



# European Semester 2020-2021 country fiche on disability equality

Spain

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# European Semester 2020-2021 country fiche on disability equality

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## Spain

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European Disability Expertise (EDE) provides independent scientific support to the Commission's policy Unit responsible for disability issues. It aims to mainstream disability equality in EU policy processes, including implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to the Semester process, see <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/how-european-semester-works/>.

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## **1 Executive summary and recommendations**

### **1.1 Key points and main challenges for the European Semester in 2021**

Spain must face the economic, educational, health and social crisis arising from COVID-19. Although this requirement is applicable to all European countries, the pandemic has affected more people in Spain than in other European countries. This aggravates the fact that the economic, employment, education and social indicators are lower than those existing for the average of the EU countries. Spain has not been able to meet the Europe 2020 targets and the forecasts are even less optimistic.

In this context, the people who have been suffering the most, are suffering and will suffer the consequences of this multidimensional crisis are the most vulnerable, namely, dependent people and people with disabilities. It is urgent and necessary to alleviate the economic emergency that many vulnerable families face and provide equal access to aid regardless of the territory in which they reside. Health equity also requires special investments in contexts where people with disabilities and dependency live, since they are a population at risk of contracting COVID-19 and suffering the most devastating effects. The representative organizations of these most vulnerable groups must be consulted, and adequate control and monitoring of the actions undertaken must be carried out.

It is necessary to promote educational measures that guarantee equal educational opportunities and their quality. The inclusive approach must be generalized to all stages. Along with financial aid for vulnerable students, concrete actions must be planned to offer professional training in accordance with the employment sources and be aligned with the green and circular economy. Employment must be governed by the same principles of guaranteeing equal opportunities and inclusion and third sector companies must be supported technically and economically.

More flexible work alternatives (teleworking) should be promoted. The European drive for a green, sustainable and circular economy should be used to launch employment initiatives (entrepreneurship, recruitment, special employment centres) for and towards workers with disabilities.

## 1.2 Recommendations for Spain

These recommendations are based on the evidence and analysis presented in the following chapters of our report.

- **Recommendation:** High quality vocational training programmes aimed at 'sources of employment' (e.g., green and circular economy) should be promoted, supported, and monitored for students with disabilities.  
Rationale: Early school leaving rates are very high in Spain. This situation is even worse for students with disabilities. Vocational training offers opportunities for inclusive education and for improving employability.
- **Recommendation:** Ensure and monitor quality of healthcare and social services for dependent and disabled population.  
Rationale: Multidimensional nature of the exclusion. Quality requires alignment with principles of inclusion, and quality of life. Consequently, it is associated to deinstitutionalization, normalization, removal of barriers, protection, and on-going monitoring.
- **Recommendation:** Promote sustainable, inclusive employment initiatives focused on the green and circular economy for people with disabilities.  
Rationale: Many special employment centres have experienced a drastic drop in income throughout the pandemic. Their dependence on tourism (services and hospitality) makes them especially vulnerable. In addition to the extraordinary financial aids that are raised from these centres we sustain that it is important to promote the reconversion of centres with medium and long-term viability problems, into circular economy centres. This would allow them to access aid and subsidies. It would also increase its potential income and viability derived from the increasingly growing awareness and obligation, by companies and the country itself, to comply with European and global commitments in this regard.

## 2 Opportunities to mainstream disability equality in the Semester documents

### 2.1 [Country Report](#) for Spain (Staff Working Document)

In 2020, the Country Report for Spain included the following direct references to disability issues:

- The employment rate of people with disabilities remains low (p. 49).
- The rates of early school leaving are especially high for students with disabilities (p. 54).

Regarding the employment situation, according to the Employment and Social service databases in 2018 the employment rate of people with disabilities decrease compared to 2017,<sup>2</sup> but also, about 60 % of people with disabilities who are working at the moment, could lose their employment as a result of the health, social and economic crisis triggered by the coronavirus and the temporary nature of the contracts that apply to many of them.<sup>3</sup> Additional issues relate to the quality of the employment and the specially disadvantaged situation of the youngest age group. Also, bearing in mind that more training is associated with greater chances of obtaining a job, the importance of tertiary training must not be forgotten. Here, there are clear disadvantages given the percentage of people with disabilities with tertiary studies, compared to the general population.

In addressing these issues, it is advisable to promote the implementation of measures aimed at promoting employment such as:

- Make arrangements to preserve jobs, use effective hiring incentives and skills development. This broad country specific recommendation<sup>4</sup> can be benefited from different specific actions. As we explain in following sections, vocational training programmes aimed at 'sources of employment' (e.g., green and circular economy) must be developed.
- Ensure compliance with job reservation quota.
- Adopting more flexible approaches to employment. Teleworking opens a path of optimism for the labour market of people with disabilities.<sup>5</sup>
- Policies to strengthen financing and guarantee the viability of third sector entities and companies are needed.<sup>6</sup>

Concerning rates of early school leaving, it is important to mention that, in Spain, the early school leaving rate is 17.3 % (21.4 % men and 13 % women), which is more than

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<sup>2</sup> 'Employment of people with disabilities' is an annual process that aims to obtain data on the workforce (employed, unemployed) and the population outside the labour market (inactive) within the group of people aged between 16 and 64 years old and with an officially recognized disability. See: [https://www.ine.es/prensa/epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/prensa/epd_2018.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.emprendedores.es/ayudas/deseempleo-discapacidad-covid/>.

<sup>4</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), page 9, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> <https://estardondeestes.com/movi/es/articulos/discapacidad-y-mercado-laboral-asi-ha-sido-el-impacto-de-la-covid-19>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ampros.org/blog-ampros/2294-plena-inclusion-y-aedis-muestran-su-decepcion-ante-el-rechazo-del-congreso-a-las-medidas-de-reconstruccion-social-post-pandemia>.



7 points higher than the EU average (10.2 %). This situation is even worse for students with disabilities. Several factors help explain this situation.

- First, the educational and social system have not yet assumed the inclusive demand of services promoted by the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As CERMI claims, one of the most significant human rights (HR) violations that occur in Spain concerns inclusive education.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, it is necessary to closely monitor the evolution of indicators in the field of educational inclusion. These indicators should be agreed on with representative disability organizations and should be based in regulations such as the 2030 Agenda, and the UN CRPD. In the medium and long term, special education centres should be transformed into resource centres that support ordinary centres. A legislative framework of specific actions is lacking to promote inclusion, avoid school dropout and the failure of many students with disabilities.<sup>8</sup>
- Culturally, vocational training in Spain has been considered as lower status training for those who are not capable of pursuing university studies. This explains why there is an overrepresentation of university graduates and an underrepresentation of vocational training graduates, and there is a lower relationship between academia and the world of employment. There is also less preparation to give quick and more adapted responses to the changing needs of society. More emphasis on vocational training measures aimed at offering professional alternatives for more diverse students should be considered. This will eventually reduce the share of young people who are neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET). More specifically, the First Strategic Plan for Vocational Training of the Educational System must include explicit measures for students with disabilities to access these studies. Quality professional training, duly accredited (by law), and accessible for different types of disabilities<sup>9</sup> is advisable.
- Disaggregated information on university students with disabilities and actions aimed at promoting their inclusion should be included. For example, in the document 'Data and figures of the Spanish University System 2019-2020' published by the Ministry of Universities,<sup>10</sup> there is not a single mention nor are there any tables or statistics on university students with specific needs for educational support or disabilities.
- In times of COVID-19, measures must be proposed to reduce the social disadvantage faced by many students with disabilities that can leave them

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<sup>7</sup> Downloadable at: [https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe %20Espa %C3 %B1a %202019.pdf](https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe%20Espa%C3%B1a%202019.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.observatoriodeladiscapacidad.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/OED-ALUMNADO-CON-DISCAPACIDAD-FASE-I.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/plena\\_inclusion\\_propuestas\\_para\\_la\\_desescalada\\_lectura\\_facil.pdf](https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/plena_inclusion_propuestas_para_la_desescalada_lectura_facil.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Downloadable at: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dam/jcr:b9e82c7a-1174-45ab-8191-c8b7e626f5aa/informe-datos-y-cifras-delsistema-universitario-espa-ol-2019-2020-correcto.pdf>.

behind due to a lack of technological means, barriers to access technologies, lack cognitive accessibility of materials, and so on.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.2 Country Specific Recommendation for Spain (CSR)

In 2020, the Country Specific Recommendation for Spain included the following direct references to disability issues:

- '19. Persons with disabilities and the elderly in residential care have been particularly exposed during the crisis. Their continued access to medical and social care, including emergency and intensive care services, needs to be ensured.
- 19. In the medium-term, healthcare delivery could better respond to the challenges of ageing, growing chronic conditions and disability.'

It is estimated that between three and four out of ten people with disabilities suffer from social exclusion in health. They are excluded or precariously cared for health devices.<sup>12</sup> In regional legislation, budget items with specific mention of people with disabilities are few.<sup>13</sup> In addressing the disadvantaged situation of persons with disabilities and the elderly in times of crisis, several actions are suggested:

- Measures must be put in place to facilitate access to services and health in times of coronavirus, guaranteeing accessibility (including cognitive) and offering aids (for technology, for support products, for personal assistance).<sup>14</sup> As an example, CERMI claims that emergency devices, such as 112 or evacuation protocols in the event of natural disasters or other types of accidents, do not take into account the reality of people with disabilities, which increases their chances of being victims.<sup>15</sup>
- Measures to ensure accessible transportation should be taken as well. This is aligned with another CSR concerning the fact that Spain's transformation to a climate neutral economy will require sizeable investment over a sustained period in renewable energy, energy infrastructure, energy efficiency and sustainable transport, among others.<sup>16</sup>
- Residential alternatives must be more inclusive, normalized and easier to protect against current or future pandemics. Disability-related entities should be supported from the additional costs that COVID-19 has caused. Residential centres for persons with disabilities must have health personnel and regulations

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[https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/plena\\_inclusion\\_propuestas\\_para\\_la\\_desescalada\\_lectura\\_facil.pdf](https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/plena_inclusion_propuestas_para_la_desescalada_lectura_facil.pdf).

12 [https://caritas-web.s3.amazonaws.com/main-files/uploads/sites/16/2019/06/Informe-FOESSA-2019\\_web-completo.pdf](https://caritas-web.s3.amazonaws.com/main-files/uploads/sites/16/2019/06/Informe-FOESSA-2019_web-completo.pdf).

13 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mLyQEyD2Mlez8YXYdMX3e3huJcqMxGbc/view>.

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[https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/coronavirus\\_como\\_ha\\_cambiado\\_la\\_vida\\_de\\_las\\_pcdi.pdf](https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/coronavirus_como_ha_cambiado_la_vida_de_las_pcdi.pdf).

15 Downloadable at: [https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe\\_%20Espa\\_%C3%B1a\\_%202019.pdf](https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe_%20Espa_%C3%B1a_%202019.pdf).

16 *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), page 6, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

that guarantee adequate ratios of personnel.<sup>17</sup> People with disabilities are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 due to barriers to accessing preventive information and hygiene, dependence on physical contact with the environment or support persons, as well as respiratory conditions caused by certain disabilities.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the implementation of quarantines or similar restrictive programmes can lead to interruptions in vital services for many people with disabilities and undermine basic rights such as food, medical care, hygiene and personal care and communications, leading to abandonment, isolation and institutionalization. In addition, when they become ill with COVID-19, people with disabilities may face additional barriers to seeking medical care and they may also experience discrimination and neglect by care personnel. (...) It is absolutely necessary for people with disabilities to be able to access treatment in intensive care units to cope with the disease. Rather than being pushed aside, they should be given the same priority as other patients. In fact, the Bioethics Committee of Spain describes it as radically unfair that the people whose health is most threatened by a coronavirus contagion are, in turn, the most affected':<sup>19</sup> Actions and specific measures to face all these issues are required. They should meet the Commission recommendations that Spain take action in 2020 and 2021 to strengthen the health system's resilience and capacity, as regards health workers, critical medical products and infrastructure.

- Additional financial help should be given to organizations that represent disabled persons. For example, *Plena Inclusión* estimates that compliance with preventive measures against COVID-19 in the 1,016 residential centres it manages in which 17,000 people with intellectual disabilities live, represents an added expense of EUR 15,000,000 per month. The application of these measures during confinement has meant an increase of 30 % in the cost per person, without the administrations having financed their application.<sup>20</sup> This financial help should be linked to quality of life indicators, increased participation of families and more inclusive environments.
- To better respond to the challenges of healthcare for ageing, growing chronic conditions and disability as demanded in the CSR, more personal centred approaches are suggested. In particular, a specific regulation of the figure of the personal assistant is advisable, as requested by CERMI.<sup>21</sup>

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[https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/plena\\_inclusion\\_propuestas\\_para\\_la\\_desescalada\\_lectura\\_facil.pdf](https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/plena_inclusion_propuestas_para_la_desescalada_lectura_facil.pdf).

18 Downloadable at: <http://www.plataformatercersector.es/sites/default/files/DIAGN%C3%93STICO%20SITUACI%C3%93N%20TERCER%20SECTOR%20ANTE%20COVID19.pdf>.

19 Downloadable at: <http://www.plataformatercersector.es/sites/default/files/DIAGN%C3%93STICO%20SITUACI%C3%93N%20TERCER%20SECTOR%20ANTE%20COVID19.pdf>.

20 <https://www.plenainclusion.org/informate/actualidad/noticias/2020/plena-inclusion-denuncia-que-las-residencias-de-personas-con>.

21 Downloadable at: <https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe%20Espa%C3%B1a%202019.pdf>.

### 3 Disability and the labour market - analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

In 2019, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Spain:

[Article 27 UN CRPD](#) addresses Work and Employment.

‘51. The Committee recommends that the State party, in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals:

(a) Analyse and modify legislation, regulations and policies to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors, with particular emphasis on women with disabilities and persons with disabilities living in rural areas;

(b) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is available and accessible for persons with disabilities with administrative safeguards, especially in cases of accidents that have led to disabilities in the workplace;

(c) Adopt concrete measures to fully implement the legal quota established in the revised text of Act No. 9/2017 on public sector contracts.’

The Spanish Disability Strategy 2012-2020 also contains relevant priorities.<sup>22</sup>

#### 3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Spain of 43.1 % in 2018, compared to 69.8 % for other persons and approximately -7.7 points below the EU27 average - resulting in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 27 percentage points (EU27 average gap 24.2, see Tables 2-4). The same data indicate unemployment rates of 32.8 % and 17.4 %, respectively in 2018 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Spain was 64.1 %, compared to 84.5 % for other persons (see Tables 8-10). These indications are broken down by gender and age in the respective tables in annex.

