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European Semester 2020-2021 synthesis report on disability equality

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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.

This synthesis report has been prepared as input for the European Semester in 2021.¹

¹ For an introduction to the Semester process, see <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/how-european-semester-works/>, and as regards the [European Semester 2021 – an exceptional cycle | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline/european-semester-2021-exceptional-cycle_en); https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline/european-semester-2021-exceptional-cycle_en.

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1 Contextual analysis of the Semester package

The revised focus for the Semester in 2021 stems both from a new strategic framework and from the exceptional circumstances arising from the COVID-19 crisis. The European Semester was temporarily adapted to coordinate it with the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) (the Facility). Commission assessments of the substance of the Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRP) replaced the European Semester country reports in 2021. There was no structural country-specific recommendations in 2021 for those Member States that will have submitted recovery and resilience plans.²

The European Semester was established in 2010 as the EU's strategic economic policy co-ordination mechanism. It addresses the public finances of the Member States and includes a strong focus on employment policies as well as a social dimension. During this time, the process has been adapted and streamlined in response to strategic priorities. Following conclusion of the Lisbon Strategy, the primary driver was the 'Europe 2020' strategy and a focus on long-term recovery from the financial crisis of 2008. Current policy proceeds in context of the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024,³ and implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The European Pillar of Social Rights has been embedded in the European Semester since 2017. Stakeholders, social partners and civil society adopted the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and committed to 2030 social targets in Porto in May 2021.⁴ The Action Plan was also welcomed in the Porto Social Summit by the EU Heads of State and Government. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan set three new measurable social targets for 2030. The revised Social Scoreboard includes notably an indicator of the employment gap of people with disabilities.⁵ In the June 2021 EPSCO Council, the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs, committed to the implementation of the Pillar Action Plan, and to set national targets that will contribute to the common targets.

In March 2021, the Commission adopted a new Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.⁶ This Strategy aims to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in the coming decade, in the EU and beyond. The objectives of this Strategy can only be reached through coordinated action at both national and EU level, with a strong commitment from Member States and regional and local authorities to deliver on the actions proposed by the Commission.

There have been marked improvements in the extent to which Member States and the EU have mainstreamed disability equality in the Semester process over the past

² European Commission, [European Semester 2021 – an exceptional cycle | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

³ European Council, *A New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39914/a-new-strategic-agenda-2019-2024.pdf>.

⁴ European Commission, *The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan*, <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/>.

⁵ Eurostat, *Social Scoreboard of Indicators*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/social-scoreboard-indicators>.

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on 'Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030', COM/2021/101 final.

decade.⁷ Annual reporting by the [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) helped the Commission to raise the profile of disability data in its Country Reports. ANED support to the practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) process also increased Member States' attention to disability policies.⁸

This synthesis report sets the scene for the 2021-22 policy cycle, drawing on the reviews carried out in the previous year, recent updates to Member States' disability action plans, newly available data and the document packages published during the Autumn and Spring of the Semester cycle. It examines past trends and identifies future challenges as a basis for the development of new EDE country fiches and Commission input to the 2022 Semester.

1.1 An introduction to the 2021 Semester

The 2021 Semester presented the first full policy cycle after the conclusion of the Europe 2020 Strategy period, covering the first year under the auspices of the new Commission. The 2021 Semester cycle was also adapted in response to the exceptional circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This raises some similar policy concerns to the cycles following the post-2008 economic crisis (e.g. in areas of employment and social protection) and some new dimensions of concern (e.g. in relation to health). In the 2021 Semester cycle, the Commission continued to monitor and assess the risk of macroeconomic imbalances, with a focus on emerging risks caused by the coronavirus crisis. Country-specific recommendations focused only on the budgetary situation. The issues of equality, including disability equality and gender equality might therefore have a lower priority in the analysis, which raises a policy risk because the crisis impacts disproportionately on already marginalised groups who may be further disadvantaged by lack of policy attention or social investment.⁹ It is a positive sign then that Member States were encouraged to pay special attention to equality concerns and to mainstream accessibility funding in their Recovery and Resilience Plans (as detailed later).

This Semester is important also because 2020 was marked by an unprecedented response to help repair the economic and social damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to aid the transition towards a modern and more sustainable Europe. The MFF was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU in December 2020. The EU's 2021-2027 long-term budget, together with the NextGenerationEU recovery instrument, amounts to EUR 2.018 trillion in current prices (EUR 1.8 trillion in 2018 prices).¹⁰ The package consists of the long-term budget, the 2021-2027 MFF, made up of EUR 1.211 trillion in current prices (EUR 1.074 trillion in 2018 prices), combined with the temporary recovery instrument,

⁷ Priestley, M. (2012) 'Disability policies and the Open Methods of Co-ordination', in Quinn, G. and Waddington, L. (eds) *European Yearbook of Disability Law*, Volume 3, pp. 7-34.

⁸ Priestley, M. (2020) *Mainstreaming disability equality in the European Semester 2019-20: policy issues and questions*, ANED, Utrecht/Leeds. <https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/1041-task-eu2020-year-4-synthesis-report>.

⁹ Shakespeare, T., Ndagire, F., & Seketi, Q. E. (2021). Triple jeopardy: disabled people and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Lancet (London, England)*, 397(10282), 1331–1333. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00625-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00625-5).

¹⁰ European Union, *NextGenerationEU: Make it Real*, https://europa.eu/next-generation-eu/index_en.

NextGenerationEU, of EUR 806.9 billion (EUR 750 billion in 2018 prices). By far, the largest pillar of both combined sources of expenditure supports ‘Cohesion, Resilience and Values’, which aims to strengthen the cohesion among EU Member States. This heading notably includes the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) that will support youth employment, up- and re-skilling of workers, and poverty reduction, as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility and REACT-EU, the two main programmes under NextGenerationEU.¹¹ Decisions made during this Semester cycle may have a determinant effect on once-in-a-generation investments. It is therefore vital that disability equality maintains a high profile in the concrete outcomes arising from these exceptional decision processes.

Previous analyses of disability mainstreaming in the European Semester (such as those conducted by ANED or civil society organisations) centred on Member States’ National Reform Programmes, the Commission’s Country Reports, and Country Specific Recommendations agreed by Council. In 2021, the opportunity for this type of analysis is more limited. There were no new Country Specific Recommendations in 2021 for most Member States, other than on the budgetary situation. The 2021 Joint Employment Report was adopted in March 2021.¹² The conclusion of the latter in Autumn 2021 presents an important policy opportunity to highlight disability equality and mainstreaming.

The Autumn Package (November 2020) focused on the budgetary and monetary policy dimensions of the Alert mechanism report and Euro area recommendation, with special attention to the surveillance of selected Member States. There was no mention of disability in this package, nor of gender or other dimensions of equality and diversity.¹³ Draft budgetary plans for the Euro area countries were also published in November 2020.¹⁴ Taking account of the ongoing health crisis and economic downturn the expectation in this cycle is that Member States will continue to provide temporary support packages while also laying the basis for economic sustainability in recovery. In this context, the opportunity for analysis of disability issues in the documentation is more limited and the opportunities for disability mainstreaming are more challenging, but no less important.

¹¹ European Commission (2021) *Headings: expenditure categories*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget/2021-2027/spending/headings_en.

¹² [Joint Employment Report 2021 adopted \(2\).pdf](#).

¹³ European Commission (2020) *Autumn Package*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline/autumn-package_en.

¹⁴ European Commission (2020) *Draft budgetary plans 2021*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/stability-and-growth-pact/annual-draft-budgetary-plans-dbps-euro-area-countries/draft-budgetary-plans-2021_en.

1.2 Annual Growth Strategy

The Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2021 (ASGS) was published in September 2020.¹⁵ This frames the context for strategic development in relation to Environmental sustainability (Green transition), Productivity (notably Digital transition), Fairness and Macroeconomic stability. It foregrounds the social and economic impacts of the pandemic and the EU response, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility for loans and grants. The rapid deployment of such a large financial investment poses both opportunities and risks for disabled people. It must be well targeted to stimulate recovery, yet it must be fair and inclusive in its impact. Investments on this scale that fail address disability equality, including accessibility, risk compounding the exclusion of disabled people at a structural level for years to come.

The ASGS mentioned briefly the situation and needs of disabled people in its general expectations arising from the Social Pillar, alongside those of other disadvantaged groups, as follows:

In light of the European Pillar of Social Rights, Member States should adopt measures to ensure equal opportunities, inclusive education, fair working conditions and adequate social protection. Together with demographic change, the green and digital transition require rethinking today's social protection systems and labour markets. In addition to the youth, the crisis has disproportionately affected women, and the disadvantaged groups such as, low skilled people and people with disabilities and people with a minority racial or ethnic background. This will require substantial efforts to facilitate their access to the job market, for instance by addressing the labour market segmentation in many Member States, strengthening active labour market policies, but also by increasing the inclusiveness of the education systems. In this regard, equal access to high-quality education and training for disadvantaged groups is particularly important, to compensate for the fact that socio-economic background is currently the most important determinant of children and young people's educational outcome. (p. 8)

In addition, the ASGS (p. 11) reiterated that, in relation to investments in reskilling and upskilling:

Member States should pay special attention to disadvantaged groups, women and in particular young people entering the labour market, by creating quality employment opportunities, and supporting adequate offer of apprenticeships and strengthening vocational education and training (VET).

These general observations add to the rationale for EDE's Semester reporting from a disability equality perspective, which focuses mainly on measures by the Member States in the labour market, social policies, and education and training. The above extracts from the ASGS offer some useful pointers in this regard, acknowledging both the disproportionate risk for disabled people and the potential for policy intervention, for example in relation to:

¹⁵ European Commission (2020) *Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2021*, COM(2020) 575 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?qid=1600708827568&uri=CELEX:52020DC0575>.

- access to the job market;
- labour market segmentation;
- active labour market policies;
- inclusiveness of education systems;
- quality of education and training;
- educational outcomes;
- socio-economic background;
- social protection measures.

Across these areas the EDE country fiches, evidence how disabled people are disproportionately disadvantaged in the Member States and where they might be further supported towards more equal opportunity and participation. The Semester also presents possibilities to address social policies beyond income protection (notably in relation to long-term care and health care) and accessibility. From a disability perspective, additional consideration should be given to:

- deinstitutionalisation;
- support for independent community living;
- equal access to health care;
- accessibility in structural investments.

1.3 Employment Guidelines and Report

The Commission's proposal for a Council Decision on Employment Guidelines emphasised the importance of tackling discrimination and acknowledges the employment potential of people with disabilities explicitly.¹⁶

(10) Discrimination in all its forms should be tackled, gender equality ensured and youth employment supported. Access and opportunities for all should be ensured and poverty and social exclusion, including that of children, should be reduced, in particular by ensuring an effective functioning of labour markets and adequate and inclusive social protection systems, and by removing barriers to education, training and labour-market participation, including through investments in early childhood education and care and in digital skills. Timely and equal access to affordable long-term care and healthcare services, including prevention and healthcare promotion, are particularly relevant, in light of the COVID-19 crisis and in a context of ageing societies. The potential of people with disabilities to contribute to economic growth and social development should be further realised. As new economic and business models take hold in Union workplaces, employment relationships are also changing. Member States should ensure that employment relationships stemming from new forms of work maintain and strengthen Europe's social model.

¹⁶ *Proposal for a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States*, COM(2021) 282 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52021PC0282>.

In its practical effect, the proposal carries forward the previous guidelines on employment policies and these are of high relevance from a disability perspective (see Annex to Council Decision (EU) 2020/1512).¹⁷

Member States should support an adapted work environment for people with disabilities, including through targeted financial support and services that enable them to participate in the labour market and in society.

And...

Member States should promote inclusive labour markets, open to all, by putting in place effective measures to fight all forms of discrimination and promote equal opportunities for all, and in particular for groups that are under-represented in the labour market, with due attention to the regional and territorial dimension. They should ensure equal treatment regarding employment, social protection, health and long-term care, education and access to goods and services, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

And...

For those in need or in a vulnerable situation, Member States should ensure access to adequate social housing or housing assistance and address energy poverty. The specific needs of people with disabilities, including accessibility, should be taken into account in relation to those services.

Guideline 8 maintains the established principle of ‘Promoting equal opportunities for all, fostering social inclusion and fighting poverty’ and refers to disability, among other grounds, in ensuring ‘equal treatment regarding employment, social protection, health and long-term care, education and access to goods and services’.

It reiterates the need to continually balance the ‘market’ with the ‘social’ and underlined the headline targets established earlier in 2021 by the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan¹⁸ and the policy guidance emerging from the Porto Social Summit in May 2021.¹⁹ It is relevant that the joint declaration arising from the summit also refers directly to disability in committing all parties to:

Develop public policies that, at the appropriate level, strengthen social cohesion, fight against all forms of discrimination, including in the world of work, and promote equal opportunities for all, particularly addressing children at risk of poverty, the elderly, people with disabilities, people with a migration background, disadvantaged and minority groups and the homeless;²⁰

¹⁷ Council Decision (EU) 2020/1512 of 13 October 2020 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States *OJL 344 19.10.2020*, p. 22–28, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2020/1512/oj>.

¹⁸ European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23696>.

¹⁹ Porto Social Summit, 7 May 2021, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2021/05/07/social-summit/>.

²⁰ *Porto Social Commitment*, 7 May 2021, <https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/porto-social-summit/porto-social-commitment>.

The summit covered the same three areas of thematic focus relevant to our social reporting on the Semester - work and employment, welfare state and social protection, skills and innovation (i.e. the labour market, social policies and health care, education and skills).

The Action Plan, to which stakeholders committed in Porto in May, builds on the Social Pillar principle of inclusion of people with disabilities as well as the cross-cutting concepts of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all.

It draws lessons from evaluation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to highlight that progress has been somewhat limited in 'in areas such as health, employment, education and skills' (p. 26) to be addressed within the new disability strategy and EU implementation of the CRPD.

In summary, the updated headline targets for the EU level are:

- an employment rate of at least 78 % in the European Union
- at least 60 % of adults attending training courses every year
- reducing the number of people at risk of social exclusion or poverty by at least 15 million people, including 5 million children

It is significant that the Revised Social Scoreboard annexed to the Action Plan also contains a specific measurable indicator for the disability employment gap, as well as provision for breakdown of other indicators by disability status where relevant for complementary analysis. This is a significant development in the long development of disability equality indicators by the Commission, ANED and Eurostat over the past decade.²¹

The new Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 (discussed later, in chapter 2) draws lessons from evaluation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to highlight that progress has been somewhat limited in 'in areas such as health, employment, education and skills' (p. 26). The Disability Strategy notably identified employment as a key area of action. The Commission notably committed to present in 2022, a package to improve labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities. These developments are highly relevant to policy matters within the remit of the Semester, concerning the labour market, social policies and skills.

The EDE country fiches contain statistical annexes consistent with the methodology of the EU2020 headline indicators (up to 2019) based on the EDE statistical reports. A situational analysis is provided later in this synthesis report in relation to selected questions and challenges arising from the employment and poverty data.²²

²¹ Priestley, M., & Grammenos, S. (2021). How useful are equality indicators? The expressive function of 'stat imperfecta' in disability rights advocacy. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*. 17(2):209-226, <https://doi.org/10.1332/174426421X16141001670976>.

²² Corresponding data on adult participation in training is not yet available for analysis but some related questions and challenges, concerning early school leaving and tertiary educational completion, are addressed in previous ANED synthesis reports and in the EDE statistical report.

1.4 The Spring package

There has been increasing recognition of the situation of disabled people in the Semester document packages. By 2019, all 28 of the Commission country reports raised disability issues, twice as many as in 2012. The number of Country-Specific Recommendation fiches referring to disability also increased from three in 2012 to 18 in 2019. As a result, visibility in the EU's high-level Joint Employment Report (JEP) also rose, from just seven references to disability in 2013 to 57 in 2019 (increasing each year). This encouraging trend has continued in the past two years, with 71 references to disability in the 2020 JEP and 85 in the 2021 report. Considering the considerable preoccupations with budgetary challenges and COVID-19, outlined earlier, this maintained focus should be considered a success for disability equality mainstreaming. It also sets a precedent for achieving similar visibility in 2022.

The Commission's 2017 Progress Report on the European Disability Strategy identified the 'Mainstreaming of disability issues in the European Semester process and policy publications' as one of its main progress achievements,²³ and the final evaluation in 2020 confirmed that 'the European Semester has increasingly aligned its provisions with the aims of the Strategy'.²⁴ In Spring 2020, most of the Commission's country-level analyses and Country Specific Recommendations also referred to disability in some way. These references were incorporated into the EDE country fiches for 2020-21 to highlight relevant issues for analysis and supplemented with priorities identified by the country authors in June 2020 (as the major impact of the COVID-19 crisis was just emerging).²⁵ Due to the exceptional Semester process this was not possible in the 2021 cycle.

The Semester Spring package was delayed (June 2021) and with a different format for the amended policy cycle. Its main focus was on the fiscal dimension of economic recovery.²⁶ The overall effect is somewhat similar to the simplification and prioritisation of Semester reporting that occurred following the 2008 crisis, which introduces a risk that the social dimension is eclipsed by the economic dimension.

The disability priorities identified in the EDE country fiches in response to the Spring 2020 Semester package can be summarised as follows:

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
AT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment gap / data update • Algorithm of labour market service / Personalised labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability mainstreaming missing / social support structure changed • Access to health care during pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel system segregating / inclusive schools • New administration structure / no distinct

²³ European Commission Staff Working Documents: *Progress Report on the implementation of the European Disability Strategy (2010 -2020)*, SWD(2017) 29 final (pp. 9, 18, 71-72), <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16995&langId=en>.

²⁴ *Evaluation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020*, SWD(2020) 289 final/2, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23191&langId=en>.

²⁵ See subsequent EDE thematic country reports and synthesis on the evolving COVID-19 crisis response.

²⁶ Communication from the Commission to the Council, *One year since the outbreak of COVID-19: fiscal policy response*, COM(2021) 105 final, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/economy-finance/1_en_act_part1_v9.pdf.

