This article is part of a set of articles on disability and sheds light on the income situation of people with disabilities based on their own reporting of an activity limitation. Income is a key measure of the economic well-being of individuals. The data are taken from the European statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), which is the reference source for statistics on income, poverty and living conditions in the European Union (EU).

In EU-SILC, disability is approximated according to the concept of global activity limitation, which is defined as a "limitation in activities people usually do because of health problems for at least the past six months". This is considered to be an adequate proxy for disability, both by the scientific community and disabled persons' organisations.

**Being at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion (AROPE): higher prevalence among the population with activity limitation**

The indicator "at risk of poverty or social exclusion", abbreviated as AROPE, measures the percentage of people who are either at risk of poverty, or severely materially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity. The AROPE is the headline indicator to monitor the Europe 2020 Strategy poverty target.
In 2018, 28.7 % of the EU-28 population aged 16 or more and having an activity limitation was at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 19.2 % of those with no limitation. Similar results were obtained for the at-risk-of-poverty rate (20.9 % vs. 15.0 %), severe material deprivation rate (9.4 % vs. 5.0 %) and the share of individuals aged less than 60 and living in households with very low work intensity (22.5 % vs. 7.1 %). The latter result reflects the more difficult access to the labour market for people with activity limitation.

There are significant differences across countries, yet in all of them, people without activity limitation are on average less exposed to the risk of poverty and social exclusion than those with some activity limitation. Severe material deprivation is more frequent in eastern European Member States. For instance, almost 40 % of those with an activity limitation in Bulgaria (35.9 %) are also severely materially deprived, while the share is 3.8 % in Sweden and 2.1 % in Luxembourg. With regard to the two other components of AROPE (being at-risk-of-poverty and living in a household with low work intensity), the gaps between countries are less significant. For instance, the at-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for people with activity limitation varies from 11.4 % in Slovakia (2017 data), up to 37.3 % in Lithuania and 38.5 % in Estonia.

People with activity limitation rely heavily on social transfers

In 2018, 68.1 % of the EU-28 population aged 16 or over with an activity limitation would have been at risk of poverty if social transfers (social benefits, allowances and pensions) had not taken place, while 20.9 % of the same population would have been at risk after taking social transfers into account. Similar impacts were observed in all countries. The rate before social transfers for those with an activity limitation ranged from 58.8 % in Slovakia (2017 data), to 74.2 % in Bulgaria and 80.6 % in Greece.
In-work poverty: people with activity limitation more exposed than people with no limitation

Regardless of whether an activity limitation exists or not, being in employment reduces the risk of poverty. In 2018, 11.0 % of the employed EU-28 population aged 18 or more was at-risk-of-poverty, while the share was 16.3 % for all persons of the same age group (see (ilc_li04) ). Nevertheless, employment does not make the risk of poverty disappear. In-work poverty , that is poverty among the employed population, is a key indicator of the labour market integration of people having an activity limitation. In the EU-28, 11.0 % of those in employment with an activity limitation were at-risk-of-poverty. The highest values were observed in Greece (16.4 %), Romania (20.4 %) and Luxembourg (20.5 %), and the lowest in Czechia (5.3 %), Denmark (4.8 %) and Finland (3.5 %).

Source data for tables and graphs

- Disability statistics - poverty and income inequalities: tables and figures

Data sources and availability

The EU-statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) is the EU reference source for comparative statistics on income distribution and social inclusion. It provides annual data for the 28 EU countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland covering income, poverty, social exclusion and other aspects of living conditions.
The reference population covered in EU-SILC includes only private households and their current members residing in the territory of the countries at the time of data collection. It should be emphasised that people living in collective households and in institutions are generally excluded from the target population, which is a restriction regarding people with activity limitation. All household members are surveyed, but only those aged 16 and more are interviewed.

Data presented in this article correspond to 2018, although data for more recent years are disseminated. This is due to updates that were made after the data extractions used for the publication.

Context

One of the specific objectives of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which was adopted by the European Commission in 2010, is to ensure decent living conditions for people with disabilities through public housing programmes. This objective is also emphasized in an international human rights treaty, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which the EU is a signatory, as a pathway to ensure better accessibility (art. 9) and adequate standards of living and social protection (art. 28) for those with disabilities.

Other articles

Online publications

- Disability statistics

Related articles

- Europe 2020 indicators - poverty and social exclusion
- Self-perceived health statistics
- Income poverty statistics
- Living conditions in Europe - poverty and social exclusion

Publications

- European Health Interview Survey (EHIS wave 3) — Methodological manual - 2018 edition
- European Health Interview Survey (EHIS wave 2) — Methodological manual - 2013 edition
- Living conditions in Europe — 2018 edition

Methodology

- European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) - metadata
- European Health Interview Survey (EHIS wave 3) — Methodological manual - 2018 edition
- European Health Interview Survey (EHIS wave 2) — Methodological manual - 2013 edition
- ESMS metadata file — EHIS

Database

- Health (hlth), see:
- Disability (hlth_dsb)

Income distribution and poverty among disabled people (source SILC) (hlth_dsb_pe)
Material deprivation among disabled people (source SILC) (hlth_dsb_md)
Dedicated section

- Health, see Disability

Other information

- Regulation (EC) No 1177/2003 of 16 June 2003 concerning Community statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) and its updates for successive enlargements

External links

- Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED)
- European disability strategy 2010-2020
- Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)