Focusing specifically on registered disabled persons only, the latest statistical data on employment and disability in Spain, published by the National Institute of Statistics as of 31 December 2018,<sup>23</sup> indicate that the employment rate of registered people with disabilities was 25.8 % (in contrast to 65.9 % for people without disabilities), with a decrease of 0.1 points compared to 2017. These data contrast with the EU27 rates for all persons reporting limitations that suggest 50.8 % employment for people with disabilities in contrast to 75 % for people without disabilities. The employment rate by age group suggests that both in people with disabilities and without disabilities, the youngest age group (16-24 years) has the lowest rates (see Figure 1). Furthermore,

<sup>22</sup> *Estrategia Española Sobre Discapacidad 2012-2020*, [https://www.mscbs.gob.es/ssi/discapacidad/docs/estrategia\\_espanola\\_discapacidad\\_2012\\_2020.pdf](https://www.mscbs.gob.es/ssi/discapacidad/docs/estrategia_espanola_discapacidad_2012_2020.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Report downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf) and press release downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf).

people without disabilities obtain employment rates more than double that of people with disabilities (Figure 1). In the 45-64 age group, these rates are more than three times those for people with disabilities (Figure 1). According to the cited Spanish official source,<sup>24</sup> national unemployment rates are higher than the EU27 average, both for people with disabilities (men and women) and for people without disabilities (men and women) (see Figure 2). National data also indicate that the unemployment rate is higher, both for people with disabilities and for people without disabilities, in the age group between 16-24 years, with a difference of more than 24 points between the group with disabilities and the group without disabilities (see Figure 3). On the other hand, and continuing with the same statistical sources, the national activity rates of persons with disabilities are much lower than the EU activity rates for this population group (see Figure 4). In Spain, although the youngest group with disabilities had the lowest activity rates, the difference with respect to the youngest group without disabilities is 13 points, while the difference with respect to the age group between 25-44 years is 40.2 points and the difference with respect to the 45-64 age group is 48.7 points (see Figure 5).

As data reflect, unemployment, particularly among people with disabilities and young people, continues to be a significant problem for Spain. The latest statistics on employment and disability in Spain from December 31, 2018,<sup>25</sup> indicate that the employment rate of registered people with disabilities was 25.8 %, with a decrease of 0.1 points compared to 2017.<sup>26</sup> This is very close to the EU-SILC estimate of employment rate for persons declaring more severe limitations (Table 2). These data contrast with the SILC EU27 employment rates of 50.8 % for all people with disabilities. The youngest age group (16-24 years) has the lowest rate (see Figure 1). The administrative data<sup>27</sup> also indicates higher national unemployment rates than the SILC data, which is particularly high in the age group between 16-24 years (see Figure 3). Similarly, activity rates of persons with disabilities obtained from national sources are much lower than SILC estimates, which are closer to the EU average (see Figure 4). This situation is even more alarming as it is estimated that about 60 % of people with disabilities who are working at the present, could lose their employment as a result of the health, social and economic crisis triggered by the coronavirus and the temporary nature of the contracts that apply to many of them.<sup>28</sup>

The expansion of the COVID-19 virus has caused an unprecedented economic shock in the Spanish economy. According to the country forecasts, the unemployment rate will reach 19 % in 2020 and will gradually decrease from the second part of 2020 closer to 17 %.<sup>29</sup> The young population are experiencing the most severe impact of the

<sup>24</sup> Report downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf) and press release downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Report downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf) and press release downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> The data are combination from three sources: (1) the Active Population Survey (EPA), (2) the State Database of People with Disabilities (BEPD), and (3) national and regional data on Social Benefits for the Unit. Thus, 'registered people with disabilities' includes people with a degree of disability greater than or equal to 33 %. It also includes pensioners who receive a permanent disability pension and pensioners who receive a retirement pension for permanent disability.

<sup>27</sup> Report downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf) and press release downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.emprendedores.es/ayudas/desempleo-discapacidad-covid/>.

<sup>29</sup> 2020 European Semester National Reform Programme Spain, p. 3, downloadable at:



pandemic.<sup>30</sup> In the Country Specific Recommendation (CSR)<sup>31</sup> a significant increase in the level of unemployment is forecast in Spain as a result of the crisis, which will weigh on the already limited capacity of employment services to support workers and employers and on social services. The UNCRPD Committee has called 'upon States to ensure that priority be given to address situations of poverty, and deprivation of persons with disabilities in their crisis management plans. States should ensure that economic hardship during the crisis is also addressed with respect to persons with disabilities who may face the loss of jobs and additional barriers to meet basic essential needs'.<sup>32</sup>

How the data will behave in the second part of 2020, if the worst forecasts are fulfilled according to the most recent data from the second quarter of 2020 and obtained from the Labour Force Survey (EPA),<sup>33</sup> the number of employed has decreased by 1,074,000 people compared to the previous quarter (-5.46 %) and stands at 18,607,200. In annual variation, employment has fallen by 1,197,700 people (-6.05 %). The unemployment rate is 15.33.

In relation to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy on employment, in Spain<sup>34</sup> (p. 6), the employment rate for the population aged 20 to 64 in the second quarter 2020, according to the EPA, fell 0.7 pp, to 63.7 %, more than 10 pp below the target set for Spain for 2020 (74 %). This figure is 4.5 pp lower than a year ago, the employment rate being higher among men, 69.5 %, than among women, which stands at 58.0 %.

However, not all the data are negative. According to data from the EPA (p. 9),<sup>35</sup> following the Eurostat criteria, for the population aged 15 to 64, in the second quarter of 2020 long-term unemployment (LDP) has decreased, accumulating an annual decrease of one - 27.6 %. The PLD rate for the active population fell to 4.1 %, 1.3 points below that reached a year earlier. Its incidence has been significantly reduced since it affects 26.7 % of the total unemployed, which is 11.8 points lower than a year ago. In the EU as a whole, the average incidence is higher: in the fourth quarter of

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[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-spain\\_es.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programme-spain_es.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Report: *Youth at Risk: analysis of the consequences socioeconomic conditions of COVID-19 on the population young in Spain*. Emergency report / 1 March / April 2020, available at: [http://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/adjuntos/2020/06/estudio\\_consecuencias\\_economicas\\_covid19\\_en\\_la\\_juventud.pdf](http://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/adjuntos/2020/06/estudio_consecuencias_economicas_covid19_en_la_juventud.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Country Specific Recommendations (20.5.2020), pp. 5-6, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> 'COVID-19 and the human rights of persons with disabilities' - Statement by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – Adopted 9 June 2020- downloadable at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25942&LangID=E>.

<sup>33</sup> See: [https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica\\_C&cid=1254736176918&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976595](https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176918&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976595).

<sup>34</sup> See: [http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/sec\\_trabajo/analisis\\_mercado\\_trabajo/pnr/observatorio/2020/septiembre/Texto.pdf](http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/sec_trabajo/analisis_mercado_trabajo/pnr/observatorio/2020/septiembre/Texto.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> See: [https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica\\_C&cid=1254736176918&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976595](https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176918&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976595).

2019, the latest data available at Eurostat level, the incidence reached 43.6 % in the Euro Zone, compared to 37 % in Spain in that quarter.

### 3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Spain.

As previously mentioned, employment policies have made it possible to reduce long-term unemployment. However, the pandemic has very negatively affected different employment indicators (activity rate, employment and unemployment rates, temporary contracts, time full jobs). The pandemic has meant a drastic change in the favourable and growth trend experienced in Spain since 2014.<sup>36</sup>

To answer all these challenges, it is recommended that the path to recovery should be paved by measures to support employment, such as gradually phasing-out short-time work schemes, reviewing the system of hiring incentives to better promote sustainable forms of employment, notably for young workers, as well as through flexibility in working conditions. In this regard:

- Teleworking opens a path of optimism for the labour market of people with disabilities.<sup>37</sup> It requires previous digital training, with vocational training programmes being an attractive alternative. It will eventually allow employers with disabilities to have more flexible work schemes.

Additional recommendations<sup>38</sup> included in the CSR:

- 'Ensure early on that all workers, including temporary workers and the self-employed, have access to adequate social protection and active labour market policies, in order to support a sustainable recovery and social cohesion'<sup>39</sup> We add that disabled workers should be specifically mentioned.
- 'Take action in 2020 and 2021 to make arrangements to preserve jobs, ensure effective hiring incentives and skills development.'<sup>40</sup> As we will explain in following sections, vocational training programmes aimed at 'sources of employment' must be developed. In this regard, as we mentioned earlier, many special employment centres have experienced a drastic drop in income throughout the pandemic. Their dependence on tourism (services and hospitality) makes them especially vulnerable. In addition to the extraordinary

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<sup>36</sup> See:

[http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/sec\\_trabajo/analisis\\_mercado\\_trabajo/pnr/observatorio/2020/septiembre/Texto.pdf](http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/sec_trabajo/analisis_mercado_trabajo/pnr/observatorio/2020/septiembre/Texto.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> <https://estardondeestes.com/movi/es/articulos/discapacidad-y-mercado-laboral-asi-ha-sido-el-impacto-de-la-covid-19>.

<sup>38</sup> Country Specific Recommendations (20.5.2020), p. 9, downloadable at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Country Specific Recommendations (20.5.2020), p. 6, downloadable at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Country Specific Recommendations (20.5.2020), p. 9, downloadable at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

financial aids that are raised from these centres,<sup>41</sup> we sustain that it is important to promote the reconversion of centres with medium and long-term viability problems, into circular economy centres. This would allow them to access aid and subsidies. It would also increase its potential income and viability derived from the increasingly growing awareness and obligation, by companies and the country itself, to comply with European and global commitments in this regard.<sup>42</sup>

- Reinforce unemployment protection, notably for atypical workers. It would be advisable to mention workers with more severe physical and intellectual /developmental disabilities, as well as workers with severe chronic physical and psychiatric disabilities.

Additional issues and proposed actions are mentioned by different organizations:

- FEACEM, Spanish Business Federation of Associations of Special Employment Centres, also emphasizes the importance of supporting the most vulnerable groups in times of crisis and highlights that the adaptability shown by the Special Employment Centres of Social Initiative, which have started to manufacture other products, has been a great help to society in the most critical moments of COVID-19.<sup>43</sup> FEACEM proposes measures to guarantee the viability of these centres that should be contemplated in plans and programmes in Spain immediately, such as:<sup>44</sup> (1) create a specific contingency fund, always linked to maintaining employment, aimed at balancing the budget to alleviate the economic-financial deficiencies caused by the current health crisis situation; (2) exceptionally increase employment maintenance assistance for people with disabilities with special difficulties; to guarantee liquidity, (3) anticipate the amount of maintenance aid corresponding to fiscal year 2020; (4) promote public contracting reserved for social initiative special employment centres as a measure of reactivation of some sectors of activity.
- *Plena Inclusión* states that policies to strengthen financing and guarantee the viability of third sector entities and companies are needed.<sup>45</sup>
- CERMI<sup>46</sup> (Spanish Committee of Representatives of People with Disabilities), criticizes the lack of compliance of the job reservation quota in many cases.
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Economy proposes to increase the SMI (Minimum Interprofessional Salary) from 50 % to 55 % for workers in special employment centres with 'severe disabilities', which represents an increase similar to that established for the previous year. AEDIS and Plena Inclusión insist on the need to improve safety and health prevention measures in special employment centres in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. These two

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.discapnet.es/centros-especiales-de-empleo-como-resurgir-tras-la-pandemia-covid-19>.

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/calidad-y-evaluacion-ambiental/temas/economia-circular/espanacircular\\_2030\\_executivesummary\\_en\\_tcm30-510578.pdf](https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/calidad-y-evaluacion-ambiental/temas/economia-circular/espanacircular_2030_executivesummary_en_tcm30-510578.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.feacem.es/sites/default/files/ndp\\_-\\_la\\_colaboracion\\_entre\\_todos\\_los\\_agentes\\_sociales\\_clave\\_para\\_la\\_recuperacion\\_economica\\_y\\_social.pdf](http://www.feacem.es/sites/default/files/ndp_-_la_colaboracion_entre_todos_los_agentes_sociales_clave_para_la_recuperacion_economica_y_social.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> See: <https://www.discapnet.es/centros-especiales-de-empleo-como-resurgir-tras-la-pandemia-covid-19>.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.ampros.org/blog-ampros/2294-plena-inclusion-y-aedis-muestran-su-decepcion-ante-el-rechazo-del-congreso-a-las-medidas-de-reconstruccion-social-post-pandemia>.

<sup>46</sup> Downloadable at: [https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe\\_%20Espa\\_%C3%B1a\\_%202019.pdf](https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe_%20Espa_%C3%B1a_%202019.pdf).



organisations expect a prompt passing of a legislative framework that guarantees the conditions of dignity (i.e. decent work and wages) in the world of work for people with disabilities and especially for those with greater difficulties in finding a job.<sup>47</sup>

At the national level, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security (MITRAMISS) has devised an Action Plan for Youth Employment 2019-2021.<sup>48</sup> According to the Plan, special attention will be given to vulnerable groups (migrants, long-term unemployed, school leavers, disabled people, etc.). It also includes quantitative objectives that must be achieved upon completion. This Plan should be monitored in order to guarantee that the pandemic is not preventing its implementation. Disaggregated data for people with disabilities are required, as statistics show that they are a specially disadvantaged group.<sup>49</sup>

Also, the MITRAMISS has developed the Triennial Plan for Preventing and Reducing Long-Term Unemployment (2019-2021)<sup>50</sup> which also includes quantitative objectives that must be achieved upon completion. Follow-up of these measures is advisable, as the pandemic may prevent its implementation. Disaggregated data for people with disabilities are required, as national data show<sup>51</sup> that although the youngest group with disabilities have the lowest activity rates, the difference with respect to the youngest group without disabilities is 13 points, while the difference with respect to the age group between 25-44 years is 40.2 points and the difference with respect to the 45-64 age group is 48.7 points (see Figure 5).

The Master Plan for Decent Work (2018-2020),<sup>52</sup> aimed at reducing the temporary contracts in Spain, which has highest share of employees on this type in the EU, needs to offer more evidences of its utility,<sup>53</sup> even though we acknowledge the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in every national plan and policy.