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	<p>market assistance Sheltered workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of qualification against background of technological change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of deinstitutionalisation for children and adults with disabilities 	<p>responsibility for children with disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situation during pandemic
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the roll out of the new Flemish policy document on 'individualised support' for the regular labour market must be closely monitored the employment of parents of children with disabilities remains a problem vis à vis the poverty risks of families with children with disabilities the poor quality reports of special schools must be followed up in function of the clear gap young people with disabilities are experiencing with regard to employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the non-take-up of social security measures by citizens with disabilities is alarming the alarming increase of people with mental health problems in the social security statistics must be followed up (metropolitan problems, poverty risks, housing problems) the announced lowering of the age at which citizens are entitled to an income replacement allowance and integration allowance from 21 to 18 years old should be closely monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the announced policy changes (Flemish Government) regarding inclusive education require a critical analysis the low level of digital literacy of children and youngsters with disabilities requires close monitoring Access to Higher Education is still a huge problem to citizens with disabilities
BG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons with actual disabilities have little to no access to the labour market The labour environment is largely not accessible to persons with disabilities The motivation to seek for a job reduces after having at least a disability pension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion remains high Despite growing wages, in-work poverty is not abating, and social protection of workers remains a challenge The new residential services for children and adults with disabilities need to be reformed as currently they violate Article 19 of the CRPD A variety of mobile social and health services need to be developed to be provided where the person with disability lives/works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and inclusiveness of education remain major challenges, despite the ongoing reforms Participation in early childhood education and care is low, and declining Vocational education and training (VET) reforms continue, although at a slow pace and with a time lag
CY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are incentive employment schemes for persons with disabilities in place but the sustainability of the employment of persons with disabilities is not safeguarded and there is absence of relevant legislation for the public sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No coherent and specific legal framework for accessibility in all aspects and neither any monitoring mechanisms are in place There was no organized accessible information for persons with disabilities and no coherent plan and services for providing accessible information during the COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online education and accommodations in response to COVID-19 Disagreements over inclusive educational reform Digital inclusion and assistive technology implementation is not satisfactory

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of the workplace environment is not funded or provided through any incentives • There are no targeted and specific training programmes followed by employment opportunities for people with disabilities • The development of a framework for the implementation of supported employment for people with disabilities is also required • Social enterprises for employment opportunities for people with disabilities 	<p>pandemic (or other similar situations) or in general</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deinstitutionalisation efforts are not supportive to independent living as would be expected to for persons with disabilities and they are often still in a format of 'smaller scale institutionalisation' • The introduction of the European Disability Card was not well accepted by the disability activists and its implementation holds a number of difficulties. • E-health and telecare for persons with disabilities is non-existent or very limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to revise the graduate certificate of learners with disabilities • vocational and further education for young people with disabilities, as the pathway to employment and independent living • Higher Education accessibility and disability support
CZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment policy and measures prioritise employment of persons with disabilities in sheltered employment • Employment of persons with disabilities in public sector remains limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal care is generally regarded as effective. However, support for informal carers is far from satisfactory • Deinstitutionalisation is seen as EU project rather than a general approach. Large residential social care facility is the prevailing model of social services • Rehabilitation remains fragmented across the sectors. It is particularly true for social services and health care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment, financing and administration of support for learners with disabilities in mainstream school is complicated and demanding burden for schools • Better support provided prior and during transition from school to employment needs
DE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion about Sheltered Workshops and alternatives, including the Work Budget ("Budget für Arbeit") • Reasonable Accommodation and Workplace Accessibility in German Labour Law • Needs Assessment in Vocational Rehabilitation according to the Participation Law (Bundesteilhabegesetz) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform of Reduced Earning Capacity Pensions (Erwerbsminderungsrente) and Basic Income for Persons with reduced earning capacity (Grundsicherung) • Accessibility in the Health Care System • Independent Living and Institutional Living according to the BTHG and in Long-Term Care (SGB XI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New alternatives for vocational training through Training Budget "Budget für Ausbildung") • Assistance and Accessibility in Higher Education according to the Participation Law (BTHG) • Inclusive Early Education
DK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New policies and evidence but little structural progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current pandemic should give rise to consideration of how to better protect vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 2012 inclusion reforms in primary school • Consider early school leavers and

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of people on flex jobs increased to over 75 000 The current pandemic should give rise to consideration of how to protect workplaces for persons with disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> groups in the event of new pandemics There is need for better connection between the social efforts towards children with disabilities and the efforts that are offered when these children become adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> further education options
EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the consequences of the Work Ability Reform, and its correspondence to providing equal opportunities of participation in the labour market Equal access to relevant services in different regions of the country Increasing the regional labour supply Provision of social services to support the participation of people with special needs, and the burden of care on the labour market Analysis and proposals for modernising long-term care arrangements and policies for people with special need The development of welfare services for disabled children with the goal of minimising the caregiver's development restrictions related to the labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-establish the Task Force on Care project on long-term care Measures to reduce occupational accidents and improve work safety culture Deinstitutionalisation of special care services and the introduction of special care services that are based on the needs of service users as well as the reorganisation of the special care infrastructure with the aim of supporting the development of a more person-focused and community-engaging service system Comprehensive development of accessibility (including the mapping of the state of play and improvement of cooperation with local governments) and increase of awareness about universal design (including by organising a universal design competition) The development of welfare services for disabled children with the goal of minimising the caregiver's restrictions related to the labour market As of 2020, benefits to children with disabilities will increase two- to threefold depending on the level of disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the educational path and career choices of young people and reduce the number of school dropouts, especially of students with special needs
EL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total employment adversely affected by COVID-19 pandemic, expected to decline by 3.6 % in 2020, self-employed most affected Discretionary measures for employees in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific reference to social policies and healthcare in the NRP 2020 Risks related to lack of access to community-based services during COVID-19 lockdown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific reference to education in the NRP 2020 Lack of accessible and inclusive environments in schools and universities;

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	<p>response to COVID- 19: special purpose leave for workers with children & vulnerable groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of policy measures enacting legislation on reasonable accommodation and accessible environments in employment/ vocational training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deinstitutionalisation has ground to a halt 	<p>inadequate individualized support for pupils with disabilities in mainstream schools (UN Concluding Observations 2020; Disability Observatory 2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to mainstream vocational education/ apprenticeship schemes for disabled students needs to be monitored
ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Teleworking opens a path of optimism for the labour market of people with disabilities Policies to strengthen financing and guarantee the viability of third sector entities and companies are needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aid for personal care and accompaniment at home is scarce in quantity and quality Between three and four out of ten people with disabilities suffer from social exclusion in health In regional legislation, budget items with specific mention of people with disabilities are few Facilitate access to services and health in times of COVID Residential alternatives must be more inclusive, normalised and easier to protect against current or future pandemics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of people with disabilities with tertiary studies. People with intellectual disabilities have the greatest disadvantage Reform special education centres into resource centres Lacking legislative framework to promote inclusion lack of access to educational technology in the pandemic
FI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment of persons with disabilities is still a big challenge. The Ministry of Labour conducting a study on this support re-employment of those who were unemployed due to pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOTE (nation-wide administrative structure) reform includes reform of the Act on Disability Services Wide-spread inequalities in terms of implementation of disability services among municipalities continues to be problematic The impact of COVID-19, several statements made by stakeholders on deteriorated living situations of persons with disabilities The government programme included several activities on the rights of Deaf persons and Sign community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive education continues to be a problem for children with disabilities The impact of COVID-19 to children with disabilities is important to investigate, as the distance-learning was difficult for some groups

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
FR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact of supported employment measures in the light of new economic crisis • The link between teleworking and digital accessibility to employment opportunities. National strategy for 2020 may induce a deep change in the labour market dynamic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to health and welfare services as well as to technical aids • impact of the new funding mechanisms for specialist provision and disability support since 2018 have been generalised • Housing opportunities persons with disabilities have in the light of reforms undertaken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 impact on education and support opportunities • impact of initiatives taken to support transition from specialist to mainstream schools • impact of revamped individual learning account started in November 2019
HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour market participation of disabled people remains well below the EU average • New parliament and new government (from 7/2020), new employment policy • Employment public incentives (reallocation of budget costs for employment of persons with disabilities during COVID crisis) • Employment in sheltered workshops (numbers, trends, types of activities, problems) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New parliament and new government (from 7/2020), jurisdictions and priorities new ministries in disability policy • Policy measures for different groups (different measures for war veterans and other persons) • Implementation of independent living concept and improvement of services for long term care (limited opportunities for living in community) • Legal regulation of personal assistance • Transition of financing of services and assistances from financing based on projects to financing based on local, regional or state budget (or other stable financial scheme) • Lack of evaluation and monitoring of long-term residence care (especially in private institutions) • Lack of professional staff in healthcare – generally and regional differences • E-government tools for persons with disabilities (necessary conditions: digital skills, equipment, quality of internet connection) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low of labour market skills among persons with disabilities • Barriers to the inclusion in on-line education (on all levels) • Opportunities and barriers for adult students with reform and new regional centres of competence in VET • Special VET schools for persons with disabilities • Implementation of teaching assistance scheme
HU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve active labour market measures aimed at persons with disabilities to increase employment rate and decrease unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve community-based care facilities, numbers and quality • Decrease deprivation rates of children with disabilities • Improvement of the social safety net aimed at persons with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve educational outcomes at all levels for persons with disabilities • Elaborate special measures for children with disabilities in the

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve participation of persons with disabilities in public work schemes Improve participation in transition programs from public work to the primary labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening primary care services 	<p>framework of the vocational education and training reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease early school-leaving of children with disabilities
IE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and reference disability specific data Address extra cost of disability and barriers to employment Full and effective implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities Provide funding supports for education, training and transition to employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and reference disability specific data Address the poverty and social exclusion of people with disabilities Progress review, target setting and action plans for implementation of policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and reference disability specific data Access and affordability of early childhood education and care is a challenge Lack of funding for students with disabilities who are under-represented on part-time courses
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law 68/1999 and its lack of implementation Workplace accessibility and reasonable accommodation Disability and discrimination in the workplace: legal framework and case-law Post-pandemic labour market and persons with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability, dignity and minimum income: the right to “minimo vitale” The “citizenship income” (Reddito di cittadinanza): some critical points Law 134/2015 (Provisions regarding the diagnosis, treatment and qualification of people with autism spectrum disorders): non-implementation problems and lack of funding Intra-regional disparities regarding the policies on independent living rethinking protocols for emergency screening and building a disability inclusive response to COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As pointed out by the Italian Constitutional Court, support teaching is undersized As highlighted by ISTAT, access to school and the learning environment for students with disabilities is poor Lack of early childhood education and care impacts on caregivers’ (mainly for women) E-learning accessibility and digital divide
LT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low employment level of the disabled in Lithuania compared with EU average Need for personal assistants at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New type of social services Deinstitutionalisation process Accessibility of healthcare services Risk of poverty or social exclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive education remains inadequate Accessibility of educational institutions for persons with disabilities
LU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of people with disabilities in the labour market following the national plan for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the recent reform programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to the health system in times of COVID-19 Transition to a new national support system (from RMG to REVIS) Exclusion from voting rights, equality in legal matters, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal abolition of the special education system (education différenciée) in favour of a competence centred approach

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
LV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsidised employment for people with disabilities Social enterprises and employment of persons with disabilities Correct data about employed persons with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate social security and health care Discrimination of persons with disabilities from childhood who are not working Poverty risks for persons with disabilities remain high Deinstitutionalisation and regional reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special education after regional reform Access to vocational education Assessment of possibilities to be employed for persons with disabilities
MT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further disaggregation of national labour market statistics The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the employment of disabled people impact of the extension of the In-work Benefit Scheme re-development of the Ta' Qali Crafts Village - how (if at all) were the needs of disabled people taken into account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on social security payments benefits (e.g. Wage Supplement) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data on the rent subsidy introduced by the Housing Authority due to COVID-19 The impact of the increase in benefits (additional assistance for severe disability, carer's allowance, disabled child allowance and non-contributory medical assistance) Government's project of providing a new residential home for adults with disability The impact of initiatives to reduce dependence on social benefits Social impact of public health measures due to COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills gap for students with disability, especially non-academic studies Government investment threatens to undermine inclusive education The need to involve children with disabilities in decisions affecting them, including individual educational programmes
NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment gap between people with and without disabilities stays high People with disabilities are disproportionately offered short term and flexible contracts Self-employed people have difficulty in getting affordable insurance for disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with disabilities face a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion Government does not provide statistics specifically on poverty and exclusion of people with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of children with disabilities referred to special schools is increasing The number of out of schools stays at around 10 000 Preschools are not commonly accessible to children with disabilities Few young people with disabilities gain a formal diploma
PL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability gap in employment remains high Low availability of instruments, benefit traps remain unsolved Bill on supported employment and its 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Disability Strategy 2020-2030 The consequences of COVID-related restrictions on care provision Access to rehabilitation – general access and COVID-related restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No substantial change with regards to the education of children with moderate and severe disabilities in segregated settings

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	<p>consequences for non-governmental organisations that rely on employment-related projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagnation of the disability assessment reform • Ineffectiveness of labour market measures, including limited transfer from project-based to systemic changes • Lack of transition from education to the open labour market • Impact of COVID-19 measures and support in maintaining employment during the pandemic and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited community-based services; Personal Assistance program and access to independent housing • Insufficient of support for families, decrease in funding for the long-term care programme “Care services for disabled persons” • Reform of the Solidarity Fund • Insufficient social benefits issues raised by the 2018 protests are not solved • Stagnation of deinstitutionalisation process during COVID-19 • 2020 election and accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-related issues in education (e-learning, drop out, home education) • Digital exclusion during the pandemic • Rural-urban divide in education • Development of the higher education accessibility programmes • Right to Polish Sign Language bilingual education • As universities progress, vocational training lags behind
PT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in persons with disabilities registered as accessed jobs and decrease in those registered as unemployed • Risk of reversal in the COVID-19 crisis • The need to reorient the vocational training opportunities for persons with disabilities, adapting to the labour market (e.g. many disabled people are being trained for the hotel and restaurant sectors, which faces a major crisis) • Investment in the qualification of persons with disabilities in terms of digital skills, even more important due to teleworking and fundamental to maintaining jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of beneficiaries of the disability social benefit is increasing (PSI) • The Statute of the Informal Caregiver was approved in 2019 (Law 100/2019) and came into force in 2020 • Extraordinary support measures created for the social sector due to COVID-19 • Suspension of medical examinations leading to disability certification • The new national scheme for independent living (MAVI-Movimento de Apoio à Vida Independente) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the new legislation on inclusive education • Adequacy of distance learning modalities for students with disabilities • Development of digital competences must include students with disabilities
RO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination remains pervasive on the labour market • legal instruments and policies have partially failed to achieve objectives, with access to the labour market remaining limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforms to promote support but levels of poverty and social exclusion still very high • People with disabilities face significant problems in accessing general and special healthcare services • The segregation of children and adults with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rate of children and young adults segregated in special schools remains very high • Shortages in teachers and specialised professionals,

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
		in institutions continues; while some steps forwards have been made, more progress is needed	particularly in the public system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities are more prone to early school leaving and have lower participation rates in upper secondary and higher education
SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active labour market measures – situation for persons with disabilities • Unemployment risk due to COVID-19 and the economic situation in Sweden– situation for persons with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures for persons on sick leave and for young persons with activity compensation • Risks due to COVID-19 health risk in special accommodation and personal assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in education at universities and colleges, polytechnics, and folk high schools–situation for persons with disabilities
SI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The labour market is inaccessible, especially for people with long-term mental health conditions and intellectual disabilities • The awareness of the employers has not improved, and the economic crises continues due to the pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Personal Assistance Act 2019 and its implementation • The inaccessibility of the healthcare for disabled and elders during the crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to replace parallel educational system and institutionalisation of disabled children with deinstitutionalisation and mainstream education
SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures to support employment remain focused on subsidies for employers rather than individualised services for jobseekers • Public employment services lack capacities to support the most disadvantaged • The biggest challenge is a high rate of economic inactivity • Impact of COVID-19 crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of people with intellectual disabilities who are deprived from legal capacity or have limited legal capacity remains challenging • Process of defining new national priorities for social services until 2030 is relevant to deinstitutionalisation • The Ministry of Labour plans to modify the monthly amount of personal care assistance, and home care allowance, with an aim to decrease the gap between them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of children with disabilities in early childhood and pre-primary education is low • In 2020, two ESIF funded national projects were approved to support inclusive teams at mainstream schools

In the absence of National Reform Programmes from all Member States and Commission Country Reports no preliminary analysis of priorities for 2021-22 could be identified at the time of writing (in May 2021).

1.5 Equal opportunities guidance for the Recovery and Resilience Plans

In 2021, under agreement on the Recovery and Resilience Facility regulation (RFF), Member States were invited to prepare 'national reform programmes and recovery and resilience plans in a single integrated document'.²⁷ The Commission's guidance drew Member States' attention to matters of equality and fairness within these Plans.²⁸ Each Plan should explain how 'Gender equality and equal opportunities for all' are addressed by the measures proposed and include recognition of the challenges arising from the COVID-19 crisis. Disability is one of the equal opportunities grounds that should be considered in the Plans (under principle 3 of the Social Pillar). The EDE country fiches in preparation for the 2021-22 cycle will examine these Plans directly.

Disability mainstreaming was addressed explicitly as an expectation in this guidance. Member States are requested to 'explain how the reforms and investments supported by the plan will be instrumental in overcoming the equality challenges identified' - by replying to these questions (see Guidance Part 1, p. 11):

How does the plan promote equal opportunities regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, and sexual orientation? When doing so, Member States are for example invited to explain how the plan ensures the mainstreaming of those objectives across relevant policies.

How does the plan ensure respect for the rights of people with disabilities in conformity with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the rights of other disadvantaged and marginalised populations? In this regard, Member States are for example invited to explain how the plan ensures disability (and otherwise) inclusive reforms of education, labour market and health sectors, accessibility of buildings, services and websites as well as transition from institutional to community-based services.

In addition, the guidance invited Member States 'to disaggregate the data they present by gender, age, disability and racial or ethnic origin wherever possible'. The EDE country fiches, and summary tables, provide this disaggregation from a disability perspective from available EU and national sources.

The addition of explicit guidance on disability mainstreaming for the 2021 Semester is a significant step forward and it will be relevant for the Commission to consider Member States' compliance with it. The adoption of similar advice for the preparation of National Reform Programmes in future Semester cycles would be most welcome.

The RRP, where available, were published this year by the Member States on national websites and in national languages and were published later in the policy cycle than is usual for the NRPs. For these reasons, it was possible to provide a preliminary content analysis of priority concerns per country this year, but EDE national experts consider the Plans from a disability perspective in their Semester

²⁷ European Commission (2021) *Questions and answers: The Recovery and Resilience Facility*, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_481.

²⁸ *Commission staff working document - Guidance to Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans* (Part 1 and Part 2), https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/guidance-member-states-recovery-and-resilience-plans_en.

country fiches and assess the extent to which the Commission's guidance has been taken into account. These will be reviewed in the subsequent synthesis report.

1.6 Investment priorities

A great deal of work has been done in the past decade to mainstream disability equality in the allocation EU Structural Funds.²⁹ To support the implementation of the Disability Strategy and of the UNCRPD, the EU will continue to promote the use of EU funding by the Member States as provided for in the Multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 and by new funding opportunities under the Recovery plan NextGenerationEU.

The Common Provisions Regulation³⁰ for shared management funds notably requires that national frameworks to ensure implementation of the UN CRPD are in place and that arrangements are in place to ensure accessibility in funded projects. In this context, the Commission called on Member States to:

- ensure partnership with regional, local authorities, representative organisations of persons with disabilities, civil society, fundamental rights bodies and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of EU funds;
- encourage the UN CRPD focal points to support the fulfilment of the relevant enabling conditions throughout the programming period.

