't easy for these men to get used to their new circumstances, many of whom started working for Telecom right after they had finished school.

Adam Stepasiuk

That's just the way human beings are. They don't like change. We all feel safest when we're on familiar territory. Changes however, are a part of today's world. There is nothing you can do about it. You have to learn to come to terms with it.

Authors Edyta Brzozowska and Agnieszka Majcher

Camera Piotr Pasierbski

Cut Marek Mulica

Production TVP

Further info / none

Music no information