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.plenainclusion.org/informate/actualidad/noticias/2020/aedis-y-plena-inclusion-aplauden-que-el-ministerio-de-trabajo>.

<sup>48</sup> Downloadable in English at: [http://www.sepe.es/SiteSepe/contenidos/que\\_es\\_el\\_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf\\_empleo/Plan-de-Choque-Empleo-Joven-2019-2021-resumen-ejecutivo-ingles.pdf](http://www.sepe.es/SiteSepe/contenidos/que_es_el_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf_empleo/Plan-de-Choque-Empleo-Joven-2019-2021-resumen-ejecutivo-ingles.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Report downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf) and press release downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf).

<sup>50</sup> Downloadable in English at: [http://www.sepe.es/SiteSepe/contenidos/que\\_es\\_el\\_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf\\_empleo/PLAN-REINCORPORA-T-INFOGRAFIA-INGLES.pdf](http://www.sepe.es/SiteSepe/contenidos/que_es_el_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf_empleo/PLAN-REINCORPORA-T-INFOGRAFIA-INGLES.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> Report downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf) and press release downloadable at: [https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe\\_epd\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ine.es/metodologia/t22/informe_epd_2018.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> Downloadable at: <http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/plandirector/plan-director-por-un-trabajo-digno.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> *Country Report* (2020) downloadable at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0508>.

#### **4 Disability, social policies and healthcare – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies**

In 2019, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Spain:

[Article 28 UN CRPD](#) addresses Adequate standard of living and social protection.

‘53. The Committee recommends that the State party:  
(a) ensure that the national strategy for reducing poverty incorporates a disability perspective, including specific measures and an allocated budget;  
(b) repeal the co-payments system for all services necessary for living independently in the community and ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to those services.’

[Article 19 UN CRPD](#) addresses Living independently in the community.

‘38. With reference to the Committee’s general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, the Committee recommends that the State party, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities:  
(a) Recognize the right to personal assistance in law, ensuring that all persons with disabilities are entitled to personal assistance, with individualized criteria for their independent living in the community and with access to a wide range of person-directed or user-led support and the self-management of service delivery.  
(b) Discontinue the use of public funds to build residential institutions for persons with disabilities and invest in independent living arrangements in the community and in all general services to make those arrangements inclusive, guaranteeing their accessibility and availability for all persons with disabilities, to enable their inclusion and participation in all spheres of life.  
(c) Design, adopt and implement a comprehensive deinstitutionalization strategy and implement safeguards to ensure the right to live independently and be included in the community across all regions, by redirecting resources from institutions to community-based services and increasing budgetary support for persons with disabilities to enhance their equal access to services, including personal assistance.’

[Article 25 UN CRPD](#) addresses Health.

‘49. The Committee recommends that the State party:  
(a) ensure the accessibility and availability of health-care services for all persons with disabilities, particularly in rural areas;  
(b) ensure that persons with disabilities have accessible information and that health-care services are provided with alternative means of communication, such as sign language interpretation, Braille, Easy Read and all required augmentative means for that purpose;  
(c) guarantee universal access to accessible sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, and information and education, particularly for women and girls with disabilities, and integrate the right to

reproductive health into national strategies and programmes, as set out in target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals'

The Spanish Disability Strategy 2012-2020 also contains relevant priorities.<sup>54</sup>

#### 4.1 Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities

We believe it is necessary to mention the current situation in Spain and the significant changes that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing and that will undoubtedly affect the most vulnerable, although we do not yet have specific data on the population with disabilities. The EAPN-ES, European Network for the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Spanish State, has prepared a report on the state of poverty in Spain, with preliminary results to July 2020.<sup>55</sup> This report offers data that show that Spain has failed to meet the objectives to comply with the Europe 2020 strategy, in accordance with the provisions of the 2011 National Reform Programme. In addition, the indicators proposed for evaluating Strategy 2020 offer worse data than at the beginning of the period. Although the data for 2019 show the trend towards improvement that began since 2019, the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the economy suggest that for 2020 and beyond a clear deterioration than the situation found in this report. Hence, the report indicates that 'measures to contain the economic consequences of the pandemic have to be taken now, or it will be too late' (p. 5).<sup>56</sup>

The forecasts cannot be optimistic, given that as indicated in the CR, the GDP growth in Spain was 2.4 % in 2018 and 2.0 % in 2019, still well above the euro area.<sup>57</sup> The expansion of the COVID-19 has caused an unprecedented economic shock in the Spanish economy. Currently, the GDP growth forecast for 2020 and 2021 is -9.2 and +6.8, respectively.<sup>58</sup> According to the country forecasts, the unemployment rate will reach 19 % in 2020 and will gradually decrease from the second part of 2020 to figures close to 17 %. Likewise, it is estimated that the deficit of the Public Administrations will be 10.3 % of GDP by 2020.<sup>59</sup> As stated in the Country Specific Recommendations (20.5.2020)<sup>60</sup> in its 2020 Stability Programme, the government plans the headline balance to deteriorate from a deficit of 2,8 % of GDP in 2019 to a deficit of 10,3 % of GDP in 2020. After decreasing to 95,5 % of GDP in 2019, the general government debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to increase to 115,5 % in 2020 according to the 2020

<sup>54</sup> *Estrategia Española Sobre Discapacidad 2012-2020*, [https://www.msbs.gob.es/ssi/discapacidad/docs/estrategia\\_espanola\\_discapacidad\\_2012\\_2020.pdf](https://www.msbs.gob.es/ssi/discapacidad/docs/estrategia_espanola_discapacidad_2012_2020.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> Downloadable at: [https://eapn.es/ARCHIVO/documentos/documentos/1595350337\\_el-estado-de-la-pobreza.-avance-resultados-julio-2020-v3.pdf](https://eapn.es/ARCHIVO/documentos/documentos/1595350337_el-estado-de-la-pobreza.-avance-resultados-julio-2020-v3.pdf).

<sup>56</sup> [https://www.google.com/search?q=google+traduction&rlz=1C1GCEA\\_enES761ES761&og=google+tra&ags=chrome.2.69i59j69i57j69i59j0l2j69i60l3.6503j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=google+traduction&rlz=1C1GCEA_enES761ES761&og=google+tra&ags=chrome.2.69i59j69i57j69i59j0l2j69i60l3.6503j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8).

<sup>57</sup> *2020 European Semester Country Report Spain* (26.2.2020), p. 9, downloadable at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0508>.

<sup>58</sup> *2020 European Semester National Reform Programme Spain*, p. 3, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programmespain\\_es.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programmespain_es.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> *2020 European Semester National Reform Programme Spain*, p. 4, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programmespain\\_es.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programmespain_es.pdf).

<sup>60</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

Stability Programme. The macroeconomic and fiscal outlook is affected by high uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data from EU-SILC indicate the poverty risk rate for working age persons with disabilities in Spain was 28.4 % in 2018, compared to 21.1 % for other persons of similar age - an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 7 percentage points (see Table 14). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was 5.0 points (18.4 % for older persons with disabilities and 13.4 % for other persons of similar age). The risk of poverty after social transfers is much higher for disabled people aged 16-64, than for the disabled older than 65. This shows the effect of pensions, invalidity benefits, and the like. It also shows that the actions that reduce the risk of poverty are more passive than active policies. Employment of people with disabilities is often precarious, which does not allow them to overcome the risk of poverty and exclusion. The tables in annex also indicate the respective rates of AROPE and break these down by gender as well age.

In many Spanish homes where people with disabilities live, aid for personal care and accompaniment at home is scarce in quantity and quality. Their social exclusion is clearly higher than in the rest of the population.<sup>61</sup> The nature of such exclusion is multidimensional through exclusion from employment, access to resources for health maintenance, as well as housing accessibility, and social isolation.<sup>62</sup> The Commission recommends that Spain take action in 2020 and 2021 to focus investment on the green and digital transition.<sup>63</sup> This is an opportunity and a requirement to guarantee equal access for people with disabilities.

Between three and four out of ten people with disabilities suffer from social exclusion in health. If, in general terms, 14 % of the population is excluded or precariously cared for in terms of health devices, this percentage reaches 34.4 % in the case of people with disabilities.<sup>64</sup> In regional legislation, budget items with specific mention of people with disabilities are few.<sup>65</sup> The crisis will likely increase the high levels of poverty or social exclusion in Spain, especially among families with children. Social protection expenditure remains highly oriented towards older people, and the level of expenditure on pensions is set to increase significantly in the medium to long term (should the announced departures from the 2013 pension reform be made permanent and no adequate compensatory measures taken). Existing regional minimum income schemes only reach 20 % of their potential beneficiaries in the country, amid large regional disparities in terms of coverage, duration, access conditions and adequacy.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> [https://caritas-web.s3.amazonaws.com/main-files/uploads/sites/16/2019/06/Informe-FOESSA-2019\\_web-completo.pdf](https://caritas-web.s3.amazonaws.com/main-files/uploads/sites/16/2019/06/Informe-FOESSA-2019_web-completo.pdf).

<sup>62</sup> [https://caritas-web.s3.amazonaws.com/main-files/uploads/sites/16/2019/06/Informe-FOESSA-2019\\_web-completo.pdf](https://caritas-web.s3.amazonaws.com/main-files/uploads/sites/16/2019/06/Informe-FOESSA-2019_web-completo.pdf).

<sup>63</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), p. 9, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> [https://caritas-web.s3.amazonaws.com/main-files/uploads/sites/16/2019/06/Informe-FOESSA-2019\\_web-completo.pdf](https://caritas-web.s3.amazonaws.com/main-files/uploads/sites/16/2019/06/Informe-FOESSA-2019_web-completo.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mLyQEYD2Mlez8YXYdMX3e3huJcqMxGbc/view>.

<sup>66</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), p. 6, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

## 4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Spain.

The crisis generated by the pandemic has led to the implementation of actions to alleviate the social impact of job losses. Economic aid to the most disadvantaged households and aid to cover basic expenses (energy ...) are examples of measures that have had to be adopted as a complement to those existing before the crisis.<sup>67</sup> Although all these measures are necessary and urgent, there is a significant problem in Spain regarding the sustainability of the system. Means must be sought so that the sustainability of the public system of social, educational and health services is not endangered. The solutions require adopting measures to: (1) reduce spending, or (2) increase income through collections, or (3) increase income through the generation of wealth through employment, R&D, and entrepreneurship. It is urgent to reach agreements that allow us to go in the same direction, ensuring the solidarity, equity and sustainability of the system.

Measures must be put in place to facilitate access to services and health in times of coronavirus, guaranteeing accessibility (including cognitive) and offering aids (for technology, for support products, for personal assistance).<sup>68</sup> Residential alternatives must be more inclusive, normalized and easier to protect against current or future pandemics. Disability-related entities should be supported from the additional costs that COVID-19 has caused. Residential centres for persons with disabilities must have health personnel and regulations that guarantee adequate ratios of these personnel.<sup>69</sup>

According to the report: 'Diagnosis of the situation of the third sector facing the crisis generated by COVID-19' (2020, p. 9):<sup>70</sup> People with disabilities are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 due to barriers to accessing preventive information and hygiene, dependence on physical contact with the environment or support persons, as well as respiratory conditions caused by certain disabilities. Additionally, the implementation of quarantines or similar restrictive programmes can lead to interruptions in vital services for many people with disabilities and undermine basic rights such as food, medical care, hygiene and personal care and communications, leading to abandonment, isolation and institutionalization. In addition, when they become ill with COVID-19, people with disabilities may face additional barriers to seeking medical care and also experience discrimination and neglect by care personnel. (...) It is absolutely necessary for people with disabilities to be able to access treatment in intensive care units to cope with the disease. Rather than being pushed aside, they should be given the same priority as other patients. In fact, the

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<sup>67</sup> See: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programmespain\\_es.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-national-reform-programmespain_es.pdf).

<sup>68</sup> [https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/coronavirus.\\_como\\_ha\\_cambiado\\_la\\_vida\\_de\\_las\\_pcdi.pdf](https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/coronavirus._como_ha_cambiado_la_vida_de_las_pcdi.pdf).

<sup>69</sup> [https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/plena\\_inclusion.\\_propuestas\\_para\\_la\\_desescalada\\_lectura\\_facil.pdf](https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/plena_inclusion._propuestas_para_la_desescalada_lectura_facil.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> Downloadable at: <http://www.plataformatercersector.es/sites/default/files/DIAGN %C3 %93STICO %20SITUACI %C3 %93N %20TERCER %20SECTOR %20ANTE %20COVID19.pdf>.



Bioethics Committee of Spain describes it as radically unfair that the people whose health is most threatened by the coronavirus are, in turn, the most affected'.<sup>71</sup>

The Commission recommends that Spain take action in 2020 and 2021 to: (1) 'Strengthen the health system's resilience and capacity, as regards health workers, critical medical products and infrastructure';<sup>72</sup> (2) 'Support employment through arrangements to preserve jobs, effective hiring incentives and skills development, and reinforce unemployment protection, notably for atypical workers.'<sup>73</sup>

These generic recommendations that not focused on the population with disabilities, can be specified in the proposals that we offer below. These proposals are aligned with the demands of the representative disability and employment organisations, as we show below.

- First, additional financial help should be given to organizations of representatives of disabled persons. For example, *Plena Inclusión* estimates that compliance with preventive measures against the contagion of COVID-19 in the 1,016 residential centres it manages and in which 17,000 people with intellectual disabilities live, represents an added expense of EUR 15,000,000 per month. The application of these measures during confinement has meant an increase of 30 % in the cost per person, without the administrations having financed their application.<sup>74</sup>
- Second, the health system and the health measures adopted must take into account the population with disabilities. As an example, CERMI highlights that inequality and poverty are especially high in people with disabilities.<sup>75</sup> It also alludes to the existence of segregating policies, institutionalization, lack of accessibility to the environment and information, lack of regulation of the figure of the personal assistant, lack of a global strategy on mental health. CERMI also highlights the particularly disadvantaged situation of women with disabilities (forced sterilization, sexist violence). Regarding healthcare, CERMI claims that emergency devices, such as 112 or evacuation protocols in the event of natural disasters or other types of accidents, do not take into account the reality of people with disabilities, which increases their chances of being victims.
- In the CSR is stated that Spain's transformation to a climate neutral economy will require sizeable investment over a sustained period in renewable energy, energy infrastructure, energy efficiency and sustainable transport, among others.<sup>76</sup> We

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<sup>71</sup> Downloadable at: [http://www.plataformatercersector.es/sites/default/files/DIAGN %C3 %93STICO %20SITUACI %C3 %93N %20TERCER %20SECTOR %20ANTE %20COVID19.pdf](http://www.plataformatercersector.es/sites/default/files/DIAGN%C3%93STICO%20SITUACI%C3%93N%20TERCER%20SECTOR%20ANTE%20COVID19.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), p. 9, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>73</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), p. 9, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.plenainclusion.org/informate/actualidad/noticias/2020/plena-inclusion-denuncia-que-las-residencias-de-personas-con>.