As mentioned earlier, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) will have important consequences for investment with potential for lasting impacts. This presents opportunities but also risks if investment priorities do not take sufficient account of a disability perspective. Where disability was already mentioned in previous CSRs, as annotated in the EDE country fiches for 2020-21, there is an opportunity to capitalise on this but where it is missing disability priorities can equally be raised on the basis of general CSR concerns. For example:

- Where CSRs called for improving 'the accessibility and resilience of the health system' in 2020, including shortages, it is vital to acknowledge the gaps in unmet needs reported by disabled people so that these can be addressed in health system investments, by targeting disability access and accessibility.
- Several CSRs focused on digital transition and sustainable transport (without reference to disability). Structural investment in these areas must prioritise accessibility to disabled people in accordance with EU funds and public procurement requirements, as well as compliance with CRPD Article 9.

²⁹ Quinn, G., & Doyle, S. (2012). Taking the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities seriously—the past and future of the EU structural funds as a tool to achieve community living. *The Equal Rights Review*, 9, 69-94; McEvoy, E. (2020). EU structural and investment funds and disability. In *Research Handbook on EU Disability Law*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

³⁰ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159–706.

In addition to concerns raised in the 2020 CSRs, the following investment priorities were among those identified by the EDE country experts in their 2020 reports, on which they will update in 2021, and on the relevance of RRP investment priorities.

MS Investment priorities	
AT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment strictly for projects that aim at the inclusion of persons with disabilities and non-discrimination • This includes measures to improve qualification for the general labour market, as well as deinstitutionalisation and the development of community-based services • An effective programme for deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities needs to be developed in Austria
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary (computer) equipment and internet access for citizens with disabilities is a top priority • If Belgium is encouraged (see Council recommendations) to invest in sustainable transport, ensuring accessibility will become a top priority • Investment in the transition from the unemployed status to employment remains a major concern
BG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active labour market policies targeted to include persons with disabilities • Improve access to distance working and promote digital skills • Ensure adequate social protection for persons with disabilities • Investment in services and support ensuring independent living
CY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprises for employment • Sustainable and effective programs of vocational education for young people and adults with disabilities • Accessibility of services (physical and digital especially moving to digital commerce and e-government) • Assistive technology service delivery system which has been a request of families and persons with disabilities during the last few years • Private sector incentives and empowerment for the employment of people with disabilities and reinforcement of job search and employment skills for people with disabilities
CZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based services • Social housing • Enhanced professional capacity of education and training personal in supporting young persons with disabilities in transition to employment and/or to other life domains • Improved competences of social workers working on municipality level to support persons with disabilities and their families • Innovative strategies to support families with children with disabilities
DE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility • Early Education • Higher Education
DK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate the development of disability aids, including digital aids. • upskilling and reskilling of workers
EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disability support benefit systems need further development • Better integration of different systems and regions to improve accessibility to services. • Increase support to people with mental health conditions and dementia
EL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal design of administrative products, environment and services, and reasonable adjustment (Law 4488/2017; Art.63 par.2) • Access to digital environment, especially digital communications, information and services, including media and network services. (Law 4488/2017; Art. 64, par. 2)
ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preference to social problems and not only to economic ones • Ensure quality of residential care for the elderly. Development of action protocols. Direct supervision of care and support. Increase participation of families in the management of the centres

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality professional training, duly accredited (by law) as tertiary education, and accessible for different types of disabilities Support the third sector in the implementation of employment initiatives for workers with disabilities; promote the employment initiatives (self-employed or employed) of workers with disabilities
FI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of persons with disabilities in decision making
FR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility of public premises and services (2019-2022 includes major projects to bring public equipment up to standard, particularly stations and schools. France is well behind its objectives set in 2005) Reform of the pricing/funding of social organisations and services
HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent living (process of deinstitutionalisation and development of long-term care services) General education of adult persons with disabilities and basic vocational training (before upskilling) Efficient implementation of ESF programmes in social care, education, labour market systems
HU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special measures to assist jobseekers with disabilities
IE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent living Education and employment supports Poverty and social exclusion
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate health and safety conditions at the workplace Improve the minimum income scheme for persons with disabilities Improve the accessibility of health facilities and services Remove the architectural barriers in schools and improve the E-learning accessibility
LT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESF support for new type of social services and group home infrastructure
LU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that education and training is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Especially in the tertiary education sector Provide independent and community-based housing for individuals with disabilities Monitor and enforce compliance with mandatory and statutory employment quotas for people with disabilities in the primary labour market
LV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health care Community-based social care and rehabilitation services Accessibility of adequate housing
MT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in telework and other flexible work arrangements should also address the needs of people with disabilities Investment in research and innovation (including enabling/new technologies) should be informed by the principles and practices of universal design so as to ensure that any developments take into account various needs of the population
NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited resources for municipalities to offer lifelong learning, vocational training and reintegration activities for people with disabilities Reintegration efforts still aim at compensating perceived lack of skills rather than making the labour market more inclusive
PL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the Personal Assistance (provision of similar services in all municipalities) and other community-based services Accessible health care information during epidemic and beyond Strategic plan for care provision (including home care and institutions) during epidemic including safety and quality measures for disabled persons as well as carers Measures tackling disability gap on the labour market, including for the transition from the education to the open labour market Investment in digital competences and devices for disabled children Development and financing of psychiatric care for youth Disability assessment reform
PT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain the investment in vocational training programmes for persons with disabilities, internships and other supports related with the creation of permanent jobs, and the new scheme for independent living

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding the new European funds to combat the crisis caused by COVID-19, it is important that in their targeting and application the needs of persons with disabilities are regarded as a strategic priority
RO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The areas of focus should include physical mobility, accessibility and the deinstitutionalisation of children and adults with disabilities Long-term investment plans are needed to reinforce the Romanian health care system, including community-based services, in both urban and non-urban areas
SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social fund programmes for investment and employment Investment in accessible infrastructure
SI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of long-term care options and deinstitutionalisation of long-stay institutions for disabled and older people
SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments and guidance concerning the removal of physical barriers in schools are needed Deinstitutionalisation of social services and the development of community-based services Accessible e-government

2 A new chapter in EU and national disability strategy

In 2021 there have been significant developments in disability strategy, which need to be recognized and reflected in the next Semester cycle – both at the EU and national level. The EU adopted its new strategy, following conclusion of the preceding ten-year initiative, and many of the Member States have refreshed their own domestic disability action plans on similar timescales. In both cases, there is an increased emphasis on alignment with the rights based global framework provided by the CRPD.

2.1 EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 was adopted by the Commission during the current Semester period, in March 2021, following a period of open consultation. It builds upon and strengthens the commitments made in the previous European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and, like its predecessor, makes specific commitments in relation to the European Semester. The new Strategy was envisioned in the action plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights, under the goal of ‘inclusion of people with disabilities’ (Pillar principle 17) and linking disability equality with the wider social agenda on promoting diversity.³¹ It calls for coordinated action at both national and EU level, with a strong commitment from Member States and regional and local authorities to deliver on the actions proposed, and also makes strong connections to implementation of the UN CRPD (under which the EU and states have parallel obligations).

The Strategy centres on three core themes of relevance to the Semester

- EU rights (including support for free movement and political participation).
- Independent living and autonomy (including support to improve social services).
- Non-discrimination and equal opportunities (including equal access to health services and employment).

Specific commitments to mainstream disability equality in the Semester are highlighted as follows:

- ‘To ensure better labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities, the Commission will continue to support Member States in the implementation of the relevant Employment Guidelines through the European Semester, in developing statistical tools as well as promoting the exchange of best practices in the context of the Social Open Method of Coordination.’ – with a Flagship initiative planned for 2022 (pp. 10-11).
- ‘Based on more comprehensive data collection, the Commission will strengthen monitoring of disabilities in the context of the European Semester.’ (p. 28)

Although the emphasis is on the Semester’s strong focus on employment and labour market dynamics, it is important to consider that many of the other Strategy priorities are also very relevant to the Semester analysis, including:

³¹ European Commission (2021) *The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan*, <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/>.

- developing independent living and reinforcing community-based services;
- developing new skills for new jobs;
- fostering access to quality and sustainable jobs;
- consolidating social protection systems;
- equal access to social protection, healthcare, education and goods and services including housing;
- inclusive and accessible education;
- sustainable and equal access to healthcare.

These are all areas in which national experts and the Commission may wish to draw attention to the disability implications of policy developments and investment priorities when reporting on the Semester process in 2021-22.

In addition, the Strategy emphasises the underpinning significance of accessibility and the role of EU funds in supporting strategic implementation, linking this to EU regulatory obligations to benefit from shared management funds and aligning the use of such funds with principles of the UN CRPD. It will be relevant in particular to analyse financing from the RRF from a disability perspective for consistency with EU disability strategy and CRPD (as shown earlier, Member States were encouraged to mainstream accessibility funding under the Recovery and Resilience Plans).

2.2 New national disability strategies and action plans

Several Member States have launched or updated national disability strategies and action plans in the past year. In most cases, these plans align closely with national implementation of UN CRPD and in some cases refer to parallel evolution of EU level disability strategy. The most recent information available for each country is summarised in Table 1 with links to source.

Table 1: Status of national disability strategies and plans in 2021

Country	National DAP	Notes
AT	National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020	An academic evaluation of the NAP ending in 2020 was planned, with a new NAP Disability 2021-2030 to be drawn up through a broad participative process.
BE	Plan d'action fédéral handicap (2021-2024)	The 2016 federal disability action plan had two components - 'handistreaming' (each ministry integrates disability in at least two policies) plus specific measures responding to UN recommendations and civil society. In March 2021 the Council of Ministers invited the Minister for People with Disabilities to develop an interfederal disability strategy (2021-2030) and Federal Disability Action Plan (2021-2024). The Plan was adopted in July 2021.
BG	National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030)	The previous National Strategy for People with Disabilities 2016-2020 was aligned with the European Strategy 2010-2020. A new strategy for 2021-2030 was adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2020.
CY	The First Cyprus Disability Strategy	The Department of Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities coordinated the First National Strategy for Disability 2018-2028. A third Disability Action Plan 2021-2023 was drafted (and reports published on the preceding period 2018-2020).

Country	National DAP	Notes
	2018-2028 and The Third Disability Action Plan 2021-23	
CZ	National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities for the Period 2021–2025	The national plan for 2021-2025 was approved by government in July 2020 and follows broadly the structure of the UN CRPD. An English version is available at https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/vvozp/dokumenty/National-Plan-for-the-Promotion-of-Equal-Opportunities-for-Persons-with-Disabilities-2021_2025.pdf .
DE	The National Action Plan 2.0 (2016-2021)	The Federal Ministry of Labour presents a new disability action plan every five years. The second NAP covers the period to 2021 and addresses national implementation of the UN CRPD specifically.
DK	Policy statement and Action Plan for Disability Policy (2013, 2014, 2016)	A disability action plan was developed in 2013 and reviewed in 2014. A Disability Policy Statement was published by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Interior in 2016. In 2019 the Department of Human Rights recommended the government to introduce a national disability action plan, following widespread demands from civil society.
EE	Welfare Development Plan 2016–2023	Disability issues (as well as gender equality) were addressed in the broader Welfare Development Plan 2016–2023, which focuses on employment, social protection and support for independent living. In April 2021, the UN CRPD Committee recommended that Estonia 'Adopt a comprehensive disability strategy and a national action plan for implementing the rights of persons with disabilities in the Convention, across all government sectors and levels, in order to address attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder participation of persons with disabilities in society'.
EL	Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	In 2019, the UN Committee recommended that Greece 'Develop a comprehensive, coherent and long-term national strategy and action plan for the implementation of the Convention, with clear timelines, benchmarks and budget allocations'. The government launched its Action Plan this at the end of 2020, following consultation.
ES	The Spanish Disability Strategy 2012-2020 (in Spanish)	In 2019, the UN Committee recommended Spain's 'adoption of the Action Plan of the Spanish Strategy on Disability 2014–2020 at the national level and other related plans developed by the different autonomous communities'. The strategy planning period is now ended.
FI	Second National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons 2020-2023	A National Action Plan on the UN CRPD was prepared for 2018–2019 by the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VANE), following consultation. This was updated for the period 2020-2023.
FR	Interministerial policy priorities 2018-2023	An inter-ministerial strategy was adopted for the period 2018-2023, developed in five working groups.

Country	National DAP	Notes
HR	National Strategy of Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025	A National Strategy of Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities was developed for the period 2017-2020. This planning period has now ended.
HU	Implementation of the National Disability Program 2022	The National Disability Program (OFP) was developed for the decade 2015-2025. The current Action Plan was adopted in 2020 for the period to 2022. The overall strategy is available at http://kozlon yok.hu/nkonline/MKPDF/hiteles/MK15047.pdf (p. 4593)
IE	National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021	A five-year national strategy was developed for the period 2017-2021, in preparation for ratification of the UN CRPD, with initial progress evaluated in 2019.
IT	The Second Action Programme	A process of biennial action programmes on disability rights was developed in 2009, with the most recent version legislated in 2017.
LT	Action Plan for the Social Integration of the Disabled for 2021-2023	A National Programme for the Social Integration of the Disabled 2013-2019 was adopted in 2012. The most recent Action Plan was approved in 2020 for the period 2021-2023.
LU	National action plan for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2019-2024	The current National action plan for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2019-2024 was published in 2020.
LV	Implementation Plan of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2018-2020)	Guidelines for implementation of the UN CRPD were developed for the period 2014-2020. The most recent action plan was for 2018-2020, with a plan for creating accessibility 2019-2021.
MT	'Freedom to Live', the 2020-2030 National Disability Strategy (consultation version)	A National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disability was published in 2014, followed by consultations on a National Disability Strategy for the period 2020-2030, which was announced in 2020 but not yet published.
NL	UN-convention Unlimited participation!	A revised UN CRPD implementation plan was developed in 2018 for the period 2018–2021 (and annexed to the initial state party report).

Country	National DAP	Notes
	Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2018-2021)	
PL	Strategy for People with Disabilities (2021-2030)	A Disability Strategy for the period 2018-2030 was developed in 2018 and most recently updated in 2021.
PT	National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities 2021-2025 (consultation version)	National disability strategies were developed from 2011. The most recent strategy for the period 2021-2025 was opened for consultation in 2020 and approved in April 2021.
RO	National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027	Following a previous strategy period 2016-2020, a new draft National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and action plan were proposed in 2021, for implementation of the UN CRPD in the period 2021-2027.
SE	National Goal and Focus on Disability Policy	A national strategy for disability policy was adopted in 2016, taking the UN CRPD as its starting point and with sectoral actions identified broadly for the period 2017-2020. An inquiry established to review the governance of disability policy reported in 2019 (proposing that it become an integral part of human rights work).
SI	Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021	A national action plan, based on UN CRPD implementation, was agreed in 2014 for the period 2014-2021.
SK	National Programme on Improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities for 2021-2030	A National Programme was developed for the period 2014-2020 and based on implementation of the UN CRPD. This was updated with a new strategic programme for 2021-2030, with an action plan for the period 2021-2024.

3 Update on Member States' participation in the UN CRPD process

The 2021 Semester guidance requires Member States to report how their plans (RRPs) conform with the UN CRPD in areas of policy relevance. It is therefore useful to look for synergies between the Semester reporting and CRPD reporting by each Member State, and for gaps and issues highlighted by the CRPD process that may be particularly relevant to the Semester reviews.

In preparation for this report, the status of each Member State in relation to the CRPD co-ordination process was checked against the UN Treaty database and verified with national experts where necessary. The extensive information collated here is then transposed into the reporting template for each country to assist the EDE national experts in monitoring the next Semester cycle.

Most EU Member States have now progressed through at least one cycle of dialogue with the UN CRPD Committee. The first to receive formal recommendations were Spain in 2011, Hungary in 2012 and Austria in 2013. Of these, Spain is the only one to complete a second cycle, in 2019. Other Member States passed through the first CRPD reporting cycle at rate of three or four per year during this period. The latest to receive formal recommendations were Greece in 2019 and Estonia in 2021. Concluding Observations on France are due in September 2021.

This leaves four Member States pending without a schedule for conclusion. Finland and the Netherlands submitted their initial state reports in 2019 (due in 2018). Ireland has not yet submitted its initial report, due in 2020 and Romania's initial report is now nine years overdue (due in 2013).

Table 2 summarises this progress, with links to recent sources of interest. Where recommendations or issues have been raised by the CRPD Committee concerning employment, social protection, health, education, or transitions to independent living these have been extracted and transposed into the EDE Semester country fiches.

Table 2: Summary of progress in the CRPD review cycle

MS	First CRPD Conclusions	Latest CRPD status
AT	2013	2018 List of Issues
BE	2014	2019 List of Issues
BG	2018	Next report due 2026
CY	2017	Next report due 2021
CZ	2015	2019 List of Issues
DE	2015	2018 List of Issues
DK	2014	2019 List of Issues
EE	2021	Not yet scheduled
EL	2019	Next report due 2026
ES	2011	2019 Concluding Observations
FI		Not yet scheduled
FR		2021 Concluding Observations
HR	2015	2020 List of Issues
HU	2012	2017 List of Issues
IE		Initial report was due 2020

MS	First CRPD Conclusions	Latest CRPD status
IT	2016	Next report due 2023
LT	2016	Next report due 2020
LU	2017	Next report due 2021
LV	2017	Next report was due 2020
MT	2018	Next report due 2026
NL		Not yet scheduled
PL	2018	Next report due 2026
PT	2016	Next report was due 2020
RO		Not yet scheduled
SE	2014	2018 List of Issues
SI	2018	List of Issues due 2022
SK	2016	2019 List of Issues

Source: data from United Nations Human Rights Treat Body Database (June 2021)

It is worth noting that a large proportion of individual complaint cases brought to the UN CRPD Committee also come from EU Member States (15 out of 24 up to 2018).³²

3.1 Information recently requested from Member States by the UN

The kinds of information requested from States by the UN CRPD Committee are often very relevant to reporting policy gaps and plans in the Semester from a disability perspective (and correspond to issues of relevance in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals). The Commission may wish to pursue similar lines of enquiry in its own analyses or when encouraging the Member States to mainstream disability in Semester reporting (reminding the Member States that there is potential to reduce administrative burden if relevant disability information has been already assembled for the CRPD process). For this reason, it is helpful to briefly review the type information requests raised in areas of employment, social policies and education in recent years.

3.1.1 Information about the labour market

The type of labour market information requested from Member States by the UN Committee is very relevant to Semester reporting, including quantitative information about the disability employment situation, programme participation and outcomes, and qualitative information about the measures taken. There have been both general and specific questions and the wording of these might provide useful prompts for Commission staff when seeking to improve reporting on disability and the labour market in the Semester reports. Table 3 shows the questions raised with Member States as reporting issues since 2017.

³² UN OHCHR, Table of pending cases before the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/Tablependingcases.pdf>.

To summarise, the following key points are relevant also to reporting expectations in the Semester.

- Include disability and labour market participation statistics as a reporting minimum.
- Seek evidence of disability employment gaps, including gender gaps.
- Focus on active support for employment in the open labour market.
- Highlight persistent market segmentation failures (such as sheltered employment).
- Report measures to remove barriers to accessibility and adjustment in the workplace.
- Make direct references to national disability action plans and CRPD.