<sup>75</sup> Downloadable at: [https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe %20Espa %C3 %B1a %202019.pdf](https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe%20Espa%C3%B1a%202019.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), p. 6, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

propose that specific measures to ensure accessible transportation should be taken. In this regard, CERMI mentions<sup>77</sup> the unfavourable impact of climate change on disability, in areas such as health, accessibility in natural disasters, energy poverty, the safety and integrity of women and girls with disabilities. in devastated spaces and the situation of climate migrants. CERMI shows its commitment to join forces that promote the sustainability of the planet in accordance with the provisions of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>78</sup>

- In September 2020, CERMI warned that the lack of equal opportunities detected in 2019 for people with disabilities will worsen significantly due to the humanitarian, social and economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>79</sup>
- Also in September, the disability sector has called for the regulation and extension of the figure of the personal assistant. Homogeneity in the application and access to this figure is demanded among the autonomous communities. Improvements in the labour regulation of this figure, professionalization of this profile, and a greater development and promotion of this figure in the dependency aid catalogue, as it is the most inclusive support, are some of the demands.<sup>80</sup>
- CERMI has alerted the Government that the non-validation by the Congress of Deputies, in September, of Royal Decree-Law 27/2020, of 4 August, of financial measures, of an extraordinary and urgent nature, applicable to local entities, has annulled the exemption of the Value Added Tax (VAT) for medical devices to combat COVID-19. This represents a clear detriment to the health institutions and social organisations that were availing themselves of this tax benefit.<sup>81</sup>

Intellectual disability organizations claim that for the calculation of the requirements to be able to receive the Minimum Vital Income (MVI), established by the government as a measure to reduce the impact of the crisis derived from COVID-19, the needs of People with disabilities should be taken into account. Thus, *Plena Inclusión* proposes measures such as: recognizing disabled people with difficulties in finding work as special coexistence units; calculate the income per living unit without taking into account the money received for having a child under 18 with a disability; increase the amount of income established to be able to receive the MVI; increase the amount established in the MVI in the case of people with disabilities; increase the amount of supplements in the case of minors with a disability of more than 33 % or of older children with a disability of more than 65 %; increase incentives for employment in the MVI.<sup>82</sup> These measures should be taken into account to prevent additional disadvantages by disabled population.

<sup>77</sup> Downloadable at: [https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe %20Espa %C3 %B1a %202019.pdf](https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe%20Espa%C3%B1a%202019.pdf).

<sup>78</sup> Downloadable at: [https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe %20Espa %C3 %B1a %202019.pdf](https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe%20Espa%C3%B1a%202019.pdf).

<sup>79</sup> [https://www.cope.es/actualidad/sociedad/noticias/cermi-alerta-que-pandemia-agravara-discriminacion-personas-con-discapacidad-20200915\\_894763](https://www.cope.es/actualidad/sociedad/noticias/cermi-alerta-que-pandemia-agravara-discriminacion-personas-con-discapacidad-20200915_894763).

<sup>80</sup> [https://www.cermi.es/es/actualidad/noticias/el-sector-de-la-discapacidad-defiende-la-regulaci %C3 %B3n-y-extensi %C3 %B3n-de-la-asistencia](https://www.cermi.es/es/actualidad/noticias/el-sector-de-la-discapacidad-defiende-la-regulaci%C3%B3n-y-extensi%C3%B3n-de-la-asistencia).

<sup>81</sup> [https://www.cermi.es/es/actualidad/noticias/el-cermi-alerta-de-que-la-no-convalidaci %C3 %B3n-del-real-decreto-ley-de-excedentes](https://www.cermi.es/es/actualidad/noticias/el-cermi-alerta-de-que-la-no-convalidaci%C3%B3n-del-real-decreto-ley-de-excedentes).

<sup>82</sup> *Plena Inclusión (2020) Propuestas para un Ingreso Mínimo Vital con las personas con discapacidad intelectual*. Downloadable at:

[https://plenainclusionextremadura.org/plenainclusion/sites/default/files/publicaciones/PROPUESTAS %20PARA %20UN %20INGRESO %20MI %CC %81NIMO %20VITAL.pdf](https://plenainclusionextremadura.org/plenainclusion/sites/default/files/publicaciones/PROPUESTAS%20PARA%20UN%20INGRESO%20M%C3%81NIMO%20VITAL.pdf).

- The National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty and social exclusion (2019-2023)<sup>83</sup> echoes the disadvantaged situation of people with disabilities not only in terms of employment and education, but also in terms of access to healthcare resources (p. 56). The National Strategy also pointed out that the existing tax credits in Spain for families do not have the desirable progressivity. Specifically, the Plan indicates (p. 66) that since there is no possibility for families to benefit from these deductions if result of the return is negative, the most vulnerable families, who pay very little or nothing in personal income tax (due to their low income), are excluded from these tax benefits, of which they are often not aware. In other words, it is aid that does not benefit the lowest income groups and does not contribute to the fight against child poverty.
- As noted in the Country Report 2020 (p. 14),<sup>84</sup> important challenges in the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Spain will include the close cooperation between the different levels of government as well as the coordination with other ministries so as to ensure policy coherence, as well as budget alignment and the definition of indicators for adequate monitoring and accountability. To achieve these goals, Spain has published an 'Action plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Towards a Spanish Strategy for Sustainable Development'.<sup>85</sup> The Plan includes a commitment to accountability and the preparation of an annual report. It is advisable to monitor the progresses in relation to people with disabilities.
- The National Strategy Against Energy Poverty 2019-2024<sup>86</sup> Introduces greater protection for vulnerable consumers, including people with disabilities. It proposes measures such as the redesigned of the social energy bonus, improves the protection of the electricity bonus and introduces the thermal bonus and prohibits power cuts to the most vulnerable households. It is necessary to monitor these measures, including data disaggregated by vulnerable groups.
- Pilot projects are under way to improve the cooperation between regional employment services and social services,<sup>87</sup> that are necessary to reduce regional disparities previously mentioned. The pandemic has limited the implementation of these projects.
- Meanwhile, the 'universal social card' continued to be rolled out in 2019. This improves service providers' access to information on benefits received by individuals thereby facilitating coordination between employment and social services. Yet, the Commission's Country Report<sup>88</sup> alerts (p. 60) that significant

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<sup>83</sup> Downloadable at: [https://eapn.es/ARCHIVO/documentos/noticias/1553262965\\_estrategia\\_prev\\_y\\_lucha\\_pobreza\\_2019-23.pdf](https://eapn.es/ARCHIVO/documentos/noticias/1553262965_estrategia_prev_y_lucha_pobreza_2019-23.pdf).

<sup>84</sup> See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0508>.

<sup>85</sup> Downloadable at: <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/Multimedia/Publicaciones/Documents/PLAN%20DE%20ACCION%20PARA%20LA%20IMPLEMENTACION%20DE%20LA%20AGENDA%202030.pdf>.

<sup>86</sup> Downloadable at: [https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/prensa/estrategianacionalcontralapobrezaenergetica2019-2024\\_tcm30-496282.pdf](https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/prensa/estrategianacionalcontralapobrezaenergetica2019-2024_tcm30-496282.pdf).

<sup>87</sup> See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0508>.

<sup>88</sup> Downloadable at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0508>.



gaps remain on benefits managed by regional and local authorities. Special attention should be paid to gaps and disparities that affect more vulnerable groups.

- Set up of the Social Inclusion Network (RIS)<sup>89</sup> and its different working groups are expected to improve coordination between employment and social services. However, the network has experienced a delay in its activity, as a consequence of the pandemic.

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<sup>89</sup> See: <http://redinclusion-social.es/>.

## 5 Disability, education and skills – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

In 2019, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Spain:

[Article 24 UN CRPD](#) addresses Education.

‘46. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and targets 4.5 and 4.A of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee reiterates the recommendations provided in its report on the inquiry concerning Spain under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention (CRPD/C/20/3), urging the State party to expedite legislative reform in line with the Convention, in order to clearly define inclusion and its specific objectives at each educational level. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to view inclusive education as a right, and grant all students with disabilities, regardless of their personal characteristics, the right to access inclusive learning opportunities in the mainstream education system, with access to support services as required. The Committee also recommends that the State party implement all other recommendations contained in the report on the inquiry.

47. The Committee recommends that the State party formulate a comprehensive inclusive education policy with strategies for promoting a culture of inclusion in mainstream education, including individualized human-rights based assessments of educational requirements and necessary accommodation, support for teachers, respect for diversity in ensuring the rights to equality and non-discrimination, and the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society.’

The Spanish Disability Strategy 2012-2020 also contains relevant priorities.<sup>90</sup>

### 5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

In general terms, in 2019, the latest data available, the rate of early school leaving has continued to decline, with decreases in both men and women, in relation to the objectives of Europe 2020 (p. 9).<sup>91</sup> The overall rate fell 6 tenths to 17.3 %, about 2.3 pp from the target of 15 % set for 2020. Among women it is lower, 13 % compared to 21.4 % among men. In the EU, the rate was 10.2 %. Regarding raising the population, aged 30 to 34 years with tertiary studies to 44 % by 2020, that objective was exceeded by reaching, according to the EPA, 44.7 % in the second quarter of 2020, the same level as reached a year earlier, continuing the upward trend observed. This percentage is significantly higher among women, 50.8 %, than among men, 38.5 % (pp. 7-8).<sup>92</sup>

<sup>90</sup> *Estrategia Española Sobre Discapacidad 2012-2020*, [https://www.msbs.gob.es/ssi/discapacidad/docs/estrategia\\_espanola\\_discapacidad\\_2012\\_2020.pdf](https://www.msbs.gob.es/ssi/discapacidad/docs/estrategia_espanola_discapacidad_2012_2020.pdf).

<sup>91</sup> [http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/sec\\_trabajo/analisis\\_mercado\\_trabajo/pnr/observatorio/2020/septiembre/Texto.pdf](http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/sec_trabajo/analisis_mercado_trabajo/pnr/observatorio/2020/septiembre/Texto.pdf).

<sup>92</sup> See: [http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/sec\\_trabajo/analisis\\_mercado\\_trabajo/pnr/observatorio/2020/septiembre/Texto.pdf](http://www.mites.gob.es/ficheros/ministerio/sec_trabajo/analisis_mercado_trabajo/pnr/observatorio/2020/septiembre/Texto.pdf).

The EU-SILC estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with some caution due to variable confidence levels but they consistently indicate disability quality gaps. Table 16 indicates early school leaving rates disaggregated by disability status. Youth with disabilities (aged 18-24) tend to leave school significantly more than non-disabled peers of the same age groups (and this is reinforced by widening the sample size to age 18-29). Table 17 shows completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (age 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider sample for age 30-39).

According to the most recent data from the Ministry of Education (last update: 7 May 2020) in the 2018-2019 academic year, the total number of students with a specific need for educational support who received specific educational attention came to 707,405, which represents 8.8 % of the total number of students. Of these, 212,807 (30.1 %) received it for special educational needs associated with disability or serious disorder; 35,494 (5.0 %) due to high intellectual abilities; 31,605 (4.5 %) for late integration into the educational system, and 427,499 (60.4 %) for other categories of needs (e.g. ADHD, specific language disorders). Students with a specific need for educational support are in primary education (48.6 %), followed by compulsory secondary education (30.3 %) and by those who attend Special education (5.3 %).<sup>93</sup>

The percentage of students with special educational needs who receive support represents 2.6 % of the enrolled students. The highest percentages are found in public schools and in subsidized education (2.8 % and 2.7 % of the total number of students, respectively), being very low in private education (0.6 %). Of the total, 82.4 % of the students with special educational needs are integrated in ordinary centres and 17.6 % are in special centres receiving specific education. Taking into account the type of disability, the highest integration percentage (98.0 %) corresponds to severe behaviour / personality disorders, followed by hearing impairment (94.9 %), and visual impairment (94.7 %). Concerning the educational level, in early childhood education, 1 % of the students have special educational needs, 2.7 % in primary education, 2.8 % in compulsory secondary education, 0.7 % in high school, 6 % in basic vocational training, 1.9 % in intermediate vocational training, and professional training, 0.5 % in higher vocational training, and 6.3 % in other vocational training programmes.<sup>94</sup>

According to the document: Data and Figures for the 2020/2021 school year published by the Ministry of Education<sup>95</sup> with data corresponding to the year 2019, in Spain, the Early school leaving rate was 17.3 % (21.4 % men and 13 % women), which is more than 7 points higher than the EU average (10.2 %).

In the document 'Data and figures of the Spanish University System 2019-2020' published by the Ministry of Universities,<sup>96</sup> there is not a single mention nor are there

<sup>93</sup> Information downloadable at: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dam/jcr:4f2d14a4-8a98-4023-adcd-9f1f041f5005/notaresumen.pdf>.

<sup>94</sup> Information downloadable at: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dam/jcr:4f2d14a4-8a98-4023-adcd-9f1f041f5005/notaresumen.pdf>.

<sup>95</sup> Downloadable at: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dam/jcr:89c1ad58-80d8-4d8d-94d7-a7bace3683cb/datosycifras2021esp.pdf>.

<sup>96</sup> Downloadable at: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dam/jcr:b9e82c7a-1174-45ab-8191-c8b7e626f5aa/informe-datos-y-cifras-delsistema-universitario-espa-ol-2019-2020-correcto.pdf>.

any tables or statistics of university students with specific needs for educational support or disabilities.

In the document: 'Human rights and disability. Report Spain 2019 'CERMI states that one of the most significant human rights (HR) violations that occur in Spain<sup>97</sup> concerns to inclusive education.

In addition, the COVID-19 crisis has very negatively impacted disabled students. *Plena Inclusión* proposes a quick guide for a safe return to the classroom.<sup>98</sup> The document highlights that children with disabilities are more affected by non-face-to-face education, since they see specific speech therapy, physiotherapy, psychology and psychiatry treatments interrupted, abruptly stopping their evolution in the educational process. Full inclusion proposes the figure of the itinerant teacher, in the event that a possible confinement is repeated, who would be in charge of giving home monitoring to students with special educational needs.

In the Country Specific Recommendation (CSR),<sup>99</sup> several suggestions are included such as: Raising the share of students in science and digital technologies, making vocational education and training more attractive and ensuring flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities. These measures could help meet the growing demand for the technical skills needed for the green and digital transitions that will accompany the recovery. Access to digital learning is also recommended.<sup>100</sup> A focus on these recommendations should be emphasized to improve the situation of students with specific needs for educational support or disabilities.

## 5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Spain.

Since 1970, there have been seven educational laws in Spain. Despite this, or perhaps for this reason, the country lags behind many of the education indicators compared to the EU. The new Education Law passed in 2020<sup>101</sup> seeks to reinforce measures to combat school failure and early school leaving, which are two clearly problematic aspects in Spain. As stated in the CSRs, improving educational and career guidance and providing adequate support to students with disadvantages and regions lagging behind could contribute to better educational outcomes. The success of measures that may be adopted with a view to achieving these objectives will strongly depend on

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<sup>97</sup> Downloadable at: [https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe %20Espa %C3 %B1a %202019.pdf](https://www.cermi.es/sites/default/files/docs/novedades/Informe%20Espa%C3%B1a%202019.pdf).

<sup>98</sup> Downloadable at: [https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/guia\\_rapida\\_vuelta\\_segura\\_a\\_las\\_aulas\\_de\\_plena\\_inclusion\\_0.pdf](https://www.plenainclusion.org/sites/default/files/guia_rapida_vuelta_segura_a_las_aulas_de_plena_inclusion_0.pdf).

<sup>99</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), pp. 5-6, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>100</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), p. 9, downloadable at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>101</sup> Downloadable at: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dam/jcr:1ef5d4e5-a41b-40a3-867b-e3b320dc48be/03-loe-con-lomloe-web-2020-03-03.pdf>.

taking the necessary time to build a broad and long-lasting social and political consensus around the reforms.<sup>102</sup>

The new Education Law<sup>103</sup> aims to combat school failure and early school leaving, which are two clearly problematic aspects in Spain. Furthermore, it is necessary to closely monitor the evolution of indicators in the field of educational inclusion. The data on school failure and early school leaving should also be disaggregated by specific educational support needs and by special educational needs and / or disabilities. Title VI of this law focuses on collecting data that allow evaluating the results, as well as improving the transparency and efficiency of the educational system. Representative disability organizations such as CERMI, as well as others focused on more specific disabilities such as *Plena Inclusión* should be consulted when developing consensus and national indicators on inclusion. These indicators must reflect compliance with universal rights such as the right to education, also related to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda (which are not mentioned in this law) and with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (which are not mentioned in this Law either).

The First Strategic Plan for Vocational Training in the Educational System<sup>104</sup> is very necessary and will reduce the imbalance between students of professional training and university studies, compared to the rest of European countries. This Plan must include explicit allusions to the way in which people with disabilities will be able to access these studies.

The process of recognition of professional competencies acquired through work experience and / or non-formal training<sup>105</sup> must be strengthened and it must pay attention and offer support and guidance to workers with disabilities who may have their work or training experience recognized through this route. Some general progress in the implementation of 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)<sup>106</sup> can be noted.

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<sup>102</sup> *Country Specific Recommendations* (20.5.2020), pp. 5-6, downloadable at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-csr-comm-recommendation-spain_en.pdf).

<sup>103</sup> Downloadable at: <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dam/jcr:1ef5d4e5-a41b-40a3-867b-e3b320dc48be/03-loe-con-lomloe-web-2020-03-03.pdf>.

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/va/dam/jcr:1bc3728e-d71f-4a8e-bb99-846996d8a2f2/i-plan-estrategico-de-formacion-profesional-del-sistema.pdf>.

<sup>105</sup> See: <https://www.sepe.es/HomeSepe/Personas/formacion/certifica-tu-experiencia-laboral.html>.

<sup>106</sup> See: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ea175fa5-ca31-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1>.

## 6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

### 6.1 Updates on the use of existing EU funds (to 2020)

First, a note, it should be mandatory to have transparent, public, accessible, updated database on programmes, beneficiaries, and participants. To date, there is not public access to this information. There is no way to access complete information on the expenses allocated to projects with ESIF funds in which the beneficiaries are people with disabilities. Access to this information would allow us to analyse the degree to which programmes (ESIF ERDF, ESF, YEI, EAFRD, EMFF) are being used in / with disadvantaged groups and not only in regions. Information on variables in terms of social cohesion (vulnerable groups ...) should be included in the reports of all programmes.

In Table III we summarize two projects aimed at improving training and employment of people with disabilities. The first project: 'Giving more young people a Passport to Employment' is a support programme for young people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities through access to training programmes for employability and the promotion of accessible work environments. Since 2017, it has carried out three projects especially aimed at people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, called 'Passport to employment for young people with disabilities.' It includes two training programmes that support young people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities to improve their chances of finding a job, combining face-to-face study with practical training on the job. The third project helps universities to develop training programmes to stimulate the inclusion and employment of young people with intellectual disabilities. In addition to offering personalised training, it helps universities create an inclusive environment for them.<sup>107</sup>

The second Project, For Talent<sup>108</sup> is a web platform that, since its inception in 2009, has attracted around 200,000 users. The portal also provides an opportunity for disabled jobseekers to interact with experts who can help them find the right career or training options. Over 4,000 employers looking for new staff have registered on the portal. In addition to allowing businesses to organise and manage their offers, For Talent provides access to information about people who might meet their particular requirements. The portal features the latest advances in accessibility to ensure people with disabilities can get the most from its navigation system. For Talent has also helped more than 8,000 people enrol in over 3,000 training courses and employment workshops. The training and job placement activities are entirely free of charge thanks to co-financing from the ESF and the ONCE Foundation. The non-profit organisation FSC Inserta is behind the efforts to get people with disabilities into the workplace and manages the project.

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<sup>107</sup> See: <https://www.fundaciononce.es/es/noticia/jovenes-con-discapacidad-intelectual-se-graduan-por-la-universidad-de-salamanca-en-un-curso>.

<sup>108</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&projectId=1503>.



**Table I. Selected projects aimed at improving training and employment of people with disabilities**

Name of the project	Giving more young people a Passport to Employment	Por Talento// ES - Disabled people land jobs thanks to special web portal
Duration	2017 - 2018	2009 – 2015
ESF contribution	EUR 4,861,796.00	EUR 700,000
Total Budget	EUR 5,290,887.00	EUR 1,000,000
Participants	1,372	> 200,000 disabled people; 4,000 business
Country	Spain	Spain
Organization	Fundación ONCE	FSC-Inserta / Fundación ONCE
Website	<a href="http://www.fundaciononce.es">www.fundaciononce.es</a>	<a href="http://www.fundaciononce.es">www.fundaciononce.es</a> ; <a href="http://www.fsc-inserta.es">www.fsc-inserta.es</a>
Related links	Opening pathways for work <sup>109</sup> Creating chances for youth <sup>110</sup>	Opening pathways for work <sup>111</sup>

It is worth highlighting that the Board of Directors of the Spanish Business Confederation of the Social Economy (CEPES) has approved 74 projects for a value of EUR 9,366,375.58, as the Intermediate Body of the 'Operational Programme for Social Inclusion and Social Economy' of the European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020. The approved projects will enable the creation of 1,206 new companies and 5,903 jobs in the Social Economy, in addition to consolidating and promoting the professionalization of human resources and the management of Social Economy entities, especially in cooperatives, labour companies, special employment centres and insertion companies. The complete resolutions and the information regarding these calls and the POIESES are available on the CEPES website <https://fse.cep.es/proyectos-aprobados>. The aid approved by CEPES will occur in 14 Autonomous Communities (Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, Canary Islands, Community of Madrid, Valencian Community, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Catalonia, Extremadura, Galicia, Navarra, Basque Country and Region of Murcia ). During 2018, 2019 and 2020, a total of 14,733 participants will benefit, 'of which 2,831 are people with disabilities or other groups at risk of exclusion'. The grants approved by CEPES will also allow 879 participants to receive qualified training and a further 162 people with disabilities or other groups at risk of exclusion to move to the ordinary labour market through 97 companies as well as for 4,343 people to improve or maintain their employment through various actions.

From a more general perspective, the 13 December 2018 resolution, by the General Directorate of Autonomous and Local Cooperation, which resolves the 2018 call for aid from the European Social Fund for local entities (town halls, provincial councils) for the insertion of the most vulnerable people, in the context of the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Education, offers general information on approved projects.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>109</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=533>.

<sup>110</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=534>.

<sup>111</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=533>.

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2018/12/19/pdfs/BOE-A-2018-17415.pdf>.

As we have mentioned in previous reports, given that disability is a transversal variable and that it is present in all operational programmes, it should be easier to access data on the number and type of beneficiaries of the different programmes, disaggregated by age, sex, disability, etc. This information should be available and public in downloadable monitoring databases of the official agencies with competences in the matter. At this time the information is still scattered, and it is difficult to get an overall idea of the state of the issue and the relationship between operational programmes-projects-financing-typology of beneficiaries, etc. The development and continuous update of a database shared by all the countries of the euro zone, in a similar way to that existing in terms of employment, is key for the evaluation and improvement.

## 6.2 Priorities for future investment (after 2020)

Several recommendations are included in the CR:<sup>113</sup>

- Investment in the creation of new firms, including ones through business incubators and consulting services (CR, p. 100). Employment services and other guidance services in universities and other organizations should promote the entrepreneurial spirit of people with disabilities.
- Investment in deployment of technology and infrastructures for affordable clean energy, in greenhouse gas emission reduction, energy efficiency and renewable energy (CR, p. 100). These employment and financing niches should serve to guide the implementation of employment initiatives (self-employment, special employment centres) with workers with disabilities.
- Investment in the circular economy (CR, p. 101). This requires training in this type of economy through accessible, accredited and quality professional training for students with disabilities. Subsequently, it requires specific aid for the implementation of these business initiatives with the disabled population.
- Investment in research and innovation activities and fostering the transfer of advanced technologies; productive investments in SMEs, including start-ups; and investment in the regeneration and decontamination of sites, land restoration and repurposing projects (CR, p. 101). Specific and accessible training, as well as the inclusion of representative organizations of people with disabilities and employment with said population, will allow their participation in this type of activities.

Moreover, priority investment needs have been identified in the CR<sup>114</sup> for alleviating the social costs of the transition in the above-mentioned areas. Key actions of the Just Transition Fund could target in particular (CR, p. 101):

- upskilling and reskilling of workers; this is especially relevant for this population, as they are more vulnerable in times of crisis and they have suffered the impact of the crisis to higher extent than other groups;
- job-search assistance to jobseekers; and,

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<sup>113</sup> Downloadable at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX %3A52020SC0508>.

<sup>114</sup> Downloadable at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX %3A52020SC0508>.



- Active inclusion of jobseekers. As mentioned previously, low activity rate, low employment rate, and high unemployment rate justify the implementation of measures aimed at reducing their risk of poverty and exclusion.

In this regard, it is an opportunity to include educational measures to improve the situation of people with disabilities that are aligned with these recommendations, as well with the suggestions included in the present report. These are:

- vocational training programmes (Basic Vocational Training Cycles,<sup>115</sup> Middle Grade Training Cycles,<sup>116</sup> Higher Degree Training Cycles,<sup>117</sup> and Specialisation courses)<sup>118</sup> closely related to the green and circular economy (e.g. agriculture, building and civil works, installation and maintenance) should be promoted and supported among students with disabilities;
- it is an opportunity for the Renewed Catalogues of Regulated Vocational Training, in which cycles related to the green and circular economy are being incorporated, to take into account measures to guarantee the inclusion of disabled and disadvantaged students in these courses;
- in the proposals for intermediate and higher-level training cycles and Vocational Training for Employment that allows obtaining Certificates of Professionalism related to the Green and Circular Economy, measures must be specified to support and eliminate barriers for students with disabilities.

Measures related to employment of disabled people, aligned with green and circular economy are also suggested:

- Assistance should be offered to third-sector companies for their conversion towards circular economy alternatives. Additional financial support should be provided to special employment centres and entrepreneurship initiatives developed by people with disabilities related to the green and circular economy.

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<sup>115</sup> See: <https://www.todofp.es/que-como-y-donde-estudiar/que-estudiar/ciclos/fp-basica.html>.

<sup>116</sup> See: <https://www.todofp.es/que-como-y-donde-estudiar/que-estudiar/ciclos/grado-medio.html>.

<sup>117</sup> See: <https://www.todofp.es/que-como-y-donde-estudiar/que-estudiar/ciclos/grado-superior.html>.

<sup>118</sup> See: <https://www.todofp.es/que-como-y-donde-estudiar/que-estudiar/ciclos/curso-especializacion.html>.

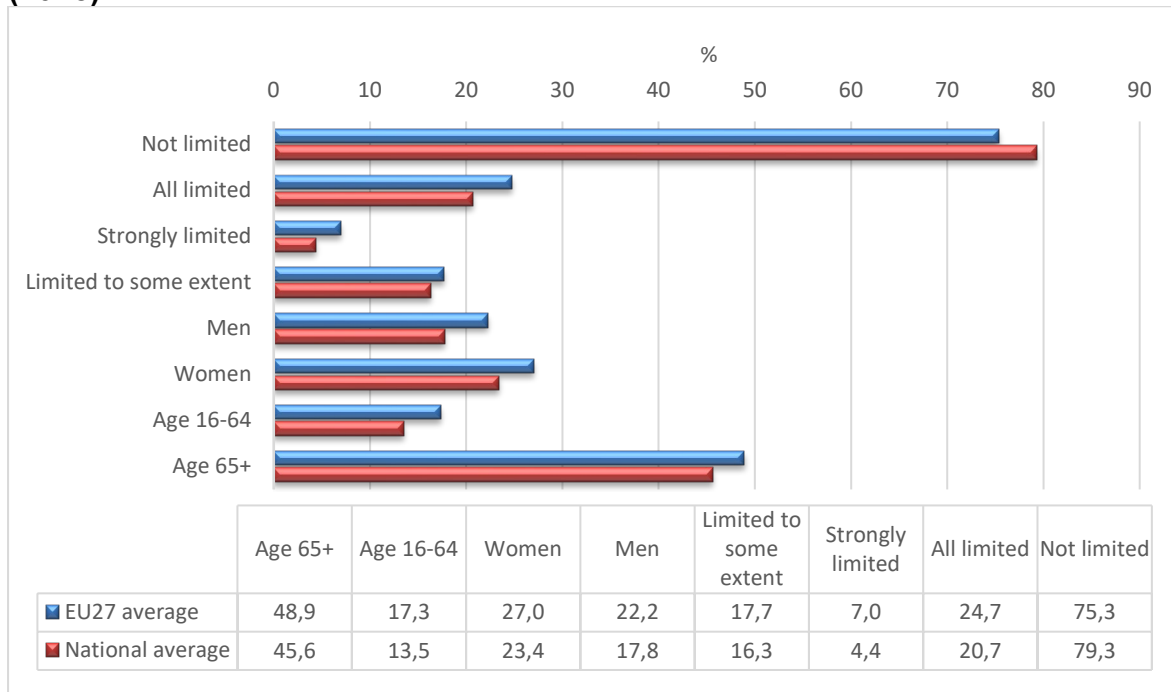
## 7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database<sup>119</sup> and statistical reports.<sup>120</sup>

Unless specified, the summary statistics are drawn from the most recent EU-SILC data available to researchers from Eurostat. The EU-SILC sample includes people living in private households and does not include people living in institutions (congregative households). The sampling methods vary somewhat in each country.