Table 3: Examples of employment information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on Employment (Article 27 CRPD and SDG Goal 8.5)
AT	2018 List of Issues	42. Please provide information on measures taken to enhance programmes for the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market and to narrow the employment and gender pay gaps. Please provide specific information on measures taken to promote the transition of persons with disabilities from sheltered employment to the open labour market. Furthermore, please provide information on measures taken to ensure that social insurance contributions are made for such persons.
BE	2019 List of Issues	25. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Enhance programmes to increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in both the private and the public sectors; (b) Facilitate the transition of persons with disabilities from unemployment or from employment in sheltered workshops to employment in the open labour market; (c) Tackle barriers and discrimination against persons with disabilities in the recruitment process and the workplace, including instances involving a lack of reasonable accommodation;
CZ	2019 List of Issues	22. Please provide information on: (a) Employment rates among persons with disabilities, disaggregated by age, sex and impairment type, in both the open labour market and sheltered employment; (b) Measures taken to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, particularly through the prohibition of discrimination on multiple or intersectional grounds, in accordance with Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation; (c) The availability of supported employment programmes and vocational and professional rehabilitation programmes, as outlined as an objective in the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2015–2020, especially with reference to the availability of work in rural and urban areas; (d) Whether some persons with disabilities (those considered as having the third degree of disability) can still only register as “interested for work” and not as “job seeking”, and on the reasons for such a distinction.
DE	2018 List of Issues	28. Please provide information on: (a) The policies and achievements since the previous concluding observations aimed at increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities in the open labour market in the public and private sectors, including specific measures and vocational training; (b) The appointees responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the system regarding the right to work and employment; (c) The number of workers with disabilities currently recruited and employed on a permanent basis by private sector companies since the application of the Federal Participation Act in 2017; (d) The accessibility of workplaces, including statistical information and information on the legal measures and complaint mechanisms with safeguards, and effective sanctions for non-compliance with binding laws and policies, such as quotas; (e) The transition from unemployment or employment in sheltered workshops to open

MS	Source	Information requested on Employment (Article 27 CRPD and SDG Goal 8.5)
		employment for persons with disabilities, the incentives available for employers, and statistics on the percentage of workers with disabilities that make the transition to the general labour market; (f) The meaningful involvement, consultation and representation of organisations of persons with disabilities in labour-related matters.
DK	2019 List of Issues	25. Please provide: (a) Information on measures taken to significantly increase the percentage of persons with disabilities working in the open labour market in Greenland and to close the employment gap for persons with disabilities; (b) Information on measures to combat prejudices preventing persons with disabilities from accessing the labour market; (c) Statistics and data for the reporting period under review, comparable on an annual basis, on the status of persons, with or without disabilities, with regard to unemployment, underemployment and multiple employment, and on persons not currently involved in any form of education, employment or training, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, urban or rural residence and family status.
HR	2020 List of Issues	25. Please provide information on the efforts made to eliminate stigma, barriers and discrimination in the recruitment process and the steps undertaken to increase the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market in both the public and private sectors. Please also elaborate on: (a) The status of development of an action plan for the employment of persons with disabilities; (b) Results achieved through the implementation of the new Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act (2015), including data; (c) The sanctions taken for non-compliance of mandatory quotas and for the denial of reasonable accommodation.
HU	2017 List of Issues	31. Please inform the Committee about measures taken to implement effectively the disability-specific provisions of the Labour Code and the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, and to develop programmes to increase employment opportunities for women and men with disabilities in the public and private sectors and their inclusion in the open labour market.
SE	2018 List of Issues	20. Please provide information about: (a) Progress made in promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, including psychosocial disabilities, in the public and private sector, including as a result of the measures taken in the Budget Bill 2016 aimed at assisting persons with disabilities in obtaining work; (b) The rate of employment of persons with disabilities compared with that of persons without disabilities, disaggregated by occupation; (c) Targeted measures to reduce the vulnerability of persons with disabilities to unemployment, including temporary special measures and the strengthening of financial incentives for employers, such as tax incentives; (d) Measures taken to reduce the unemployment rate of and gender pay gap faced by women with disabilities; (e) Steps taken to support persons with disabilities in exercising their right to freely choose or accept employment in work environments that are open, inclusive and accessible to them, particularly the right to freely chosen work in the labour market; (f) Measures taken to review the use in the labour market of the term "persons with reduced capacities or limitations".
SK	2019 List of Issues	26. Please provide information on the measures taken to increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in the open labour market, and on the national targets for creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Please also provide information on measures taken to: (a) Ensure the transition of persons with disabilities, including those in the process of moving from institutions into the community, from unemployment or employment in sheltered workshops to employment in the open labour market; (b) Eliminate barriers and discrimination against persons with disabilities in the recruitment process and the workplace, including instances involving the denial of individualized measures.

3.1.2 Information about social policies and healthcare

Following a similar pattern, from the available cases of reporting issues raised by the UN CRPD Committee, there are a number of examples relevant to Semester reporting concerning social policies and health care. The most relevant examples are those raised under Articles 28, 25 and 19 CRPD, relating to social protection, health and independent living, respectively. As with the examples of labour market information, these may be helpful for Commission staff in suggesting lines of analysis or clarification concerning Member States' reporting in the semester process too, from a disability perspective.

To summarise, the type of information requested by the UN Committee on standard of living and social protection highlights the need also in the Semester to:

- Include disability poverty and social protection statistics as a reporting minimum.
- Seek evidence of disability poverty gaps, including gender gaps and child poverty.
- Distinguish outcomes for people with severe levels of impairment and different age groups.
- Consider both income maintenance and additional disability costs compensation.
- Highlight failures in social protection schemes (including disability assessment processes).
- Make links between national poverty reduction strategies and disability action plans.

Table 4: Examples of social protection information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on standard of living and social protection (Article 28 CRPD)
BE	2019 List of Issues	26. Please describe measures taken to: (a) Mainstream disability in poverty and homelessness reduction strategies. Please focus in particular on the situation of women, children and older persons with disabilities; (b) Ensure that social protection and support services are provided to persons with disabilities, taking into account additional costs related to disability; (c) Eliminate the current backlog of applications for social protection measures to the Directorate-General for Persons with Disabilities of the Federal Public Service for Social Security.
CZ	2019 List of Issues	23. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Revise benefit and pension legislation and policy concerning persons with disabilities and their families, in particular to bring the concept of disability and the assessment criteria used to calculate social protection entitlements, such as the disability pension, into line with the Convention; (b) Reintroduce the additional social allowance to bring the standard of living of families with children with disabilities above subsistence level.
DE	2018 List of Issues	29. Please provide information on: (a) The social protection measures for persons with disabilities, especially families of children or parents with disabilities, to eliminate the additional costs related to disability; (b) The measures to mainstream women, youth and children with disabilities from families at risk of poverty or living in poverty in national poverty-reduction strategies; (c) The effect on claims for integration assistance benefit from persons with disabilities following the adoption of the Federal Participation Act; (d) Equal and comparable social and support services for persons with disabilities regardless of age, especially for adults with disabilities over the age of 65; (e) The measures to address insufficient accessible and affordable housing, especially in densely populated urban areas.
DK	2019 List of Issues	26. Please provide information on: (a) The early retirement reform under Act No. 574 of 2014 amending the Act on Social Pensions and any impact assessments carried out on persons with disabilities under the age of 40 for accessing early

MS	Source	Information requested on standard of living and social protection (Article 28 CRPD)
		retirement pension; (b) Measures adopted to grant non-contributory pensions to persons with disabilities, including those who require more intensive support; (c) Assessments of the impact that the ceiling on entitlements provided under the social security system has had on the living conditions of persons with disabilities, including information on disproportionate impact in relation to type of impairment, gender and age; (d) Persons with disabilities who have been awarded early retirement pensions since the entry into force of the early retirement pension regime; on the household income levels of persons with disabilities, compared with those of the general population since 2014; and on persons with disabilities receiving compensation under the Danish unemployment insurance scheme, in the form of disaggregated data.
HR	2020 List of Issues	26. Please inform the Committee about the efforts made to develop a disability assessment that fully incorporates a human rights model of disability and whether the design of the disability assessment method has been undertaken in a systematic, consistent and transparent manner through the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities. 27. Please elaborate on the measures to combat poverty among persons with disabilities, in particular among persons with disabilities of Roma origin and in rural and remote areas. 28. Please provide information on: (a) The measures taken to implement the provisions of the Social Benefit Act in order to ensure its full enjoyment by persons with disabilities, irrespective of the cause of their impairment, in all counties and municipalities; (b) The provisions of the social protection schemes to ensure that all persons with disabilities are provided with support for equipment, such as hearing aids, mobility aids and assistive technologies; (c) The steps taken by the State party to increase pension, social welfare and other benefits for both civilian and veteran persons with disabilities throughout the country, including for parents of children with disabilities.
HU	2017 List of Issues	32. According to information before the Committee, the disability pension system was replaced in 2012 by a disability benefit scheme. Please provide detailed information on the disability benefit scheme. Please specify any steps taken towards bringing assessment of disability and the necessary benefits fully into line with the Convention. Please also provide information on any earmarked compensation schemes with regard to disability-related extra expenses incurred by persons with disabilities and their families.
SE	2018 List of Issues	21. Please provide information about: (a) The extent to which the “guaranty benefit” adequately covers the living costs of persons with disabilities, including for food, accommodation, transport, rehabilitation and medical care, and any existing differences among municipalities; (b) How recent reforms in the national insurance system have improved the living conditions of persons with disabilities; (c) Measures taken to reduce poverty among persons with disabilities.
SK	2019 List of Issues	27. Please inform on the measures taken to: (a) Mainstream disability inclusion in strategies to address poverty, with a particular focus on the policies addressing the situation of women, children and older persons with disabilities; (b) Develop public housing programmes that are accessible to and affordable for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others; (c) Ensure that all social protection schemes and support services are provided to persons with disabilities without discrimination related to age, gender or socioeconomic status, and ensure the coverage of disability-related extra costs and disability-related schemes after the age of 65 years; (d) Collect statistical data on poverty, disaggregated by disability, age, gender, place of residence and geographical location, and provide the Committee with the available figures.

The types of information requested by the UN CRPD Committee on health and rehabilitation include questions about policy measures and access to, and affordability of, health care systems for disabled people. These are very relevant to Semester reporting on these issues. There have been questions about staff training and about

the accessibility of health information. Nevertheless, the CRPD Committee has requested rather less information about evidence of unmet health needs than might be available in the Semester, from national or EU data sources. The available examples predate the COVID-19 crisis and the issues raised are amplified by its differential impact on disabled people.

In summary, Member States should be able to:

- Include disability health access statistics as a reporting minimum (e.g. using unmet needs).
- Evidence of the differential impact of health crises on disabled people (e.g. in institutions).
- Report measures taken to increase accessibility and preparedness in health care settings.
- Assess whether disabled people face additional health care cost barriers.
- Highlight failures in health services (e.g. involuntary treatment or institutional detention).
- Make links between national health strategies and national disability action plans.

Table 5: Examples of health care information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on health (Article 25 CRPD)
BE	2019 List of Issues	23. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Ensure that health-care facilities and services, including specialist services, are accessible and affordable to all persons with disabilities; (b) Train health professionals and support personnel on the human rights model of disability and on measures taken to end discriminatory and negative attitudes towards and the stereotyping of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.
CZ	2019 List of Issues	21. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Train and raise awareness among health-care professionals on the rights of persons with disabilities; (b) Ensure that information and communications regarding health-care services are available in accessible formats to all persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual disabilities and persons who are blind or deaf, in both urban and rural communities; (c) Provide access to full health-care and rehabilitative services, including sexual and reproductive health services, for persons with disabilities in their communities.
DE	2018 List of Issues	25. Please explain the initiatives taken to ensure affordable, full and equal access to health-care facilities and services for persons with disabilities, including within the local community, in the light of existing stipulations in the Social Code, particularly section 63b, paragraph 4, of Book XII. 26. Please clarify: (a) Whether health information and education is available in all accessible formats; (b) The measures to train health professionals and support personnel on the human rights-based approach to disability, and to avoid discriminatory and negative attitudes and stereotyping against persons with disabilities, particularly persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities; (c) The safeguards that exist to ensure that medical procedures performed on persons with disabilities are carried out with their free and informed consent, particularly on women and girls with disabilities, including effective monitoring and appeal mechanisms for infringements; (d) The terms on which persons with disabilities can be denied access to private health insurance in, for example, section 19 of the General Anti-Discrimination Act (CRPD/C/DEU/1, para. 213) and to what extent expenses related to a disability or an impairment are covered through the statutory health insurance system. Please describe any differences at the national and Land levels.
DK	2019 List of Issues	23. Please provide information on: (a) Measures to improve access to health facilities and services used by persons with disabilities, including sexual and

MS	Source	Information requested on health (Article 25 CRPD)
		reproductive health-care services and cervical cancer screening for women with disabilities, women with cerebral palsy and women with intellectual disabilities; (b) Measures to reduce the high mortality rates among persons with psychosocial disabilities, including through early detection and health checks; (c) Measures to ensure coverage of hearing aid treatment by the health-care system; (d) Measures taken to meet the transport requirements of persons with disabilities in accessing health-care facilities and to provide emergency facilities for persons with psychosocial disabilities in the Faroe Islands.
HR	2020 List of Issues	24. Please provide information on: (a) The efforts undertaken to provide for persons with disabilities to have access to health insurance and services on an equal basis with others, including public and private health services and equipment that are affordable, accessible and of good quality; (b) The measures taken for training health professionals and support personnel to raise awareness of the human rights model of disability; (c) Whether mental and psychosocial health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, are accessible for women and girls with disabilities in both urban and rural areas.
HU	2017 List of Issues	29. Please inform the Committee about the steps taken towards providing accessible, gender-sensitive, mainstream and quality public health-care services, including accessibility to public health-care facilities and the equipment used therein throughout the entire State party and on an equal basis with others. In view of the concern expressed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its previous concluding observations, namely, that women with disabilities are excluded from gynaecological and breast-screening tests and about the limited access to and inadequate quality of sexual and reproductive health services for women with disabilities (see CEDAW/C/HUN/CO/7-8, para. 32), please indicate whether any steps have been made to ensure the access by women with disabilities to quality sexual and reproductive health services, and all screening tests on an equal basis with others. 30. Please inform the Committee about any mandatory and systematic training of health-care professionals on human rights of persons with disabilities.
SE	2018 List of Issues	18. Please provide information about: (a) The availability of psychiatric services, including outpatient treatment, and of specialized psychiatric personnel throughout the territory of the State party, disaggregated by municipality; (b) Measures taken to promote access to health-care services for women and girls with disabilities, including sexual and reproductive health services, and information on HIV/AIDS, on an equal basis with others.
SK	2019 List of Issues	24. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Ensure that health-care facilities, services and equipment, including specialist services, are accessible and affordable to all persons with disabilities, in particular persons requiring high levels of support; (b) Train health professionals and support personnel on the human rights model of disability, and prevent discriminatory and negative attitudes and stereotypes against persons with disabilities, particularly with regard to persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities; (c) Ensure equal access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for women and girls with disabilities.

Progress on deinstitutionalisation and support for independent living is a third key area of CRPD reporting relevant to reporting on social inclusion policies in the Semester. In this respect, the UN CRPD Committee has provided extensive interpretation and elaboration of expectations in its General Comment.³³ Observations on deinstitutionalisation from the Commission, including strong links to structural fund regulation, have been very helpful in reinforcing these obligations arising from the CRPD. In addition, the types of information requested by the UN Committee on this

³³ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017) *General comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, CRPD/C/GC/5*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/GC/5.

theme provide some useful pointers for Commission staff in seeking clarification from Member States through their Semester or structural funds monitoring processes. For example, there is a distinct lack of robust comparative data about the numbers of disabled people supported in institutions or in the community (although some structured reporting of national administrative data on long term care does exist).³⁴

In summary, Member States should be able to:

- Describe the concrete steps taken to progress deinstitutionalisation.
- Evidence of the situation of people living in institutions as well as those living in the community.
- Account for the use of EU funds in relation to transition from institutional to community living.
- Assess the effectiveness of support for independent living, including personal assistance schemes.
- Highlight failures or bottlenecks in the process of deinstitutionalisation.
- Make links between national health strategies and national disability action plans.

Table 6: Examples of independent living information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on independent living (Article 19 CRPD)
AT	2018 List of Issues	37. Please provide information on measures taken, including the provision of adequate funding, to enable the diversity of persons with disabilities to enjoy their right to freely choose their residence on an equal basis with others and to access a full range of in-home and other community services for daily life, including personal assistance.
BE	2019 List of Issues	18. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to implement disability action plans at the federal, regional and community levels to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to independent living and to be included in the community, and to implement plans to eliminate waiting lists for access to personal assistance budgets and other services and support; (b) Steps taken to implement an effective deinstitutionalization strategy, with a clear time frame, for all persons living in institutions. Please include the number of persons with disabilities who have been deinstitutionalized so far, and provide details of their current situation; (c) Measures taken to enable all persons with disabilities to enjoy their right to freely choose their residence on an equal basis with others, and to access a full range of in-home and other community services for day-to-day living, including personal assistance; (d) The use of European Structural and Investment Funds and national funds for personal assistance and independent living. Please include precise data, in absolute and relative numbers, on the funds provided.
CZ	2019 List of Issues	16. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to achieve deinstitutionalization, including details on the time frame within which the full deinstitutionalization of all persons with disabilities (particularly children under 3 years of age, persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities and older persons with disabilities) will be achieved; (b) The use of financial resources, including European Structural and Investment Funds, and on the transition plans to enable persons with disabilities to freely choose their living arrangements in the community. Please provide an update on the completion of actions to support independent living, as set out under objectives 6.1 to 6.15 of the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2015–2020; (c) The availability and accessibility of community-based services for persons with disabilities, including housing services, an open labour market, social services and human rights-based mental health

³⁴ OECD statistics on Long-Term Care Resources and Utilisation, https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=HEALTH_LTCR.