The proxy used to identify people with disabilities (impairments) is whether ‘for at least the past 6 months’ the respondent reports that they have been ‘limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do’.<sup>121</sup>

**Table 1: Self-reported ‘activity limitations’ as a proxy for impairment/disability (2018)**



Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1

In subsequent tables, these data are used to indicate ‘disability’ equality gaps and trends relevant to the analytical chapters – for the labour market, social policies and healthcare, and education – by comparing outcomes for persons who report and do

<sup>119</sup> Eurostat health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

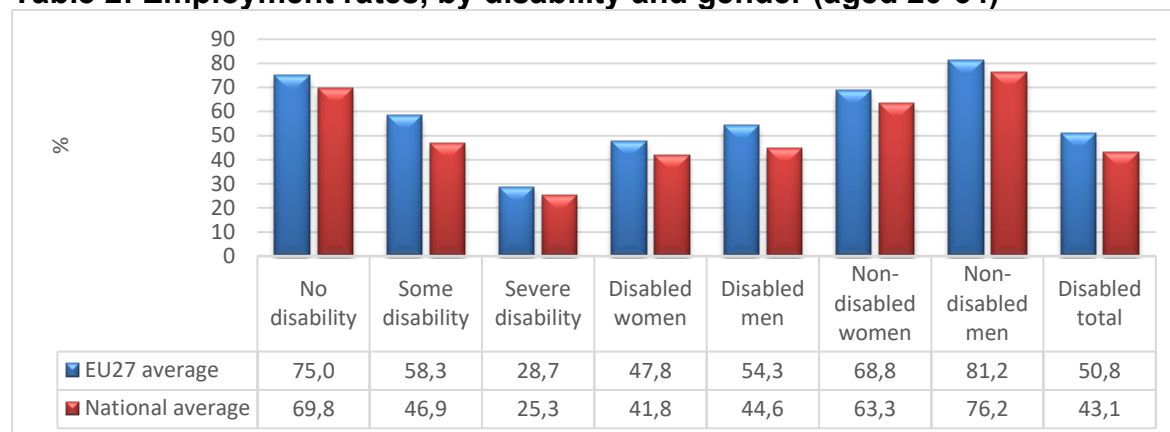
<sup>120</sup> Eurostat (2019) *Disability Statistics* [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics).

<sup>121</sup> The SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM) [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum\\_European\\_Health\\_Module\\_\(MEHM\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_(MEHM)).

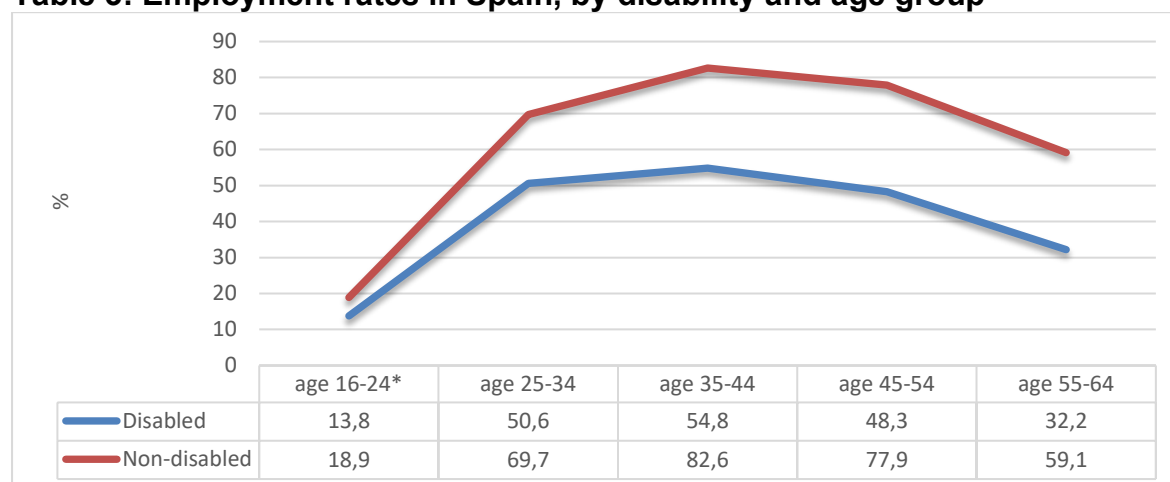
not report 'activity limitations'.<sup>122</sup> National estimates for Spain are compared with EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.<sup>123</sup>

## 7.1 EU data relevant to disability and the labour market

**Table 2: Employment rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)**



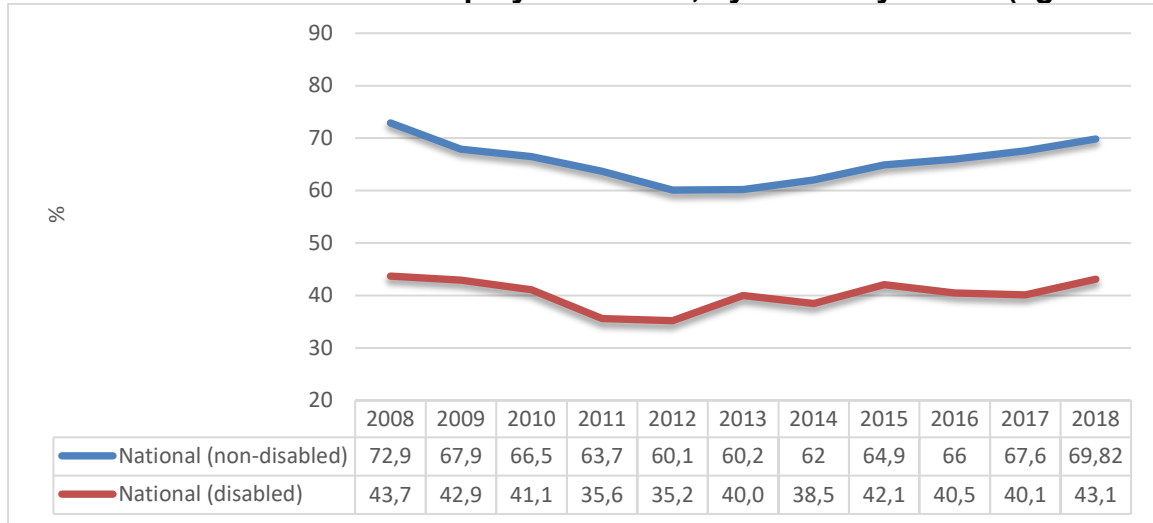
**Table 3: Employment rates in Spain, by disability and age group**



<sup>122</sup> This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

<sup>123</sup> The exit of the United Kingdom from the EU changes the EU average. Averages were also affected in 2015 by a discontinuity in the German disability data due to a definitional change.

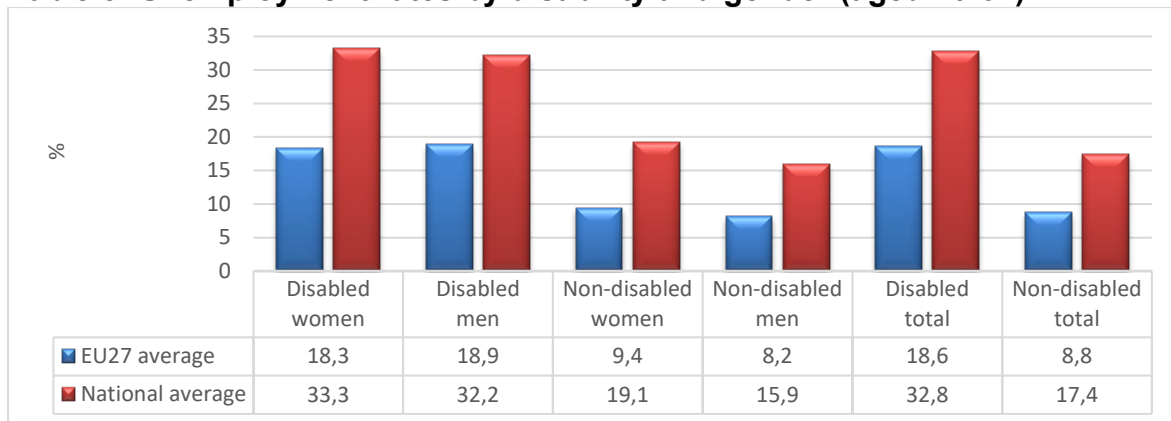
**Table 4: National trends in employment rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)**



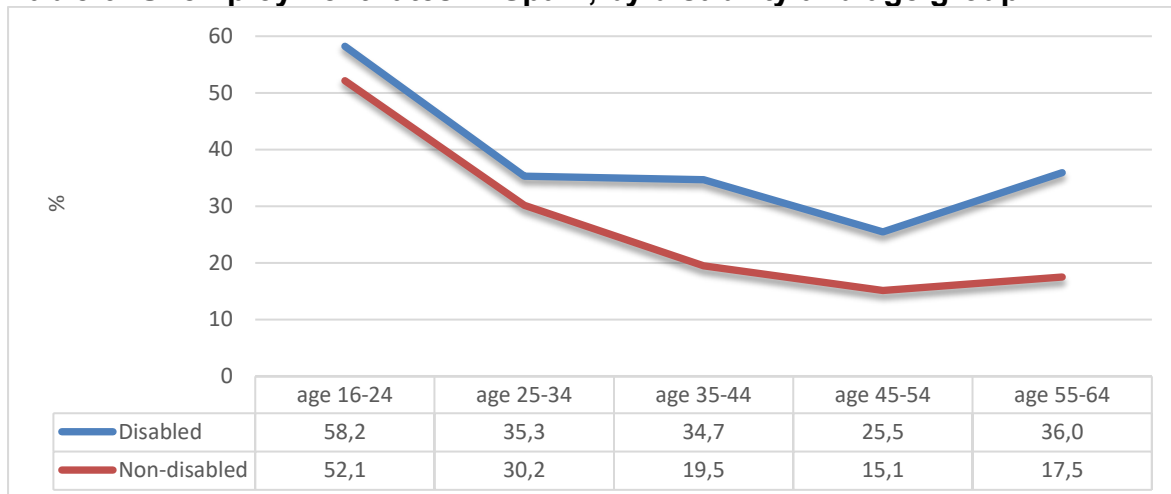
Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

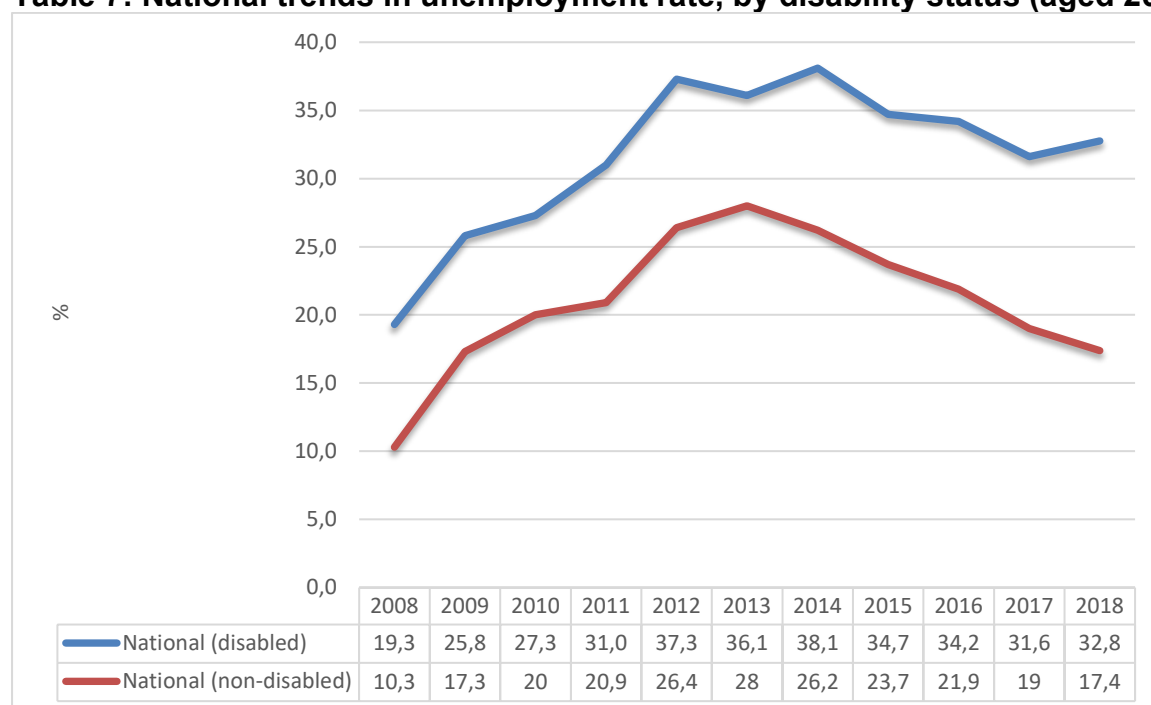
### 7.1.1 Unemployment

**Table 5: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64)**



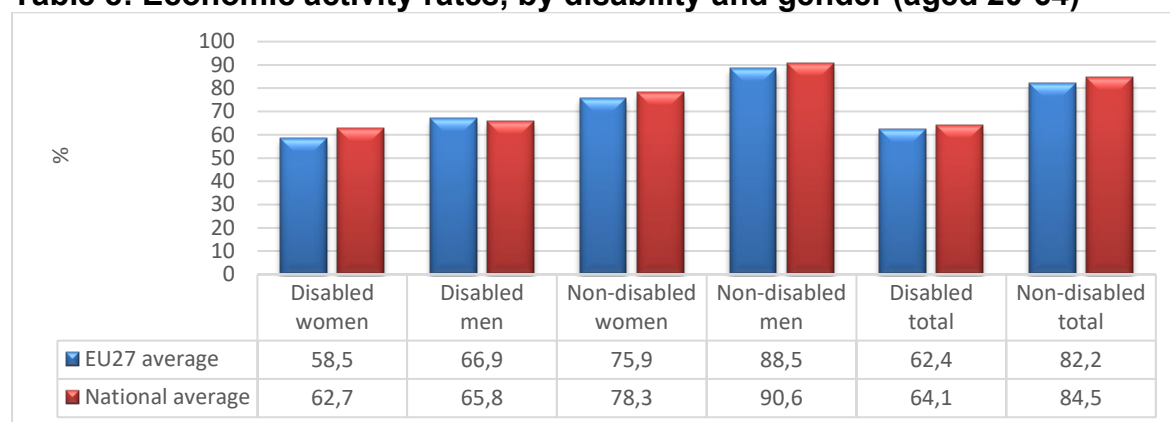
**Table 6: Unemployment rates in Spain, by disability and age group**