MS	Source	Information requested on independent living (Article 19 CRPD)
		care. Please indicate whether coverage of these services is sufficient and detail measures to ensure their sustainability.
DE	2018 List of Issues	<p>18. Please provide information, at the national and Land levels, on the legal, policy and other measures — and, when appropriate, their specific time frames for implementation — that have been adopted to: (a) Ensure sufficient, sustainable and long-term funding and support, including a sufficient number of accessible and affordable housing options, for individualized independent living within the community at national, Land and municipal levels; (b) Expedite deinstitutionalization, particularly for persons with intellectual disabilities; (c) Ensure equal access to long-term care insurance benefits for persons with disabilities currently living in communal housing provided by the integration assistance services and describe the measures taken to guarantee their free choices to live independently and be included in the community; (d) Provide personal assistance services based on an assessment of the characteristics, circumstances and requirements of persons with disabilities and whether the type of impairment, or a person's income or that of his or her family can affect this assessment. Please specify any differences in such provisions at national and Land levels.</p> <p>19. Please provide information on the initiatives planned to ensure full freedom of movement and inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities, in line with the judgment of the European Court of Justice in the case C-679/16.</p> <p>20. Please provide data, at the Land and municipal levels, on the number of persons with disabilities below the age of 60 living in residential and nursing homes for the elderly, disaggregated by age, impairment and sex.</p>
DK	2019 List of Issues	<p>18. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Recognize the individual right of persons with disabilities to live independently and to be included in the community, and to ensure that they can freely make choices regarding their living arrangements, including in living areas and facilities that are currently under the control of public authorities and not open to the public; (b) Prevent the development of institutionalized living environments, including measures to end the building of and investment in large-scale closed institution-like residences (CRPD/C/DNK/CO/1, para. 43); (c) Repeal sections in the Consolidation Act on Social Services of 2015, as amended in 2017, that permit the forced relocation of persons with disabilities to assisted living facilities, thus denying them the opportunity to choose their place of residence; (d) Provide persons with disabilities with individualized support for independent living based on individual assessments at the municipal level, with disaggregated data about access to personal assistance and in-kind or in-cash forms of support, including personal budgets; (e) Adopt strategies and allocate resources to ensure accessible housing for persons with disabilities in all housing sectors in the Faroe Islands.</p>
HR	2020 List of Issues	<p>19. In reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations (CRPD/C/HRV/CO/1, para. 30), please inform the Committee about: (a) The personal assistance and community-based services available to persons with disabilities who require them; (b) The progress made with respect to the operational plan for deinstitutionalization, particularly in the case of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities in 24-hour living spaces, in psychiatric hospitals, those living in family homes for more than 20 persons and those living in adult foster families.</p> <p>20. Please provide information on whether the use of the European Union structural and investment funds is directed to deinstitutionalization and ensuring independent living in the community for persons with disabilities. Please inform the Committee about: (a) The provisions made to ensure their active participation in decision-making, including for the exercise of their choice regarding with whom, how and where to live; (b) The steps taken to amend the Social Welfare Act to prohibit a guardian from having the authority to place a person in any institution or in any other living arrangement without that person's consent; (c) The allocation of personnel, technical and financial means for support services enabling independent life and community inclusion at the national and local level.</p>

MS	Source	Information requested on independent living (Article 19 CRPD)
HU	2017 List of Issues	<p>24. Please provide updated information on the status of the deinstitutionalization process. Please inform the Committee about effective measures taken to ensure that an adequate level of funding is made available to effectively enable persons with all types of disabilities to: (a) enjoy the freedom to choose their residence on an equal basis with others; (b) have access to a full range of in-home and other community services for daily life, including personal assistance, instead of congregate care; and (c) are provided with the necessary reasonable accommodation, with a view to supporting their inclusion in their local communities.</p> <p>25. Please inform the Committee about the use of the European Union structural funds and national funds, including reallocation of those structural funds provided to residential institutions, including “small home communities”, and financial resources provided to personal assistance and other support services in local communities, including support for the de-institutionalization of boys and girls with disabilities.</p>
SE	2018 List of Issues	<p>13. Please provide information about: (a) Measures taken to ensure that personal assistance programmes provide persons with disabilities with sufficient financial assistance to allow them to live independently in the community, and the criteria to be eligible for personal assistance; (b) Measures taken to provide persons with disabilities with the opportunity to choose their place of residence, and where and with whom they want to live, on an equal basis with non-disabled persons; (c) Measures taken to ensure that decisions granting individual support are implemented promptly by the municipalities; (d) The number and percentage of persons with disabilities who have received personal assistance benefits since 2014, disaggregated by year, sex, age, type of impairment and municipality of residence.</p>
SK	2019 List of Issues	<p>19. With reference to the Committee’s previous concluding observations (paras. 56 and 58), please provide information on: (a) Progress made in the deinstitutionalization process of persons with disabilities, as evidenced by data disaggregated by age, sex and ethnicity, as well as on persons who have been deinstitutionalized and on the number of persons who have regained their legal capacity as a result of the deinstitutionalization process; (b) Individualized supports, such as personal assistance, available to persons with disabilities, including those deinstitutionalized in the last five years, who live in the community, and on the personnel and the technical and financial means allocated to such support services at the national and local levels; (c) Measures taken to prevent the reinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities, including older persons with disabilities in small congregated settings, such as group homes; (d) Measures taken to redirect budget allocations for institutions, including those allocations from the European Structural and Investment Funds, towards initiatives that provide support for inclusion in the community, and to ensure accessibility of mainstream community services at the municipal level. Please provide information about any national targets to increase accessibility of community services and on the indicators of progress.</p>

3.1.3 Information about education and training

As in the case of independent living, outlined earlier, the UN Committee has provided extensive interpretation of state obligations in its General Comment on the right to inclusive education.³⁵ Both this interpretation and the types of information requested from states by the Committee focus mainly on children in the school system and less

³⁵ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016) *General comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, CRPD/C/GC/4*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/GC/4.

on the aspects of skills and training prioritised in the Semester reporting. Nevertheless, the questions they raise can be usefully applied to all stages of learning.

To summarise, the following key points are relevant also to reporting expectations in the Semester.

- Disaggregate statistical data on educational participation by disability status as a reporting minimum.
- Highlight systemic failures in the education system (such as segregative barriers).
- Focus investment on active support measures for disabled learners in inclusive settings.
- Consider the training and preparedness of staff to include disabled learners.
- Make connections between national skills strategies and national disability action plans.

Table 7: Examples of education information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on education (Article 24 CRPD and SDG 4)
AT	2018 List of Issues	41. Please provide information on the funding available to provide reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities based on individual requirements, to provide students with disabilities with the support they require within the mainstream education system, and to continue training teachers and all other educational and non-teaching staff to accommodate quality inclusive educational settings, in line with general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education. Please indicate what measures are taken to promote and encourage the training and hiring of teachers with disabilities. Please provide information on measures taken to implement targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals.
BE	2019 List of Issues	22. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to adopt and implement a coherent and inclusive education strategy, in all communities of the State party, to transform the parallel-track education system, which includes special education, into a quality, inclusive system that provides support in the mainstream system for all children with disabilities, including children with intellectual disabilities. Please include information on the benchmarks, baselines and indicators used for the strategy, and on the resources allocated to its implementation; (b) The financial, material and human resources available to provide individualized support for students with disabilities, and on the applicable accessibility standards within the framework of inclusive education; (c) Measures taken to promote and encourage the training and hiring of teachers with disabilities.
CZ	2019 List of Issues	20. Please provide updated information on: (a) The implementation of the amended School Act (Act No. 561/2004 Coll., amended by Act No. 82/2015 Coll.) to ensure the right to inclusive education; (b) The allocation of financial, technical and human resources to ensure the right of all children with disabilities, including Roma children with disabilities, to a high-quality, inclusive education, and to provide teachers with training that fosters inclusive education, in both rural and urban settings, with Braille and sign language interpretation made available; (c) Efforts to transform segregated education into an inclusive education environment in both urban and rural areas, particularly for persons with intellectual disabilities or autism and deafblind persons. Please also provide an update on the achievement of objectives 10.1 to 10.32 of the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2015–2020.
DE	2018 List of Issues	24. Please provide information on: (a) The efforts and time frames to ensure that all professionals within and around the education system are sufficiently aware of and receive adequate training to contribute to high-quality inclusive education; (b) The identifiable resources available to ensure adequate staff, supervision and training

MS	Source	Information requested on education (Article 24 CRPD and SDG 4)
		to guarantee support for students with disabilities in mainstream schools, including higher education and sports activities; (c) The efforts to promote the employment of teachers and assistants with disabilities in mainstream schools; (d) The education establishments that have been transformed into inclusive settings since 2009 (number/percentage/types); (e) The Länder that guarantee the right of persons with disabilities to attend mainstream schools with reasonable accommodation as a legal entitlement with safeguards.
DK	2019 List of Issues	22. Please provide information on: (a) Measures taken to include all children with disabilities in the inclusive education system, including in compulsory education, and to provide the required support and accommodation, in particular for autistic children and children requiring high levels of support; (b) Steps taken to train teachers and other members of school staff and to equip them with inclusive education skills, methodological knowledge and expertise to facilitate access by pupils with disabilities to inclusive education, and on the human, technical and financial resources provided to schools, including in Greenland and the Faroe Islands; (c) Measures to tackle the low educational outcomes of persons with disabilities, including in vocational training; (d) The number and percentage of children with disabilities with access to inclusive quality education, disaggregated by age and sex, type of impairment, type of school and municipality; (e) Awareness-raising and the effective dissemination of the Committee's general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education among professionals, in close partnership with representative organizations of persons with disabilities.
HR	2020 List of Issues	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."
HU	2017 List of Issues	23. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that all students with disabilities have access to inclusive education, in both rural and urban areas, in line with the recommendation in 2012 of the Ombudsperson to ensure conditions for children and youth with disabilities to have quality education in schools throughout the State party. Please also provide information on: (a) The number of children with disabilities enrolled in inclusive mainstream schools, in special schools and in other segregated school units at all levels of education, disaggregated by sex, national or ethnic origin, impairment and urban or rural settings and trends since the last review of the State party by the Committee; (b) The human, technical and financial resources allocated to providing individualized support to students with disabilities to ensure equal access to the learning environment; (c) The steps taken to promote and ensure the training and hiring of teachers with disabilities and the training of teachers in sign language, orientation and mobility skills in mainstream schools.
SE	2018 List of Issues	28. Please explain in detail how the State party is working towards providing quality inclusive education at all levels of the education system with a view to fully replacing all forms of special education with inclusive education. In particular, please provide information about effective measures to: (a) ensure that an adequate level of funding is made available to provide reasonable accommodation to children with disabilities on the basis of the student's individual requirements, including with regards to school transportation; (b) provide students with disabilities with required support within the general education system, including with a view to ensuring that they do not leave school earlier than their peers without disability; (c) ensure the full inclusion of Roma children with disabilities into the mainstream education system; and (d) continue training teachers and all other educational staff to enable them to work in inclusive educational settings. Please inform the Committee about measures to implement targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals.
SK	2019 List of Issues	17. Please provide information about: (a) Measures taken to include all children with disabilities in their nearest mainstream education school and ensure the

MS	Source	Information requested on education (Article 24 CRPD and SDG 4)
		availability of the necessary support; (b) Steps taken to abolish the provision of the Education Act allowing schools to deny a place to pupils with disabilities when taking them would involve significant organizational or financial difficulties, and to allocate sufficient human, technical and financial support to schools; (c) The number and percentage of children with disabilities with access to education, disaggregated by age and sex, type of impairment, type of school, and municipality.

3.2 UN Recommendations to Member States

The EDE country fiches include relevant extracts from the UN CRPD Concluding Observations to each Member State, where available. These are collated here with regard to employment, social policies and education, and have been updated in preparation for the next Semester cycle with addition of new information in 2021.

3.2.1 Recommendations relevant to employment

Article 27 CRPD refers to a wide range of policy steps that need to be taken, including the prohibition of disability discrimination in ‘all matters concerning all forms of employment’, protecting ‘just and favourable conditions of work’ and ‘labour and trade union rights’, promoting equal opportunities in work and training, and ensuring ‘reasonable accommodation’ is provided in the workplace.³⁶ As yet, there has been no General Comment from the UN CRPD Committee on this Article³⁷ but almost all Member States have received some question, comment or recommendation of relevance. Employment policies should include and support disabled people within the mainstream of the labour market.

The UN Committee views the structural segmentation of people with disabilities outside the mainstream in a similar way to segregated education or institutional care. For example, in its 2015 Concluding Observations to Germany, the CRPD Committee expressed concern about ‘segregation in the labour market’ and ‘The fact that segregated, sheltered workshops fail to prepare workers for or promote transition to the open labour market’.³⁸ Similarly, in 2021, it recommended that Estonia ‘Strengthen measures to ensure work and employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, and inclusive work environments, including for persons with disabilities taking part in deinstitutionalisation processes...an ‘Adopt a strategy to abolish sheltered workshops’.³⁹

Understanding the extent to which employment policies integrate or marginalise job search and placement for disabled people is highly relevant to the Semester. Labour market segmentation has disability implications too for the Social Pillar concerns with equality, labour rights and wage setting.⁴⁰ This kind of employment segmentation is

³⁶ <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=287>.

³⁷ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/GC.aspx>.

³⁸ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fDEU%2fCO%2f1.

³⁹

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fEST%2fCO%2f1.

⁴⁰ These are addressed in the Social Pillar analysis provided by ANED in 2016-17,

<https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/870-mainstreaming-disability-rights-in-the-european-pillar-of-social-rights-a-compendium>.

not apparent from general statistical indicators, which present a unified picture of the labour market, but it should be considered among the explanatory factors for analysis at country level, where relevant.

In its 2015 Concluding Observations to the EU, the UN Committee expressed its concern at ‘the high unemployment rates for persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, in comparison with other groups of population in the European Union’. Accordingly:

The Committee recommends that the European Union take effective actions to measure the employment of persons with disabilities and to increase their employment rate in open labour market, including by providing training for Member States on reasonable accommodation and accessibility in the context of employment.⁴¹

So, there is some expectation from the UN that the EU has shared competence and responsibility not only to protect non-discrimination rights arising from Directive 2000/78/EC but also to help the Member States co-ordinate and monitor employment policies (i.e. in the development of employment statistics and through the advisory process of the European Semester). These assumptions appear to be strengthened by the direction of the new EU disability strategy in 2021 and the continued recognition of disability issues in the current Employment Guidelines and Social Pillar.

To achieve co-ordination between the European Semester process and the UN CRPD process it would be useful for the Member States and the Commission to refer to UN Conclusions when preparing National Reform Programmes and Country Reports. The following extracts from the UN Committee’s Recommendations on Article 27 highlight areas where the EU could harmonise its European Semester reviews with its supportive role to the Member States as a regional integration organisation under the UN CRPD).

⁴¹ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fEU%2fCO%2f1.

Table 8: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 27 CRPD (work and employment)

Country	Year	Recommendations (employment)
Austria	2013	47. The Committee recommends that the State party enhance programmes to employ persons with disabilities in the open labour market. The Committee further recommends that measures be put in place to narrow the employment and pay gender gap.
Belgium	2014	39. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary regulatory measures and incentives to guarantee the right of persons with disabilities to employment, in both the private sector and the public sector. It should ensure that they have effective protection against discrimination, vocational training, adequate accessibility and the necessary reasonable accommodation.
Bulgaria	2018	58. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Adopt a policy framework and a strategy to promote employment for persons with disabilities in the open labour market, including by increasing resources for it, with the aim to facilitate transition from sheltered employment to the open labour market; (b) Recognize in its legal and policy framework the right of persons with disabilities to reasonable accommodation at the workplace; (c) Raise awareness among public and private companies about reasonable accommodation at work; (d) Strengthen training programmes for persons with disabilities on skills that are required in the open labour market and skills in entrepreneurship and collect disaggregated and targeted data about the participation of women and men with disabilities in programmes and the outcome of training for them.
Cyprus	2017	54. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure access to employment in the open labour market, including by ensuring that the private sector is also covered by a quota system and by ensuring equal pay for work of equal value in all settings for all persons with disabilities being guided by target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It furthermore recommends that the State party collect data on the employment of persons with disabilities, disaggregated by gender, age and type of impairment.
Czechia	2015	52. The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure the same wage for all persons with disabilities, regardless of their disability classification. It also urges the State party to develop measures, intensify efforts and allocate sufficient resources to promoting the employment in the open labour market of persons with disabilities, especially women.
Germany	2015	50. The Committee recommends that the State party provide regulations that effectively create an inclusive labour market in accordance with the Convention by: (a) Creating employment opportunities in accessible workplaces, in line with general comment No. 2 of the Committee, in particular for women with disabilities; (b) Phasing out sheltered workshops through immediately enforceable exit strategies and timelines and incentives for public and private employment in the mainstream labour market; (c) Ensuring that persons with disabilities do not face any reduction in social protection and pension insurance currently tied to sheltered workshops; (d) Collecting data on the accessibility of workplaces in the open labour market.
Denmark	2014	59. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to significantly increase, as soon as possible, the percentage of persons with disabilities working in the open labour market, including amendments to the general labour legislation so that it imposes clear obligations on employers to afford reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.

Country	Year	Recommendations (employment)
Estonia	2021	53. The Committee recommends that the State party, in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals: (a) Strengthen measures to ensure work and employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, and inclusive work environments, including for persons with disabilities taking part in deinstitutionalization processes, those living in rural areas, persons with intellectual, persons with hearing impairments, and persons with psychosocial disabilities; (b) Adopt a strategy to abolish sheltered workshops. The State party should review labour conditions of all persons with disabilities, and ensure that persons with disabilities are not paid below the minimum wage; (c) Adopt measures, alongside with the workability reform to combat attitudinal barriers among employers, and adopt an action plan to assess periodically accessibility at the work place, including access to transportation, alternative means of information and communication, sign language and speech to text interpretation, and pictograms for job seekers and employees. The State party should adopt policies and procedures that establish and support the infrastructure for the provision of personal assistance at the workplace; (d) Ensure that the right to seek reasonable accommodation in the workplace is recognised for employees in the public and private sector; (e) Develop a comprehensive system of vocational and professional training for persons with disabilities and effective transitions from vocational and tertiary education to work and employment.
Greece	2019	39. The Committee recommends that the State party take effective measures to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in the open labour market, with a view to achieving target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also recommends that the State party ensure the provision of specific measures and individualized support in the workplace; promote among employers the right of persons with disabilities to employment on an equal basis with others; and mainstream the disability dimension in all employment policies, measures and programmes, including in the policy design of the Greek Manpower Employment Organization.
Spain	2011	46. The Committee recommends that the State party develop open and advanced programmes to increase employment opportunities for women and men with disabilities.
Finland		[Not yet scheduled].
France	2019	[from the List of Issues raised in September 2019]. 28. Please provide information on: (a) The rates and trends of employment and unemployment of persons with disabilities after 2013, disaggregated by disability, gender, age, rural and urban areas, place of residence, socioeconomic status, type of labour market (segregated or open) and sector (private or public); (b) The agreements concluded with and measures undertaken by public and private sector enterprises to promote access to work and employment by persons with disabilities. Please also report on the results achieved through the multi-stakeholder agreement of November 2013 related to measures to improve access of persons with disabilities to work and employment; (c) Political and legislative measures taken to promote the access by persons with disabilities to employment in the open labour market, including by promoting the transition from segregated “protected” employment to the open labour market; (d) Measures taken to prevent discrimination and exploitation of persons with disabilities in employment and to ensure their professional, trade union and wage rights.
Croatia	2015	42. The Committee recommends that the State party develop and implement, in cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities, a plan of action to increase the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market. It recommends that the quota system is complemented with other incentives for employers to hire persons with disabilities. Disincentives to employment for persons with disabilities should be analysed and remedied.

Country	Year	Recommendations (employment)
		Reasonable accommodation, including supported employment with personal assistance, and the accessibility of the workplace, should be regulated and monitored.
Hungary	2012	44. The Committee recommends that the State party effectively implement the disability-specific provisions of the Labour Code and develop programmes to integrate persons with disabilities into the open labour market and the education and professional training systems, and to make all work places and educational and professional training institutions accessible for persons with disabilities, as recommended by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2008 (E/C.12/HUN/CO/3), through fulfilling the requirements of article 27 of the Convention, with a special view to further intensifying its efforts to increase the employment opportunities for women and men with disabilities in the public and private sectors.
Ireland		[Not yet scheduled].
Italy	2016	70. The Committee recommends that the State party be guided by article 27 of the Convention in implementing targets 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals; and that it ensures the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. In addition, the State party must implement special measures to address the low level of employment for women with disabilities. It also recommends that the State party remove any legislation limiting the rights of persons with disabilities to perform any profession on the grounds of their disability.
Lithuania	2016	52. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, eliminate the concept of “working incapacity” of persons with disabilities and develop and implement efficient strategies and programmes aimed at increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, by eliminating segregated work environments and investing in promoting vocational training, access to appropriately adjusted workplaces, the provision of reasonable accommodation and the training of private and public employers, as set out in target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
Luxembourg	2017	47. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt measures to phase out sheltered workshops, with a time-bound schedule and plan for transfer of those currently employed in sheltered workshops into the open labour market, and increase the level of employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, in line with the Convention and in view of target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that it ensure the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. It also recommends that the State party: (a) Designate an entity for monitoring and sanctioning non-compliance of labour quotas in both the private and public sectors; (b) Take measures to ensure the effective monitoring of the provision of reasonable accommodation, with appropriate remedies for the denial of requests; (c) Provide vocational and professional training and provide incentives for the self-employment of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities.
Latvia	2017	47. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure support for the employment of all persons with disabilities in the open labour market in inclusive employment settings on an equal basis with others; (b) Pay attention to the links between article 27 of the Convention and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
Malta	2018	40. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt further enforcement mechanisms and incentives to ensure the implementation of the quota system under articles 15 and 16 of the Persons with Disability (Employment) Act and other measures to support persons with disabilities to work in the open labour market, in accordance with the Convention and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and ensure the

Country	Year	Recommendations (employment)
		achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all. It also recommends that the State party: (a) Amend article 17 (3) of its Constitution to bring it in conformity with article 27 of the Convention; (b) Review the quota system under the Persons with Disability (Employment) Act in order to make it applicable to enterprises with less than 20 employees; (c) Replace any assessment of suitability to work with an assessment that considers the needs and requirements for reasonable accommodation at work for persons with disabilities; (d) Step up efforts to raise awareness among employers on the rights of persons with disabilities to work in the open labour market, in particular the provision of reasonable accommodation, and on the benefits of employing persons with disabilities.
Netherlands		[Not yet scheduled].
Poland	2018	48. The Committee recommends that the State party develop legislation and measures for the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, and that it in particular: (a) Promote the work and employment of women with disabilities, and ensure equal income, particularly in rural areas; (b) Promote decent work for persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in public and private sectors and provide specific incentives and support for reasonable accommodation, including individual assistance for employing persons with a wide range of disabilities; (c) Ensure that the employment quota of 6 per cent for persons with disabilities is reached in all sectors, in particular in the public administration sector; (d) Ensure that open labour market activation programmes effectively include all persons with disabilities.
Portugal	2016	52. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, review its public- and private-sector labour legislation to bring it into line with the Convention and that it takes measures to enforce the law and apply the stipulated penalties for non-compliance. The Committee also recommends that it do away with segregated working environments, that it review the legislation regulating the Occupational Activity Centres from a human rights perspective to bring them into line with the Convention and that it steps up efforts to promote access to the regular labour market for persons with intellectual disabilities and autism. The State party should promote corporate social responsibility in connection with the employment of persons with disabilities. The Committee recommends that the State party consider the links between article 27 of the Convention and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
Romania		[Not yet scheduled].
Sweden	2014	50. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities to obtain work on the basis of the report presented by the FunkA Inquiry (FunkA-utredning). It further suggests that the State party increase measures of support, including, inter alia, personal assistance in employment, technical assistance in performing in the workplace, reduced social fees, financial support to employers, rehabilitation and vocational training, and that it put in place measures to narrow the employment and pay gender gap. The Committee recommends that the State party assess the impact of the use in the labour market of the term "people with reduced capacities or limitations" to refer to persons with disabilities and revise it in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination.

Country	Year	Recommendations (employment)
Slovenia	2018	46. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Adopt measures aimed at promoting an inclusive, open and accessible labour market in all sectors for all persons with disabilities; (b) Create specific incentives for employers and provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, particularly for persons with intellectual disabilities, aimed at facilitating their inclusion in the open labour market; (c) Ensure the safeguarding of all incomes, including disability pensions for self-employed persons with disabilities; (d) Ensure equal requirements for employment quotas in the public administration and information services and other work sectors, and monitor their implementation. The State party should collect data on compliance with the quota system and provide for adequate sanctions in cases of non-compliance.
Slovakia	2016	74. The Committee recommends that the State party step up efforts on the transition from sheltered workshops to an open labour market for all. The process must include an action plan, timetable, budget and training for public and private sector employers, including on the provision of reasonable accommodation. The Committee also recommends that the State party pay attention to the links between article 27 of the Convention and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.2.2 Recommendations relevant to social policies and healthcare

Table 9: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 28 CRPD (social protection)

Country	Year	Recommendations (social protection)
Austria	2013	37. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the federal Government and the governments of the Länder step up efforts towards de-institutionalisation and allowing persons with disabilities to choose where they live.
Belgium	2014	There was no recommendation on Article 28.
Bulgaria	2018	60. The Committee recommends that the State party revise the criteria for assessing the degree of impairment, incorporate the human rights model of disability in the assessment process, and ensure that persons with disabilities continue to enjoy an adequate standard of living. It also calls upon the State party to intensify its efforts to ensure that all persons with disabilities can meet the additional costs of disability, including by increasing budget allocations and resources accordingly.
Cyprus	2017	56. The Committee recommends that the State party implement progressively measures to ensure adequate income of persons with disabilities in order to reduce significantly the pay gap between persons with and without disabilities, regardless of gender, ethnic origin or age, and that it abolish the requirement of user payment for social services and support and partial payment for disability-related expenses and assistive devices, being guided by target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party identify a social protection floor that is not affected by expenses for disability-related costs and assistive devices and user payments for social services and support, in order to alleviate the socioeconomic disadvantages that result from the exclusion experienced by persons with disabilities.
Czechia	2015	54. The Committee calls upon the State party to review the legislation on the provision of benefits to persons with disabilities, with genuine participation of persons with disabilities, to reintroduce the additional social allowance in order to bring the standard of living of families with children with disabilities above the subsistence level. The State party should also broaden the range of and facilitate access to assistive devices for children with disabilities, regardless of age. 56. The Committee calls upon the State party to revise its legislation on disability pension beneficiaries and the newly established method of calculating the relevant period from the beginning of disability until the

Country	Year	Recommendations (social protection)
		entitlement of retirement pensions, as it has resulted in the amount of the pension received by persons with disabilities at the third level being below the minimum subsistence level.
Germany	2015	52. The Committee recommends that the State party immediately undertake a review of the personal income used by persons with disabilities to meet their needs and to live independently. The Committee also recommends that the State party provide social services to persons with disabilities that provide the same living standards compared to persons without disabilities on comparable incomes.
Denmark	2014	There was no recommendation on Article 28.
Estonia	2021	55. Taking into account the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities within the national strategy for poverty eradication with concrete expeditious measures and earmarked budgets to address situations of disadvantage and exclusion concerning older persons with disabilities, in particular older women; (b) Prioritise persons with disabilities in the socio-economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensure the access to appropriate and affordable services and facilities for the general population, assistance, transportation and to public housing programmes for persons with disabilities, particularly to women with disabilities.
Greece	2019	41. The Committee recommends that the State party revise the relevant legal provisions and practices on welfare allowances, benefits, pensions and tax exemptions for persons with disabilities, harmonizing the existing rules and repealing discriminatory rules and practices, including in the disability certification system. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure the effective implementation of the existing social protection framework, and progressively develop further measures to ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities.
Spain	2011	40. The Committee encourages the State party to ensure that an adequate level of funding is made available to effectively enable persons with disabilities: to enjoy the freedom to choose their residence on an equal basis with others; to access a full range of in-home, residential and other community services for daily life, including personal assistance; and to so enjoy reasonable accommodation so as to better integrate into their communities.
Finland		[Not yet scheduled].
France	2019	[from the List of Issues raised in September 2019]. 29. Please provide data, disaggregated by disability, gender, age, rural and urban areas, place of residence and socioeconomic status, on the levels of poverty and homelessness of persons with disabilities. 30. Please also provide information on measures taken to: (a) Address poverty among persons with disabilities and guarantee an adequate standard of living; (b) Guarantee access of persons with disabilities to adequate social housing and accessible private housing arrangements, including flexible housing solutions; (c) Adapt the level of disability compensation benefits to the actual costs of support measures and to use the European Union structural and investment funds for the implementation of these support measures.
Croatia	2015	44. The Committee recommends that poverty reduction programmes be strengthened. It also recommends that benefits aimed at alleviating increased costs arising from disability should be based on an assessment of the individual's support needs and should disregard any financial assets test.
Hungary	2012	[There was no recommendation on Article 28].
Ireland		[Not yet scheduled].
Italy	2016	72. The Committee recommends that the State party expedite constitutional reform to homogenize social protection interventions and policies throughout

Country	Year	Recommendations (social protection)
		the national territory; expedite the adoption and implementation of the Minimum Standards of Social Assistance; conduct assessments of the impact of austerity measures on children and adults with disabilities; and prevent any further reduction in resources that could increase levels of poverty. It also recommends that the State party be guided by article 28 of the Convention in implementing target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, including by mainstreaming disability in its poverty reduction policies.
Lithuania	2016	54. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt new policies that secure income levels among persons with disabilities and their families that are adequate and equal to the income levels of others, and that take into account additional disability-related costs. 56. The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to secure that persons with disabilities and their families are not disproportionately affected by budget cuts and to ensure an adequate standard of living through income support and social security, taking note of target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which calls on States to implement appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors.
Luxembourg	2017	49. The Committee recommends that the State party collect data on the socioeconomic situation of persons with disabilities to design appropriate policies to ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and their families. It also recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure that social protection policies and programmes secure income levels by taking into account the additional costs related to disability; (b) Guarantee that persons with disabilities have access to sufficient community-based social services, public housing programmes and support services for living independently respectful of the rights, will and preferences of persons with disabilities; (c) Pay attention to the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which calls upon States to implement appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors.
Latvia	2017	49. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and their families, by guaranteeing, inter alia, that social protection and poverty reduction programmes take into account the additional costs related to disability; (b) Pay attention to the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
Malta	2018	No observations were provided on Article 28.
Netherlands		[Not yet scheduled].
Poland	2018	50. Taking into account the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Emphasize the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly of women with disabilities, and mainstream them into the national strategy for reducing poverty with concrete measures and relevant budget; (b) Ensure that the employment of persons with disabilities does not make them ineligible for disability-related protection schemes, such as disability allowances; (c) Collect disaggregated data on the poverty of persons with disabilities, and monitor the effectiveness of social security mechanisms designed to combat poverty; (d) Ensure specific measures to ensure access to housing for persons with disabilities; (e) Ensure that the term “public housing” is translated correctly in the Polish-language version of the Convention.
Portugal	2016	54. The Committee recommends that the State party, in cooperation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, take the following measures: (a) Urgently review austerity measures to prevent further negative and

Country	Year	Recommendations (social protection)
		regressive effects on the standard of living and social protection of persons with disabilities by taking steps that enable them to be included in the community; (b) Provide support services for living independently and residential homes respectful of the rights of persons with disabilities, their wishes and preferences, in addition to providing cash subsidies to make it possible for unemployed persons with disabilities and without family support to have a decent standard of living; (c) Step up efforts, in line with the human rights approach of the Convention, to strengthen the right to a decent standard of living and the social protection of persons with disabilities who are living in poverty and extreme poverty, allocating funds sufficient for that purpose; (d) Consider the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of their disability.
Romania		[Not yet scheduled].
Sweden	2014	No observations were provided on Article 28.
Slovenia	2018	32. 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: (a) Adopt and implement a strategy and action plan, within a time frame, aimed at deinstitutionalization; (b) Prevent any form of re-institutionalization and provide sufficient funding for developing community-based independent living schemes; (c) Allocate sufficient resources to ensure that services in the community are available, accessible, affordable, acceptable and accommodating of persons with disabilities, so that such persons may exercise their right to live independently and be included in their communities, in both urban and rural areas; (d) Strengthen the national and municipal capacity to implement deinstitutionalization, in close cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities.
Slovakia	2016	76. The Committee recommends that the State party provide an adequate standard of living to persons with disabilities, including those from an ethnic minority background and those over the age of 65, and ensure that social protection schemes are regularly monitored to track the alleviation of poverty. The Committee also recommends that the State party pay attention to the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.2.2.1 Independent living

Table 10: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 19 CRPD (living independently)

Country	Year	Recommendations (independent living)
Austria	2013	39. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the personal assistance programmes provide sufficient financial assistance to ensure that a person can live independently in the community. The Committee further recommends that the State party harmonize and broaden its personal assistance programmes by making personal assistance available to all persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.
Belgium	2014	There was no recommendation on Article 28. 33. The Committee recommends that the State party work towards deinstitutionalization by reducing investment in collective infrastructure and promoting personal choice. The Committee urges the State party to implement a disability action plan at all levels of the State to guarantee access to services and an independent life for persons with disabilities so that they are able to live in the community. The action plan must eliminate

Country	Year	Recommendations (independent living)
		current waiting lists and ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sufficient financial resources and that communities are accessible for persons with disabilities. The Committee recommends that the State party devise international cooperation programmes that respect the right of persons with disabilities to live in the community and involve disabled persons' representatives and their families in their preparation.
Bulgaria	2018	<p>40. The Committee, in accordance with its general comment No. 5, recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Accelerate the transition process to ensure that all persons with disabilities living in any form of institution, such as psychiatric hospital units or in small community-based group homes, have the right to live independently within the community with choices equal to those of other persons; in the de institutionalization process, the State party should focus on the situation of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, and children and elderly persons with disabilities;</p> <p>(b) Allocate greater resources for developing individualized support services for persons with disabilities, regardless of the type of impairment or age; such services should include peer support and personal assistance;</p> <p>(c) Adopt legislation on individualized and self-managed personal assistance and social and support services, recognizing the right to live independently and be included in the community as a subjective right for all persons with disabilities, regardless of their impairment or required level of support;</p> <p>(d) Implement a procedure to consult in a meaningful and disability-sensitive manner with organizations of persons with disabilities on all aspects of the implementation of article 19, including deinstitutionalization strategies and processes;</p> <p>(e) Allocate national financial resources and those provided by the European Union to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, and introduce efficient remedies and guidelines to avoid spending national and international funds on establishing infrastructure, housing and/or services that are not accessible or affordable to all persons with disabilities.</p>
Cyprus	2017	<p>44. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, and in line with article 4 (3) of the Convention: (a) Develop and implement safeguards securing the right to independent living; (b) Adopt and immediately implement an adequately funded deinstitutionalization strategy;</p> <p>(c) Redirect resources allocated to institutionalization and earmark and allocate them to community-based services and increase the budget enabling persons with disabilities to live independently across the State party with access to individually assessed and adequate services, including personal assistance, within the community.</p>
Czechia	2015	<p>39. The Committee urges the State party to step up the process of deinstitutionalization and to allocate sufficient resources for the development of support services in local communities that would enable all persons with disabilities, regardless of their impairments, gender or age, to choose freely with whom, where and under which living arrangements they will live, in line with the provisions of article 19 of the Convention.</p> <p>40. The Committee recommends that the State party take all measures necessary to ensure that policy processes for deinstitutionalization, including the development of the National Plan on Promoting Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2015–2020, have a clear timeline and concrete benchmarks for implementation that are monitored effectively at regular intervals. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to abolish the placement of children under 3 years of age in institutionalized care as soon as possible.</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (independent living)
Germany	2015	42. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Take steps towards the legal reform of section 13, paragraph 1 (3), of the Twelfth Book of the Social Code for increased social assistance services to enable inclusion, self-determination and the choice to live in the community; (b) Allocate sufficient financial resources to facilitate deinstitutionalization and promote independent living, including increased financial resources to provide community-based outpatient services providing the required support to persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities based on the free and informed consent of the individual concerned, across the whole country; (c) Increase access to programmes and benefits to support living in the community and ensure they cover disability-related costs.
Denmark	2014	43. The Committee recommends that the State party end the use of State-guaranteed loans to build institution-like residences for persons with disabilities; that it amend the legislation on social services so that persons with disabilities may freely choose where and with whom they live, while enjoying the necessary assistance to live independently; and that it take measures to close existing institution-like residences and to prevent the forced relocation of persons with disabilities, in order to avoid isolation from the community.
Estonia	2021	39. The Committee recalls its General comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, and recommends that the State party: (a) Adopt a strategy, including awareness raising activities to promote understanding of the right to choose and self-determination of persons with disabilities concerning living arrangements, the right to not be obliged to live in a particular living arrangement, and the value of inclusion in the community, as opposed to segregation from the community; (b) Implement a moratorium of new institutionalization of children and adults with disabilities, revise its deinstitutionalization strategy, and redirect the use of public funds, including the European Regional Development funds to developing individualized support for living independently, and transition programmes from congregated settings, such as “home-like institutions”, “family-type houses” and “special care villages” to inclusion in the community; (c) Develop a system for self-managed personal assistance, which include the person-directed tools for supporting living independently in the community, according to an individual’s requirements and preferences; (d) Set up a timeframe and benchmarks for achieving accessibility to mainstream services in the community by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.
Greece	2019	29. The Committee recommends that, in line with its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, the State party: (a) Adopt a comprehensive national strategy with clear time-bound measures and sufficient funds for effective deinstitutionalization at all levels; (b) Ensure the active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in the development of independent living strategies and schemes that provide accessible community-based services, especially at the local level.
Spain	2011	42. The Committee encourages the State party to expand resources for personal assistants to all persons with disabilities in accordance with their requirements.
Finland		[Not yet scheduled].
France	2019	[from the List of Issues raised in September 2019]. 19. Please inform the Committee about measures taken to: (a) Repeal all legislation that allows for the forced institutionalization of children and adults with disabilities and to protect parents who refuse the institutionalization of their children from reprisals;