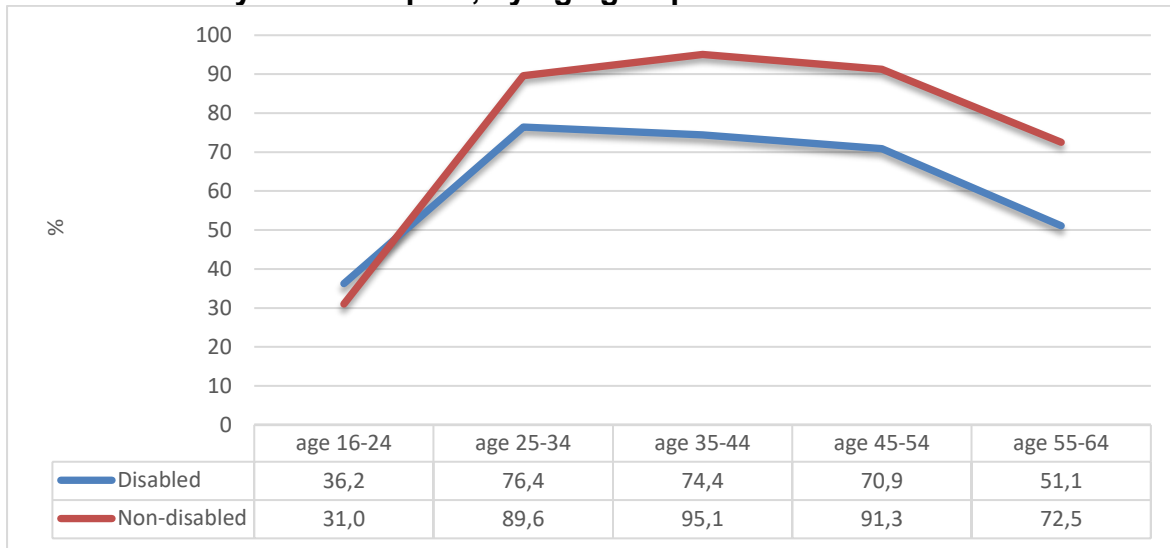
**Table 7: National trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64)**


Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

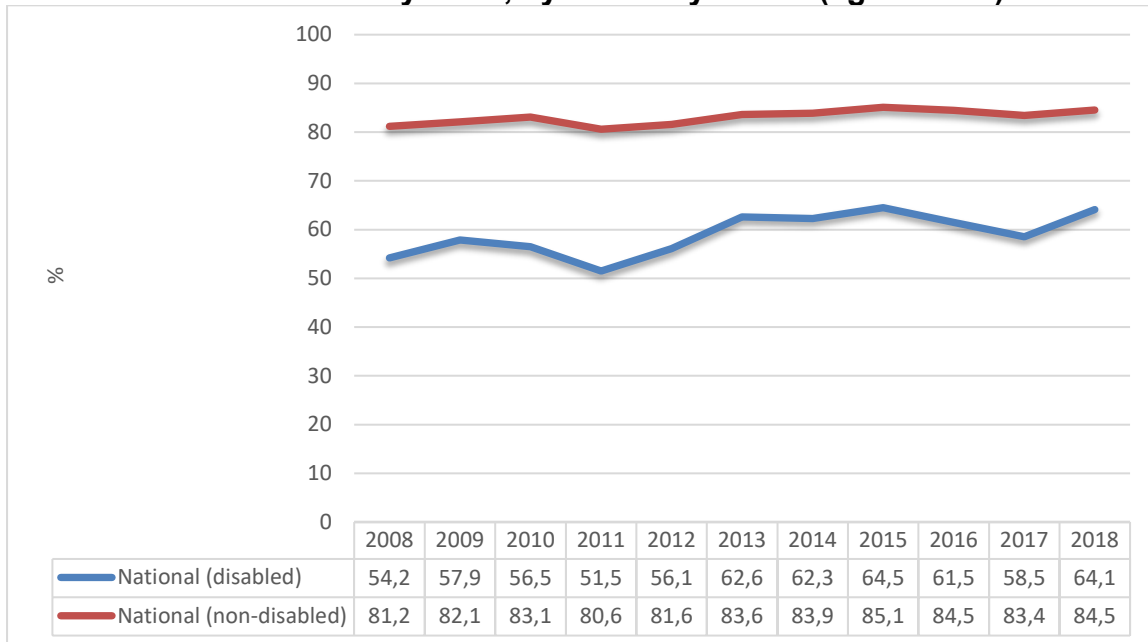
### 7.1.2 Economic activity

**Table 8: Economic activity rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)**


**Table 9: Activity rates in Spain, by age group**



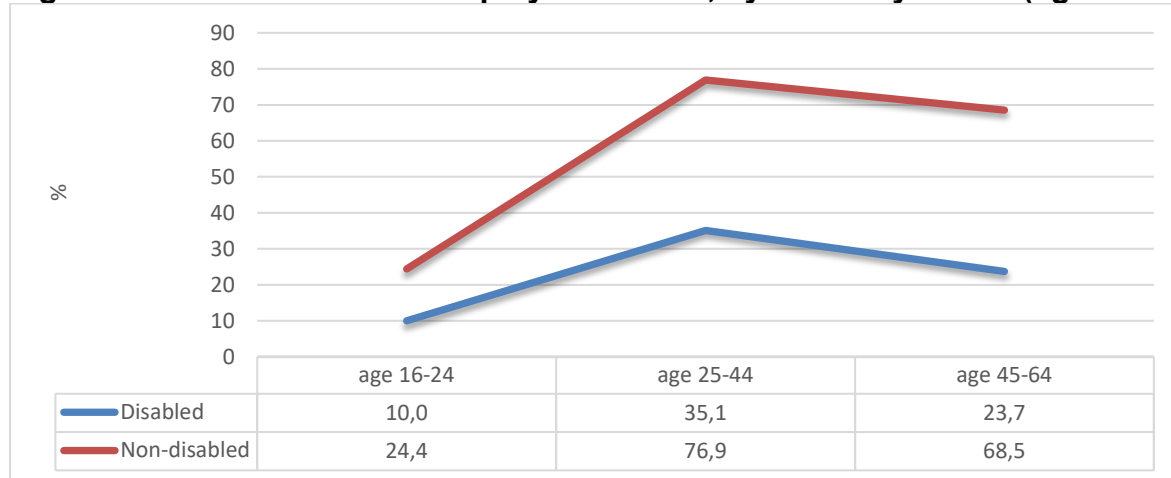
**Table 10: Trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)**



Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

### 7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Spain

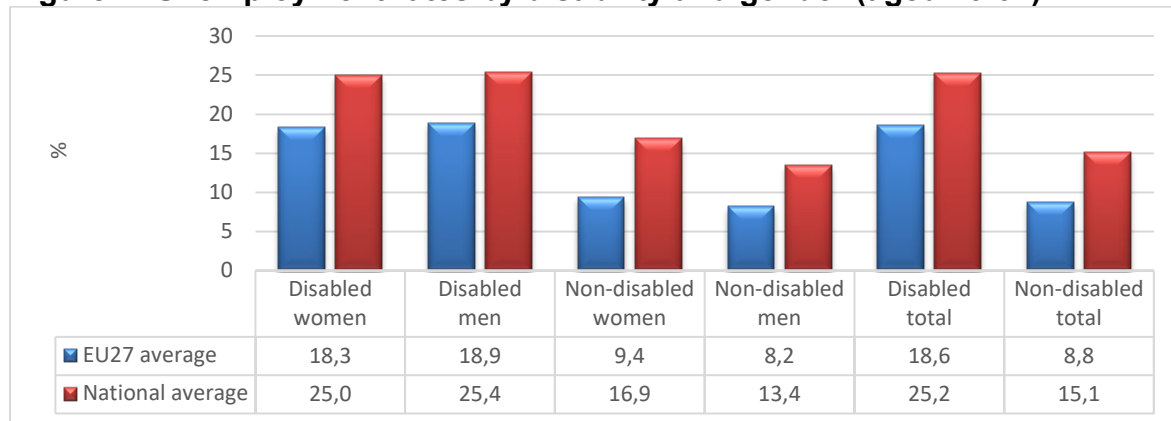
**Figure 1: National trends in employment rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)**



Source: INE (31-12-2018)

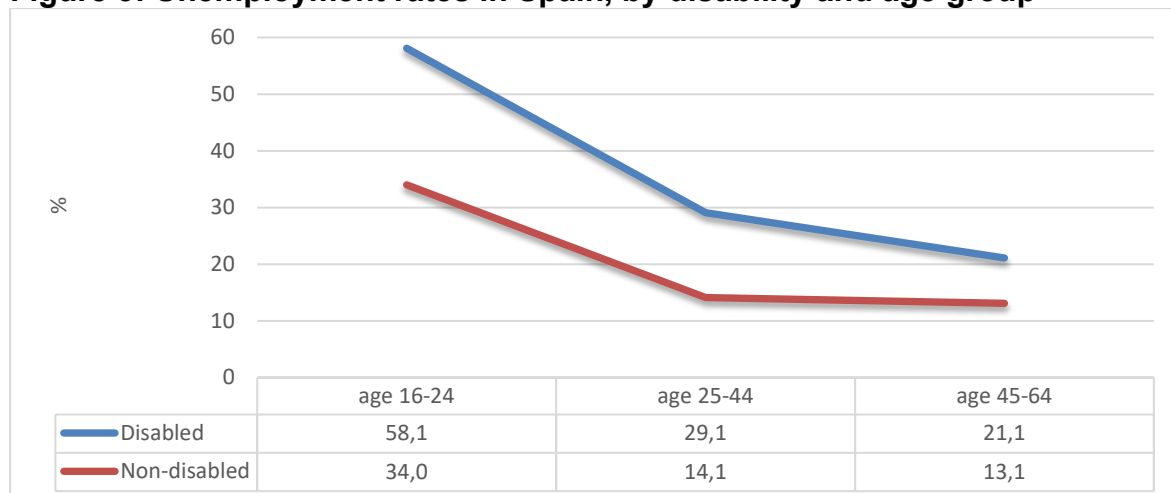
Note: data for registered disabled persons only

**Figure 2: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64)**

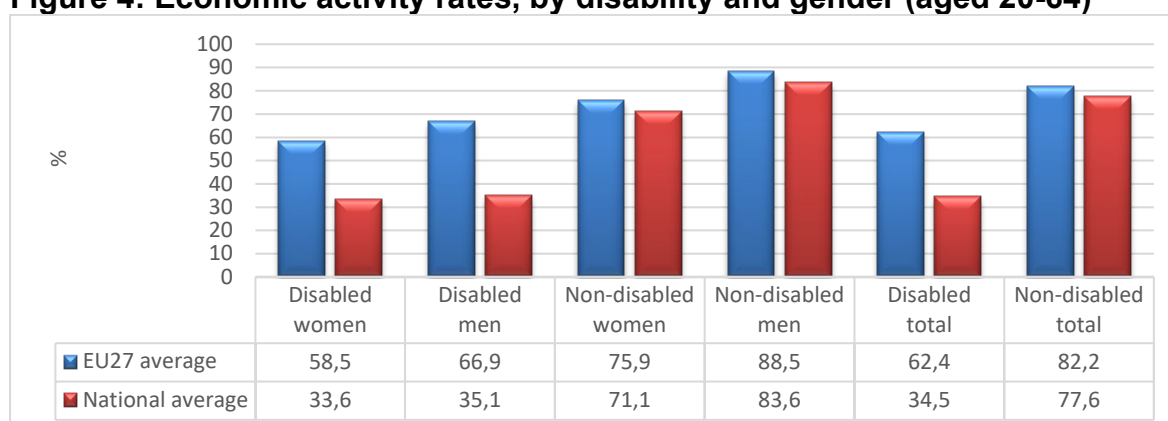


Source: INE (31-12-2018)