Country	Year	Recommendations (independent living)
		<p>(b) Adopt a strategy for the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities, especially of children, as well as for the promotion of the right to live independently and be included in the community;</p> <p>(c) Place a moratorium on new admissions to institutions.</p> <p>20. Please provide data on:</p> <p>(a) Persons with disabilities living in residential institutions;</p> <p>(b) The number of persons with disabilities who have been deinstitutionalized;</p> <p>(c) Persons with disabilities who benefit from support for their independent living in the community.</p> <p>21. Please provide information on:</p> <p>(a) A timeline for the adoption of the decree implementing Act No. 2005-102, which is aimed at capping support costs for persons with disabilities;</p> <p>(b) The provision of personal assistance to persons with disabilities, including assistive devices and technical aids, and on results obtained through the implementation of comprehensive support plans and of Law 2015-1776 of 28 December 2015;</p> <p>(c) The effectiveness of the agreement of December 2011 between the State party and Belgium on the reception of persons with disabilities from France in Belgium in order to ensure inclusion in the community, individualized support for persons with disabilities in the State party and independent living arrangements. Please also indicate how many persons with disabilities have been deinstitutionalized from institutions in Belgium.</p>
Croatia	2015	<p>30. The Committee recommends that the process of deinstitutionalization include all residential institutions and foster homes for all persons with disabilities. It recommends that a legal framework be adopted to provide for entitlement to personal assistance services in the community and that a process be initiated to make local communities and mainstream services accessible to persons with disabilities</p>
Hungary	2012	<p>34. The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure that an adequate level of funding is made available to effectively enable persons with disabilities to: enjoy the freedom to choose their residence on an equal basis with others; access a full range of in-home, residential and other community services for daily life, including personal assistance; and enjoy reasonable accommodation with a view to supporting their inclusion in their local communities.</p> <p>35. The Committee further calls upon the State party to re-examine the allocation of funds, including the regional funds obtained from the European Union, dedicated to the provision of support services for persons with disabilities and the structure and functioning of small community living centres, and to ensure full compliance with the provisions of article 19 of the Convention.</p>
Ireland		[Not yet scheduled].
Italy	2016	<p>48. The Committee recommends that the State party implement safeguards to retain the right to autonomous independent living across all regions, and redirect resources from institutionalization to community-based services and increase budget support to enable persons with disabilities to live independently across the country and have equal access to services, including personal assistance.</p>
Lithuania	2016	<p>40. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities:</p> <p>(a) Adopt an adequately funded strategy for deinstitutionalization ensuring a range of community-based services for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, including for children with intellectual and/or psychosocial impairments, including their right to live independently in the community, with the possibility of individualized personal assistance support services in their home;</p> <p>(b) Effectively implement the action plan for the implementation of the</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (independent living)
		<p>national programme for the social integration of persons with disabilities for the period 2013-2019 at all levels of the State;</p> <p>(c) Adopt a moratorium on new admissions of children into institutionalized care;</p> <p>(d) Eliminate excessive waiting time for receiving support services by investing in developing new services and rendering existing services accessible and inclusive and ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sufficient financial resources for independent living and improved access to accessible services in the community.</p>
Luxembourg	2017	<p>37. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, and: (a) Adopt the legal and other measures necessary, including repealing Reform Act 7014 and relevant disability insurance systems, replacing them by legislation promoting the right to independent living and being included in the community, providing for, among others, personal assistance and clarifying the responsibilities and resource allocations of central and local authorities; (b) Develop and implement an effective deinstitutionalization plan, with a clear time frame and benchmarks, involving persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in all stages; (c) Adopt the measures necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities have a legal entitlement to a sufficient personal budget for independent living, which takes into account the additional costs related to disability and, at the same time, redirect resources from institutionalization to community-based services, while increasing the availability of personal assistance.</p>
Latvia	2017	<p>31. The Committee urges the State party to: (a) Expedite the complete deinstitutionalization of all persons with disabilities within a set time frame in order to close all remaining institutions, both those run by the State and the municipalities, ensuring that residents are not subject to trans-institutionalization ; (b) Reinforce the engagement of municipalities in implementing the deinstitutionalization strategy, including through raising awareness about independent community-based living for persons with disabilities and ensuring sustainable provision of services to promote independent living following termination of European structural funds; (c) Ensure the provision of quality personal assistance that takes into account the individual needs of persons with disabilities and ensures their social inclusion and participation.</p>
Malta	2018	<p>30. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account its general comment No. 5 (2017) and:</p> <p>(a) Ensure that existing residential institutions that contribute to the isolation of persons with disabilities are closed and that the provision of appropriate community-based services is strengthened;</p> <p>(b) Ensure that all projects supported by public funds are carried out in a community setting, do not contribute to isolation of persons with disabilities, are monitored by organizations of persons with disabilities and are provided with sustainable continuous funding;</p> <p>(c) Adopt the legal and other measures, such as the planned bill on personal autonomy and the bill on the Convention, necessary to make article 19 of the Convention justiciable;</p> <p>(d) Ensure that financial and other measures are in place to allow persons with disabilities to be provided with personal assistance and that personnel supporting persons with disabilities in the community are appropriately trained, if necessary.</p>
Netherlands		[Not yet scheduled].
Poland	2018	<p>33. With reference to general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, the Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Design and adopt concrete action plans for deinstitutionalization and</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (independent living)
		<p>time-bound transition to independent living schemes for persons with disabilities within the community, and ensure that adequate funding is allocated to this process after the termination of European Union funds allocated specifically to this purpose;</p> <p>(b) Adopt legal frameworks and allocate a sustainable budget for providing persons with disabilities with personal assistance within the framework of individualized and inclusive support arrangements;</p> <p>(c) Ensure the spending of European Union funds allocated to deinstitutionalization on measures that are consistent with the provisions of the Convention, and that such spending is monitored, with the effective participation of persons with disabilities and/or their representative organizations, to ensure that such spending is in line with the requirements of persons with disabilities themselves;</p> <p>(d) Ensure that the term “community” is translated correctly in the Polish-language version of the Convention.</p>
Portugal	2016	39. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, adopt a national strategy for living independently, including increased investment to facilitate living independently in the community rather than in institutions, that it regulates personal assistance and that it increase the availability of sign language interpreters and fingerspelling systems in public services. It also urges the State party to establish support services in the community for persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities.
Romania		[Not yet scheduled].
Sweden	2014	44. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that personal assistance programmes provide sufficient and fair financial assistance to ensure that a person can live independently in the community.
Slovenia	2018	48. In the light of the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection and poverty reduction programmes for persons with disabilities, especially persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities; (b) Restore all support measures curtailed under the austerity policy and prevent any hardship that may be faced by persons with disabilities whose income was reduced as a result of that policy; (c) Ensure the accessibility of public housing for persons with disabilities, disseminate information about available and affordable housing in accessible formats and engage with the private sector with a view to promoting the development of accessible housing units; (d) Implement positive measures to provide taxation relief in respect of pensions and disability insurance for persons with disabilities living in poverty; (e) Recognize the right of persons with disabilities to receive a full disability pension and insurance through the relevant legal and administrative mechanisms; (f) Ensure a dignified and inclusive social protection system for older persons with disabilities.
Slovakia	2016	56. The Committee recommends that the State party provide and implement a timetable to ensure that the implementation of the deinstitutionalization process is expedited, including by putting in place specific additional measures to ensure that community-based services are strengthened for all persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities and older persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the State party should ensure that the use of European structural and investment funds complies with article 19 and that new follow-up national action plans on the transition from institutional settings to community-based support are initiated with the comprehensive involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities and civil society organizations, including in the area of monitoring. The Committee also recommends that the State party no longer allocate resources from the national budget to institutions and that it

Country	Year	Recommendations (independent living)
		reallocates resources into community-based services in accordance with the investment priorities of the European Regional Development Fund (art. 5.9 (a) of European Union regulation No. 1303/2013).

3.2.2.2 Health

Table 11: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 25 CRPD (health)

Country	Year	Recommendations (health)
Austria	2013	43. The Committee recommends that greater efforts be made to support students with disabilities in all areas of inclusive education from kindergarten to secondary school. It particularly recommends that the State party ensure that persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities and their representative organisations, are involved in the day-to-day implementation of the inclusive education models introduced in various Länder. The Committee further recommends that greater efforts be made to enable persons with disabilities to study at universities and other tertiary institutions. The Committee also recommends that the State party step up its efforts to provide quality teacher training to teachers with disabilities and teachers with sign language skills, so as to enhance the education of deaf and hearing-impaired girls and boys, in accordance with the formal recognition of Austrian sign language in the Constitution of Austria.
Belgium	2014	37. The Committee requests that the State party implement a coherent inclusive education strategy for children with disabilities in the mainstream system and ensure the provision of adequate financial, material and human resources. It recommends that the State party ensure that children with disabilities receive the educational support they need, in particular through the provision of accessible school environments, reasonable accommodation, individual learning plans, assistive technology in classrooms, and accessible and adapted materials and curricula, and guarantee that all teachers, including teachers with disabilities, receive comprehensive training on the use of Braille and sign language with a view to improving the education of all children with disabilities, including boys and girls who are blind, deaf-blind, deaf or hard of hearing. The Committee also recommends that inclusive education should form an integral part of teacher training at university and during continuing professional development.
Bulgaria	2018	50. The Committee recommends that the State party, in accordance with general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education: (a) Replace segregated education systems with quality inclusive education; (b) Raise awareness of the advantages of quality inclusive education for society, in particular for teachers and other education staff, and also for parents of children without disabilities; (c) Intensify its efforts to ensure quality inclusive education and the provision of reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities in mainstream schools, including by allocating sufficient human, technical and financial resources for it; (d) Collect data on the number of children and young people with disabilities not currently enrolled in any form of education, disaggregated by age, sex, type of impairment and place of residence, and develop a strategy to include these children in the mainstream education system.
Cyprus	2017	50. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Decide upon a clear legislative scope of inclusive education and monitor its implementation with a view to fully replacing segregated education by inclusive education; (b) Adopt a clear, targeted and adequately funded plan of action that includes access to reasonable accommodation and adequate teacher education and training, and progressively ensure that children and adult learners with disabilities are able to exercise their right to inclusive education; (c) Be guided by general comment No. 4 (2016) and targets 4.5

Country	Year	Recommendations (health)
		and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals in ensuring equal access to all levels and types of education, education facilities and vocational training by persons with disabilities.
Czechia	2015	48. The Committee recommends that the State party implement the amended School Act, incorporate inclusive education as the guiding principle of the education system and ensure the admission of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, in line with article 24 of the Convention. The Committee calls upon the State party to intensify its efforts and to allocate sufficient financial and human resources for reasonable accommodations that will enable boys and girls with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities and autism, and deaf-blind children, to receive inclusive quality education.
Germany	2015	46. The Committee recommends that the State party: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Immediately develop a strategy, action plan, timeline and targets to provide access to a high-quality, inclusive education system across all Länder, including the required financial resources and personnel at all levels; (b) Scale down segregated schools to facilitate inclusion and ensure that the law and policies uphold the duty that mainstream schools enrol children with disabilities with immediate effect if that is their choice; (c) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided at all levels of education and that the right to such accommodation is legally enforceable and justiciable before the courts; (d) Ensure the training of all teachers in inclusive education, increased accessibility of the school environment, materials and curricula, and the provision of sign language in mainstream schools, including at the post-doctoral level.
Denmark	2014	53. The Committee recommends that the State party amend its legislation to ensure the inclusion of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system, with adequate support and accommodation, in particular through the provision of adequate training to teachers and other employees in the school system in all parts of the Kingdom of Denmark, in order to ensure quality education for pupils with disabilities. The State party should take measures to address discrepancies in accomplishment rates between pupils with and without disabilities at all levels of education. 55. The Committee recommends that the State party amend its legislation to ensure that all children with disabilities can submit a complaint to an independent authority if they do not receive adequate educational support.
Estonia	2021	47. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the Right to inclusive education and the Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 4.5 and indicator 4 (a), the Committee recommends, that the State party: (a) Develop the strategy for implementing quality inclusive education with specific targets, timelines, budget allocation, and share of responsibilities between national and municipal levels; (b) Establish a policy framework that recognises the right of persons with disabilities to seek, individualized supports as reasonable accommodation in education, when so required; (c) Ensure education is an area of life covered under anti-discrimination and includes the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination; (d) Provide students with disabilities with assistive compensatory aids and learning materials in alternative/accessible formats, including inclusive digital access, modes and means of communication, including Easy Read, communication aids and assistive and information technology, and ensure teachers fluent in Estonian Sign Language; (e) Take measures, including the provision of technical equipment, and the adoption of regulations to ensure that children with disabilities receive the individualized support required within the quality and inclusive education system during the COVID-19 pandemic period, especially in rural areas and

Country	Year	Recommendations (health)
		those facing economic hardship, and guarantee for children with chronic diseases equal access to school.
Greece	2019	<p>5. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, and taking into account Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially targets 4.5 and 4.a, the Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to guarantee inclusive education, and in particular that it:</p> <p>(a) Adopt and implement a coherent strategy on inclusive education in the mainstream educational system;</p> <p>(b) Ensure the accessibility of school and university environments, in line with the Convention, by promoting universal design, the provision of specific measures and individualized support, such as accessible and adapted materials, inclusive curricula, inclusive information and communication technologies for pupils and students with disabilities, and digital pedagogy;</p> <p>(c) Immediately ensure access to formal education for all refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children with disabilities, and for Roma children with disabilities;</p> <p>(d) Allocate effective and sufficient financial and material resources and adequately and regularly trained personnel, including persons with disabilities, to effectively guarantee inclusive education;</p> <p>(e) Incorporate inclusive education training into higher education curricula for trainee teachers, and into training programmes for current teaching staff, with an adequate budget.</p>
Spain	2011	<p>44. The Committee reiterates that denial of reasonable accommodation constitutes discrimination and that the duty to provide reasonable accommodation is immediately applicable and not subject to progressive realization. It recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Increase its efforts to provide reasonable accommodation in education, by: allocating sufficient financial and human resources to implement the right to inclusive education; paying particular attention to assessing the availability of teachers with specialist qualifications; and ensuring that educational departments of local governments understand their obligations under the Convention and act in conformity with its provisions;</p> <p>(b) Ensure that the decisions to place children with a disability in a special school or in special classes, or to offer them solely a reduced-standard curriculum, are taken in consultation with the parents;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that the parents of children with disabilities are not obliged to pay for the education or for the measures of reasonable accommodation in mainstream schools;</p> <p>(d) Ensure that decisions on placing children in segregated settings can be appealed swiftly and effectively.</p>
Finland		[Not yet scheduled].
France	2019	<p>[from the List of Issues raised in September 2019].</p> <p>25. Please provide data on children with disabilities in the mainstream educational system, disaggregated by disability, age, gender, rural and urban areas, place of residence, socioeconomic status, and ethnic or national origin, as well as by educational setting (including segregated or inclusive classrooms within mainstream schools and in medico-social institutions) and level of education. Please also provide data on children with disabilities who are excluded from the educational system.</p> <p>26. Please further inform the Committee about concrete measures taken to:</p> <p>(a) Adopt a policy and concrete measures to promote the shift towards an inclusive educational system at all levels, including in preschool and in higher education, that also address the situation of persons considered “without a solution” and those currently in medico-social institutions;</p> <p>(b) Train educational personnel, including examination authorities, on the right to inclusive education and flexible and multiple forms of examination</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (health)
		<p>methods;</p> <p>(c)Ensure the access of young people and adults with disabilities to mainstream vocational education and support their transition into the open labour market;</p> <p>(d)Include Roma children with disabilities in mainstream schools and provide information on legal prerequisites and practices in this regard.</p>
Croatia	2015	<p>36. The Committee recommends that the State party take immediate steps to ensure that all persons with disabilities have access to inclusive quality primary, secondary and tertiary education and that reasonable accommodation is provided in mainstream education. It also recommends establishing the principle that exclusionary and segregated education is discriminatory. It recommends that teachers and other professionals receive training on inclusive education and that all secondary education facilities be made accessible to persons with disabilities.</p>
Hungary	2012	<p>41. The Committee calls upon the State party to allocate sufficient resources for the development of an inclusive education system for children with disabilities. It reiterates that denial of reasonable accommodation constitutes discrimination and recommends that the State party significantly increase its efforts to: provide reasonable accommodation to children with disabilities based on the student's individual requirements; provide students with disabilities with the required support within the general education system; and to continue training teachers and all other educational staff to enable them to work in inclusive educational settings.</p> <p>42. The Committee urges the State party to develop programmes to ensure that Roma children with disabilities are included in mainstream education programmes, without disregarding the provision of reasonable accommodation that might be needed to obtain the desired outcome.</p>
Ireland		[Not yet scheduled].
Italy	2016	<p>56. The Committee recommends that the State party implement an action plan — with sufficient resources, timelines and specific goals — aimed at monitoring the implementation of laws, decrees and regulations to improve the quality of inclusive education in classrooms, support provisions and teacher training across all levels. It also recommends that the State party be guided by article 24 of the Convention, including its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, in implementing targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training, and build and upgrade education facilities that are disability-sensitive and safe.</p> <p>58. The Committee recommends that the State party monitor and provide highly qualified sign language interpreters for any deaf child who requests such assistance, and to desist from recommending general communication assistants as an exclusive alternative.</p> <p>60. The committee recommends that the State party undertake, through legislative and other measures, including the newly drafted decree on education, to guarantee the availability of accessible learning materials and the provision of assistive technology in a timely manner in order to ensure inclusive and quality education in the mainstream setting.</p>
Lithuania	2016	<p>46. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt and implement a coherent strategy on inclusive education in the mainstream educational system in accordance with article 24 of the Convention and with reference to Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially its targets 4.5 and 4.8. Through such a strategy, the State party should:</p> <p>(a) Ensure the accessibility of school environments, the provision of reasonable accommodation, accessible and adapted materials and curricula, and the compulsory pre-service and in-service training of all teachers on inclusive education;</p> <p>(b) Secure a sufficient number of accessible means of transport to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities;</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (health)
		<p>(c) Set clear timelines, targets, baselines and indicators to secure time-bound and measurable progress;</p> <p>(d) Allocate effective and adequate financial, material and adequately trained human resources.</p> <p>47. The Committee recommends that the State party guarantee a legally enforceable right to inclusive, quality and free primary education and to affordable secondary education on an equal basis with others.</p> <p>48. The Committee also recommends that the State party facilitate access for persons with disabilities to tertiary education and vocational training, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation in higher education.</p>
Luxembourg	2017	<p>43. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially its targets 4.5 and 4.8, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Amend the laws on education to ensure that no student is refused admission to mainstream schools on the basis of disability, ensure accessibility and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation, including assistant support staff, including pre-school and tertiary education and the private sector; (b) Adopt a legally defined procedure for the provision of reasonable accommodation at all levels of education and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation according to individual requirements in consultation with the person concerned; (c) Design and implement an action plan on inclusive education with sufficient resources, timelines and specific goals; (d) Increase awareness-raising initiatives, including training on inclusive education and its implementation mandatory for teachers, support teachers and non-teaching education personnel; (e) Increase data collection on, among others, the implementation of education laws and policies, and accessibility of school infrastructures, information and communications, including information and communications technology, to inform inclusive education policies.</p>
Latvia	2017	<p>41. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially targets 4.5 and 4 (a) thereof, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that no child is refused admission to mainstream schools on the basis of disability, and that it further allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation to facilitate the accessibility of all students with disabilities to quality, inclusive education, including in preschool, tertiary and lifelong learning institutions.</p>
Malta	2018	<p>36. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially targets 4.5 and 4.a, the Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Ensure the implementation of its laws on education, and accelerate the adoption process of the bill on the Convention, to ensure that violations of the rights under article 24 of the Convention become justiciable in the State party;</p> <p>(b) Adopt measures to ensure that students with disabilities, including students with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, are provided with reasonable accommodation at all levels of education, and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation according to individual requirements in consultation with the person concerned, including the provision of learning support educators and their replacements when they are absent;</p> <p>(c) Ensure accessible mechanisms for accountability and redress in cases in which educational institutions, such as childcare centres and summer schools, or teachers discriminate against students on the basis of their disability;</p> <p>(d) Review the curriculum of students with disabilities through individualized education plans to ensure that the curricula allow them to learn the skills</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (health)
		required to access the job market on an equal basis with others; (e) Carry out research on the extent to which accessibility standards are being complied with in the State party to obtain a full understanding of the barriers persons with disabilities face in the education system and the solutions required to enable their full participation, and to make research findings on the socioeconomic and cultural benefits of inclusive education available to all relevant stakeholders.
Netherlands		[Not yet scheduled].
Poland	2018	42. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, targets 4.5 and 4 (a), the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Enact specific provisions to support the implementation of reasonable accommodation, individualized learning curriculum and inclusive classroom teaching in accessible learning environments; (b) Support measures for schools, including support for teachers, to advance inclusive education for students with moderate or severe disabilities; (c) Raise awareness among parents of non-disabled children about the advantages of inclusive education for all, and provide training for school masters and teachers on inclusive education methods and best practices.
Portugal	2016	45. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, review its legislation on education to bring it into line with the Convention and take measures to provide additional resources and materials to facilitate access to and enjoyment of inclusive education of high quality for all students with disabilities, providing public schools with the resources they need to ensure the inclusion of all students with disabilities in ordinary classrooms. 46. The Committee recommends that the State party consider the relationship between article 24 of the Convention and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training, as well as to build and upgrade education facilities to make them disability-sensitive and safe. 48. The Committee recommends that the State party introduce in its legislation regulations on the access of students with disabilities to higher education and vocational training on an equal basis with other students, while providing reasonable accommodation and the required support services.
Romania		[Not yet scheduled].
Sweden	2014	48. The Committee urges the State party to guarantee the inclusion of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system and ensure that they have the required support.
Slovenia	2018	40. 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 recommends that the State party: (a) Recognize the right of all children with disabilities to inclusive education and abandon segregated education schemes; (b) Adopt a strategy and action plan with a clear time frame for the implementation of inclusive education at all levels for all children with disabilities and, further, establish a comprehensive monitoring system to assess the progress of inclusive education; (c) Strengthen the capacity of inclusive schools to train teachers in inclusive education, curriculum accommodation and teaching methods. The State party should enhance the quality of educational support by adopting an individualized approach to children with disabilities and their capacity-building; (d) Provide lifelong learning for persons with disabilities and ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodation in all tertiary education institutions, including vocational and higher education schools; (e) Provide transport services for students with disabilities from their place of residence to their education facilities.