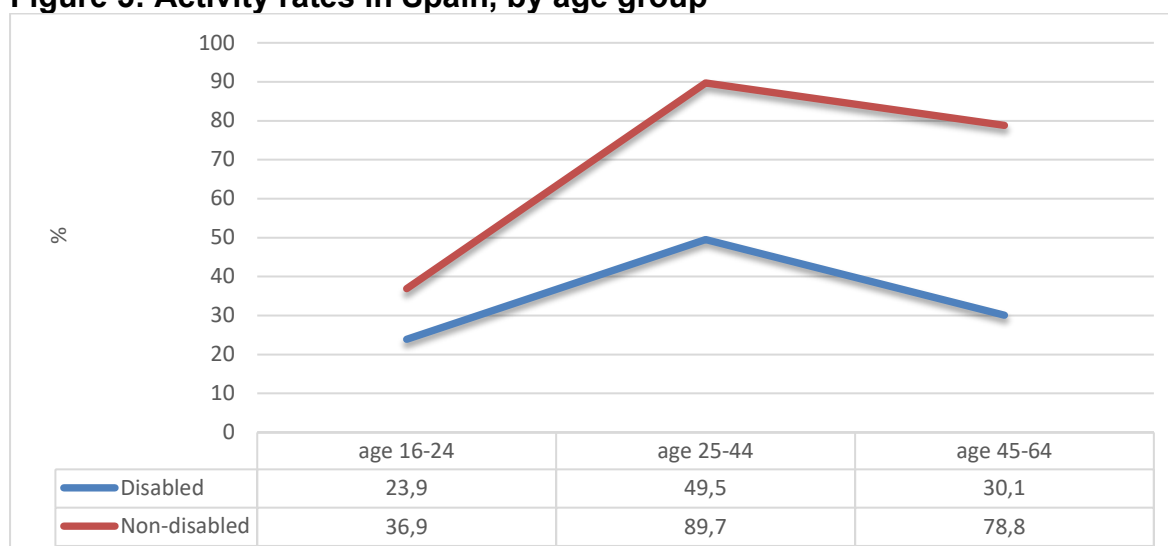
**Figure 3: Unemployment rates in Spain, by disability and age group**



Source: INE (31-12-2018)

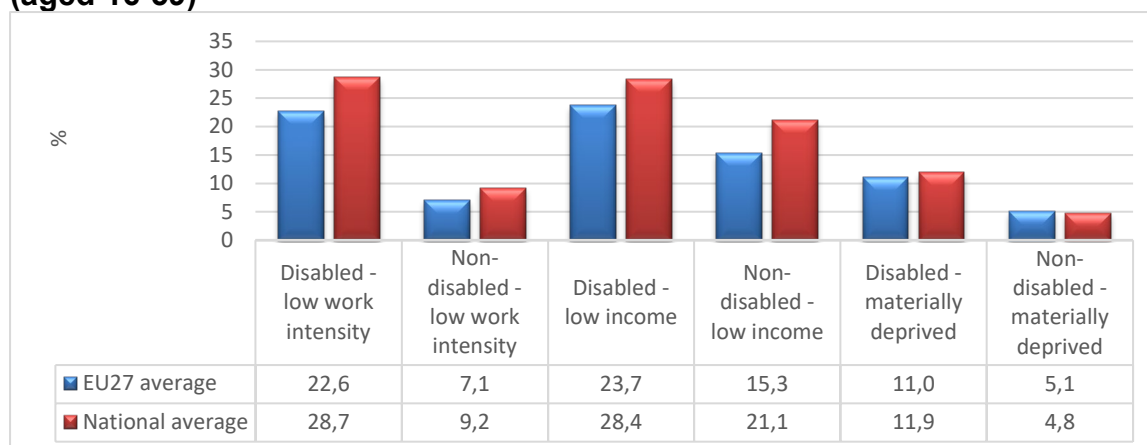
**Figure 4: Economic activity rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)**


Source: INE (31-12-2018)

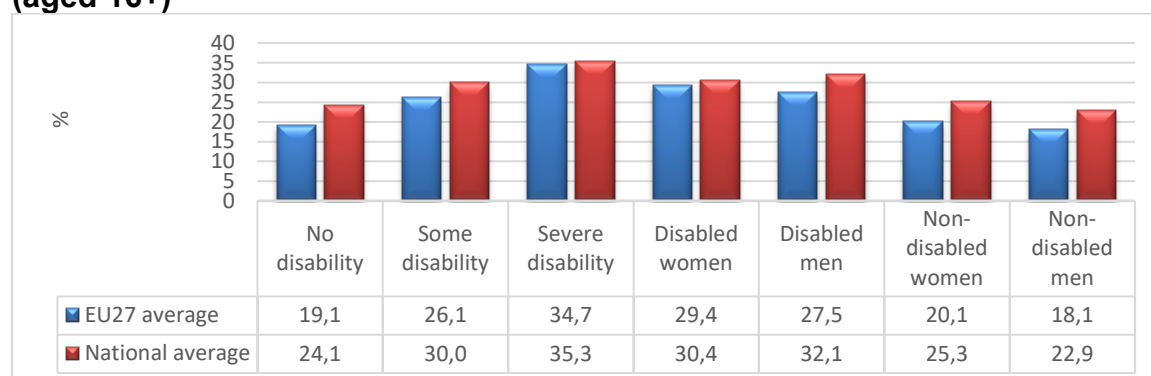
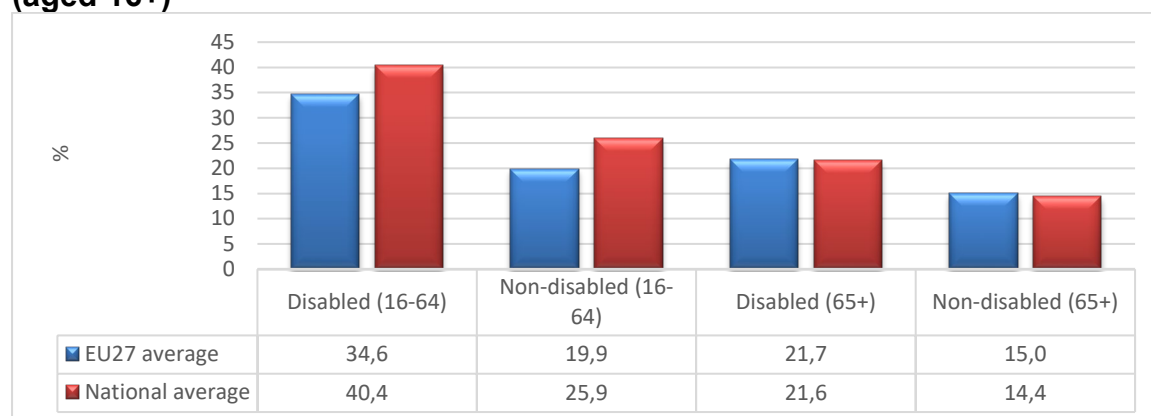
**Figure 5: Activity rates in Spain, by age group**


Source: INE (31-12-2018)

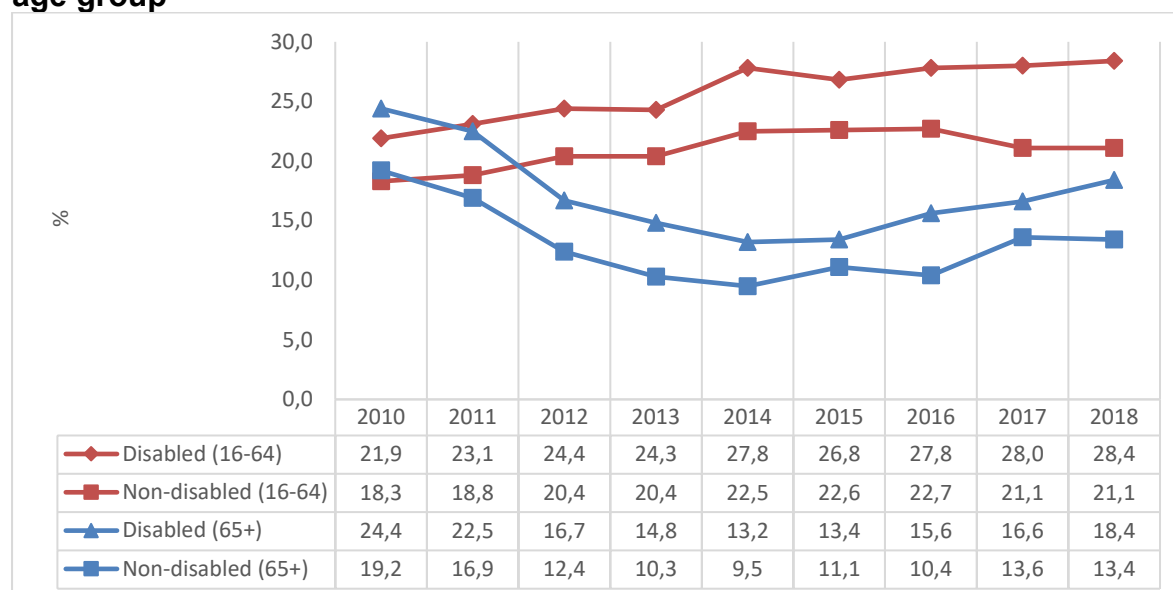
## 7.2 EU data relevant to disability, social policies and healthcare (2018)

**Table 11: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and risk (aged 16-59)**




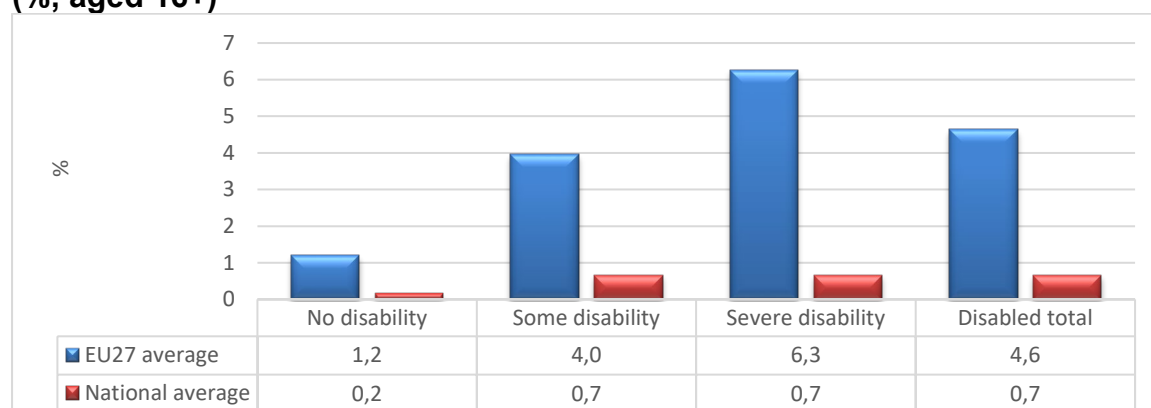
**Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)**

**Table 13: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)**


Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and previous UDB)

**Table 14: Trends in the risk of poverty after social transfers, by disability and age group**


Source: Eurostat Health Database [[hlth\\_dpe020](#)] - People at risk of poverty

Note: this table shows national trends in financial poverty risk, rather than the general AROPE indicator (which is not as comparable between age groups due to the effect of paid employment); the survey does not distinguish 'activity limitation' for children under 16.

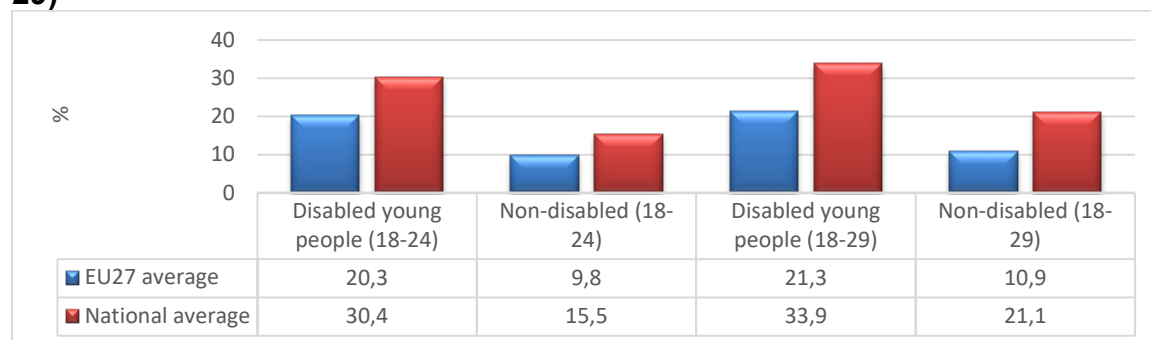
**Table 15: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination, 3-year average (% , aged 16+)**

Source: Eurostat Health Database [[hlth\\_dh030](#)] – ‘Too expensive or too far to travel or waiting list’  
 Note: due to large variations, an average of three years is indicated. EU mean averages are also skewed by high values in a minority of countries within disability groups but median averages for the total disability and no disability groups in 2018 are consistent with the 3-year mean values.

### 7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or health care data in Spain

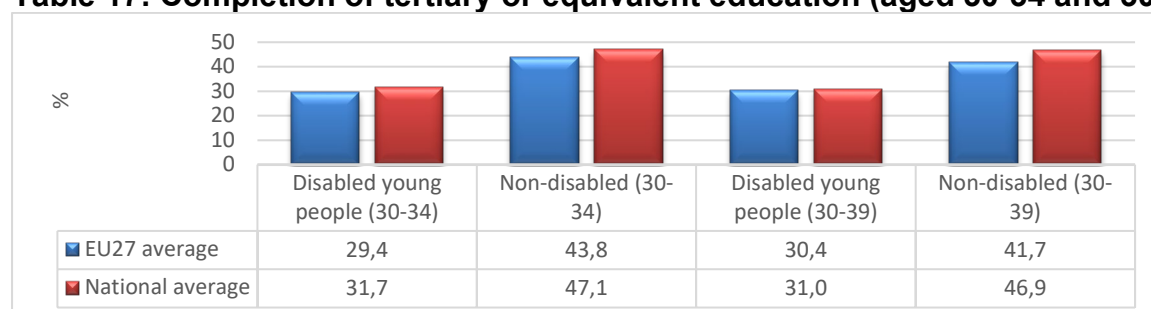
The EU-SILC data provides a comprehensive and reliable source concerning poverty or social exclusion rates. In addition to the summary tables presented so far, the Eurostat disability database also contains breakdowns concerning disability and poverty before and after social transfers, as well as in-work-poverty.<sup>124</sup>

### 7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

**Table 16: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)<sup>125</sup>**

<sup>124</sup> Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

<sup>125</sup> There was a change from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011 qualification definitions in 2014 although some Member States continued to use the older definition after this time.

**Table 17: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)**

Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

Note: Confidence intervals for the disability group are large and reliability low (due to the small sample size in the target age group). An average of several years may be needed to establish trends or to compare breakdowns by gender.

### 7.3.1 Alternative sources of education data in Spain

Disability data is not included in the core European Labour Force Survey, but education and training indicators were disaggregated from ad hoc modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.<sup>126</sup> Similar caution is needed with this data.

Some administrative data is also provided in the European Agency's Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE), concerning the population of enrolled students identified with special educational needs in Spain.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

<sup>127</sup> European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, *Statistics on Inclusive Education*, <https://www.european-agency.org/data/data-tables-background-information>.

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