Country	Year	Recommendations (health)
Slovakia	2016	<p>68. The Committee recommends that the State party pay attention to the links between article 24 of the Convention and targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee also recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Introduce an enforceable right to inclusive and quality education in the Education Act, including by defining inclusive education in accordance with the Incheon Declaration on education 2030: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and Sustainable Development Goal No. 4;</p> <p>(b) Adopt a legally binding plan for the transition from segregated schools into inclusive education at all levels, including by setting timelines, identifying responsible authorities, and allocating adequate resources;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that all children with disabilities who so require have access to personal assistance and allocate resources for this purpose;</p> <p>(d) Ensure available, accessible and inclusive preschool education for all children with disabilities;</p> <p>(e) Put an end to the process of placing Roma children in segregated schools for children with disabilities on the basis of their ethnic background.</p>

3.2.3 Recommendations relevant to education and training

Table 12: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 24 CRPD (education)

Country	Year	Recommendations (education)
Austria	2013	<p>43. The Committee recommends that greater efforts be made to support students with disabilities in all areas of inclusive education from kindergarten to secondary school. It particularly recommends that the State party ensure that persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities and their representative organizations, are involved in the day-to-day implementation of the inclusive education models introduced in various Länder. The Committee further recommends that greater efforts be made to enable persons with disabilities to study at universities and other tertiary institutions. The Committee also recommends that the State party step up its efforts to provide quality teacher training to teachers with disabilities and teachers with sign language skills, so as to enhance the education of deaf and hearing-impaired girls and boys, in accordance with the formal recognition of Austrian sign language in the Constitution of Austria.</p>
Belgium	2014	<p>37. The Committee requests that the State party implement a coherent inclusive education strategy for children with disabilities in the mainstream system and ensure the provision of adequate financial, material and human resources. It recommends that the State party ensure that children with disabilities receive the educational support they need, in particular through the provision of accessible school environments, reasonable accommodation, individual learning plans, assistive technology in classrooms, and accessible and adapted materials and curricula, and guarantee that all teachers, including teachers with disabilities, receive comprehensive training on the use of Braille and sign language with a view to improving the education of all children with disabilities, including boys and girls who are blind, deaf-blind, deaf or hard of hearing. The Committee also recommends that inclusive education should form an integral part of teacher training at university and during continuing professional development.</p>
Bulgaria	2018	<p>50. The Committee recommends that the State party, in accordance with general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education:</p> <p>(a) Replace segregated education systems with quality inclusive education;</p> <p>(b) Raise awareness of the advantages of quality inclusive education for society, in particular for teachers and other education staff, and also for parents of children without disabilities;</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (education)
		<p>(c) Intensify its efforts to ensure quality inclusive education and the provision of reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities in mainstream schools, including by allocating sufficient human, technical and financial resources for it;</p> <p>(d) Collect data on the number of children and young people with disabilities not currently enrolled in any form of education, disaggregated by age, sex, type of impairment and place of residence, and develop a strategy to include these children in the mainstream education system.</p>
Cyprus	2017	<p>50. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Decide upon a clear legislative scope of inclusive education and monitor its implementation with a view to fully replacing segregated education by inclusive education; (b) Adopt a clear, targeted and adequately funded plan of action that includes access to reasonable accommodation and adequate teacher education and training, and progressively ensure that children and adult learners with disabilities are able to exercise their right to inclusive education; (c) Be guided by general comment No. 4 (2016) and targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals in ensuring equal access to all levels and types of education, education facilities and vocational training by persons with disabilities.</p>
Czechia	2015	<p>48. The Committee recommends that the State party implement the amended School Act, incorporate inclusive education as the guiding principle of the education system and ensure the admission of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, in line with article 24 of the Convention. The Committee calls upon the State party to intensify its efforts and to allocate sufficient financial and human resources for reasonable accommodations that will enable boys and girls with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities and autism, and deaf-blind children, to receive inclusive quality education.</p>
Germany	2015	<p>46. The Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Immediately develop a strategy, action plan, timeline and targets to provide access to a high-quality, inclusive education system across all Länder, including the required financial resources and personnel at all levels;</p> <p>(b) Scale down segregated schools to facilitate inclusion and ensure that the law and policies uphold the duty that mainstream schools enrol children with disabilities with immediate effect if that is their choice;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided at all levels of education and that the right to such accommodation is legally enforceable and justiciable before the courts;</p> <p>(d) Ensure the training of all teachers in inclusive education, increased accessibility of the school environment, materials and curricula, and the provision of sign language in mainstream schools, including at the post-doctoral level.</p>
Denmark	2014	<p>53. The Committee recommends that the State party amend its legislation to ensure the inclusion of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system, with adequate support and accommodation, in particular through the provision of adequate training to teachers and other employees in the school system in all parts of the Kingdom of Denmark, in order to ensure quality education for pupils with disabilities. The State party should take measures to address discrepancies in accomplishment rates between pupils with and without disabilities at all levels of education.</p> <p>55. The Committee recommends that the State party amend its legislation to ensure that all children with disabilities can submit a complaint to an independent authority if they do not receive adequate educational support.</p>
Estonia	2021	<p>47. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the Right to inclusive education and the Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 4.5 and indicator 4 (a), the Committee recommends, that the State party: (a) Develop the strategy for implementing quality inclusive education with</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (education)
		<p>specific targets, timelines, budget allocation, and share of responsibilities between national and municipal levels; (b) Establish a policy framework that recognises the right of persons with disabilities to seek, individualized supports as reasonable accommodation in education, when so required; (c) Ensure education is an area of life covered under anti-discrimination and includes the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination; (d) Provide students with disabilities with assistive compensatory aids and learning materials in alternative/accessible formats, including inclusive digital access, modes and means of communication, including Easy Read, communication aids and assistive and information technology, and ensure teachers fluent in Estonian Sign Language; (e) Take measures, including the provision of technical equipment, and the adoption of regulations to ensure that children with disabilities receive the individualized support required within the quality and inclusive education system during the COVID-19 pandemic period, especially in rural areas and those facing economic hardship, and guarantee for children with chronic diseases equal access to school.</p>
Greece	2019	<p>5. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, and taking into account Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially targets 4.5 and 4.a, the Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to guarantee inclusive education, and in particular that it:</p> <p>(a) Adopt and implement a coherent strategy on inclusive education in the mainstream educational system;</p> <p>(b) Ensure the accessibility of school and university environments, in line with the Convention, by promoting universal design, the provision of specific measures and individualized support, such as accessible and adapted materials, inclusive curricula, inclusive information and communication technologies for pupils and students with disabilities, and digital pedagogy;</p> <p>(c) Immediately ensure access to formal education for all refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children with disabilities, and for Roma children with disabilities;</p> <p>(d) Allocate effective and sufficient financial and material resources and adequately and regularly trained personnel, including persons with disabilities, to effectively guarantee inclusive education;</p> <p>(e) Incorporate inclusive education training into higher education curricula for trainee teachers, and into training programmes for current teaching staff, with an adequate budget.</p>
Spain	2011	<p>44. The Committee reiterates that denial of reasonable accommodation constitutes discrimination and that the duty to provide reasonable accommodation is immediately applicable and not subject to progressive realization. It recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Increase its efforts to provide reasonable accommodation in education, by: allocating sufficient financial and human resources to implement the right to inclusive education; paying particular attention to assessing the availability of teachers with specialist qualifications; and ensuring that educational departments of local governments understand their obligations under the Convention and act in conformity with its provisions;</p> <p>(b) Ensure that the decisions to place children with a disability in a special school or in special classes, or to offer them solely a reduced-standard curriculum, are taken in consultation with the parents;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that the parents of children with disabilities are not obliged to pay for the education or for the measures of reasonable accommodation in mainstream schools;</p> <p>(d) Ensure that decisions on placing children in segregated settings can be appealed swiftly and effectively.</p>
Finland		[Not yet scheduled].

Country	Year	Recommendations (education)
France	2019	<p>[from the List of Issues raised in September 2019].</p> <p>25. Please provide data on children with disabilities in the mainstream educational system, disaggregated by disability, age, gender, rural and urban areas, place of residence, socioeconomic status, and ethnic or national origin, as well as by educational setting (including segregated or inclusive classrooms within mainstream schools and in medico-social institutions) and level of education. Please also provide data on children with disabilities who are excluded from the educational system.</p> <p>26. Please further inform the Committee about concrete measures taken to:</p> <p>(a) Adopt a policy and concrete measures to promote the shift towards an inclusive educational system at all levels, including in preschool and in higher education, that also address the situation of persons considered “without a solution” and those currently in medico-social institutions;</p> <p>(b) Train educational personnel, including examination authorities, on the right to inclusive education and flexible and multiple forms of examination methods;</p> <p>(c) Ensure the access of young people and adults with disabilities to mainstream vocational education and support their transition into the open labour market;</p> <p>(d) Include Roma children with disabilities in mainstream schools and provide information on legal prerequisites and practices in this regard.</p>
Croatia	2015	<p>36. The Committee recommends that the State party take immediate steps to ensure that all persons with disabilities have access to inclusive quality primary, secondary and tertiary education and that reasonable accommodation is provided in mainstream education. It also recommends establishing the principle that exclusionary and segregated education is discriminatory. It recommends that teachers and other professionals receive training on inclusive education and that all secondary education facilities be made accessible to persons with disabilities.</p>
Hungary	2012	<p>41. The Committee calls upon the State party to allocate sufficient resources for the development of an inclusive education system for children with disabilities. It reiterates that denial of reasonable accommodation constitutes discrimination and recommends that the State party significantly increase its efforts to: provide reasonable accommodation to children with disabilities based on the student’s individual requirements; provide students with disabilities with the required support within the general education system; and to continue training teachers and all other educational staff to enable them to work in inclusive educational settings.</p> <p>42. The Committee urges the State party to develop programmes to ensure that Roma children with disabilities are included in mainstream education programmes, without disregarding the provision of reasonable accommodation that might be needed to obtain the desired outcome.</p>
Ireland		[Not yet scheduled].
Italy	2016	<p>56. The Committee recommends that the State party implement an action plan — with sufficient resources, timelines and specific goals — aimed at monitoring the implementation of laws, decrees and regulations to improve the quality of inclusive education in classrooms, support provisions and teacher training across all levels. It also recommends that the State party be guided by article 24 of the Convention, including its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, in implementing targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training, and build and upgrade education facilities that are disability-sensitive and safe.</p> <p>58. The Committee recommends that the State party monitor and provide highly qualified sign language interpreters for any deaf child who requests such assistance, and to desist from recommending general communication assistants as an exclusive alternative.</p> <p>60. The committee recommends that the State party undertake, through</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (education)
		legislative and other measures, including the newly drafted decree on education, to guarantee the availability of accessible learning materials and the provision of assistive technology in a timely manner in order to ensure inclusive and quality education in the mainstream setting.
Lithuania	2016	<p>46. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt and implement a coherent strategy on inclusive education in the mainstream educational system in accordance with article 24 of the Convention and with reference to Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially its targets 4.5 and 4.8. Through such a strategy, the State party should:</p> <p>(a) Ensure the accessibility of school environments, the provision of reasonable accommodation, accessible and adapted materials and curricula, and the compulsory pre-service and in-service training of all teachers on inclusive education;</p> <p>(b) Secure a sufficient number of accessible means of transport to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Set clear timelines, targets, baselines and indicators to secure time-bound and measurable progress;</p> <p>(d) Allocate effective and adequate financial, material and adequately trained human resources.</p> <p>47. The Committee recommends that the State party guarantee a legally enforceable right to inclusive, quality and free primary education and to affordable secondary education on an equal basis with others.</p> <p>48. The Committee also recommends that the State party facilitate access for persons with disabilities to tertiary education and vocational training, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation in higher education.</p>
Luxembourg	2017	<p>43. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially its targets 4.5 and 4.8, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Amend the laws on education to ensure that no student is refused admission to mainstream schools on the basis of disability, ensure accessibility and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation, including assistant support staff, including pre-school and tertiary education and the private sector; (b) Adopt a legally defined procedure for the provision of reasonable accommodation at all levels of education and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation according to individual requirements in consultation with the person concerned; (c) Design and implement an action plan on inclusive education with sufficient resources, timelines and specific goals; (d) Increase awareness-raising initiatives, including training on inclusive education and its implementation mandatory for teachers, support teachers and non-teaching education personnel; (e) Increase data collection on, among others, the implementation of education laws and policies, and accessibility of school infrastructures, information and communications, including information and communications technology, to inform inclusive education policies.</p>
Latvia	2017	<p>41. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially targets 4.5 and 4 (a) thereof, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that no child is refused admission to mainstream schools on the basis of disability, and that it further allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation to facilitate the accessibility of all students with disabilities to quality, inclusive education, including in preschool, tertiary and lifelong learning institutions.</p>
Malta	2018	<p>36. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially targets 4.5 and 4.a, the Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Ensure the implementation of its laws on education, and accelerate the</p>

Country	Year	Recommendations (education)
		<p>adoption process of the bill on the Convention, to ensure that violations of the rights under article 24 of the Convention become justiciable in the State party;</p> <p>(b) Adopt measures to ensure that students with disabilities, including students with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, are provided with reasonable accommodation at all levels of education, and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation according to individual requirements in consultation with the person concerned, including the provision of learning support educators and their replacements when they are absent;</p> <p>(c) Ensure accessible mechanisms for accountability and redress in cases in which educational institutions, such as childcare centres and summer schools, or teachers discriminate against students on the basis of their disability;</p> <p>(d) Review the curriculum of students with disabilities through individualized education plans to ensure that the curricula allow them to learn the skills required to access the job market on an equal basis with others;</p> <p>(e) Carry out research on the extent to which accessibility standards are being complied with in the State party to obtain a full understanding of the barriers persons with disabilities face in the education system and the solutions required to enable their full participation, and to make research findings on the socioeconomic and cultural benefits of inclusive education available to all relevant stakeholders.</p>
Netherlands		[Not yet scheduled].
Poland	2018	<p>42. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, targets 4.5 and 4 (a), the Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Enact specific provisions to support the implementation of reasonable accommodation, individualized learning curriculum and inclusive classroom teaching in accessible learning environments;</p> <p>(b) Support measures for schools, including support for teachers, to advance inclusive education for students with moderate or severe disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Raise awareness among parents of non-disabled children about the advantages of inclusive education for all, and provide training for school masters and teachers on inclusive education methods and best practices.</p>
Portugal	2016	<p>45. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, review its legislation on education to bring it into line with the Convention and take measures to provide additional resources and materials to facilitate access to and enjoyment of inclusive education of high quality for all students with disabilities, providing public schools with the resources they need to ensure the inclusion of all students with disabilities in ordinary classrooms.</p> <p>46. The Committee recommends that the State party consider the relationship between article 24 of the Convention and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training, as well as to build and upgrade education facilities to make them disability-sensitive and safe.</p> <p>48. The Committee recommends that the State party introduce in its legislation regulations on the access of students with disabilities to higher education and vocational training on an equal basis with other students, while providing reasonable accommodation and the required support services.</p>
Romania		[Not yet scheduled].
Sweden	2014	48. The Committee urges the State party to guarantee the inclusion of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system and ensure that they have the required support.

Country	Year	Recommendations (education)
Slovenia	2018	40. 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 recommends that the State party: (a) Recognize the right of all children with disabilities to inclusive education and abandon segregated education schemes; (b) Adopt a strategy and action plan with a clear time frame for the implementation of inclusive education at all levels for all children with disabilities and, further, establish a comprehensive monitoring system to assess the progress of inclusive education; (c) Strengthen the capacity of inclusive schools to train teachers in inclusive education, curriculum accommodation and teaching methods. The State party should enhance the quality of educational support by adopting an individualized approach to children with disabilities and their capacity-building; (d) Provide lifelong learning for persons with disabilities and ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodation in all tertiary education institutions, including vocational and higher education schools; (e) Provide transport services for students with disabilities from their place of residence to their education facilities.
Slovakia	2016	68. The Committee recommends that the State party pay attention to the links between article 24 of the Convention and targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee also recommends that the State party: (a) Introduce an enforceable right to inclusive and quality education in the Education Act, including by defining inclusive education in accordance with the Incheon Declaration on education 2030: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and Sustainable Development Goal No. 4; (b) Adopt a legally binding plan for the transition from segregated schools into inclusive education at all levels, including by setting timelines, identifying responsible authorities, and allocating adequate resources; (c) Ensure that all children with disabilities who so require have access to personal assistance and allocate resources for this purpose; (d) Ensure available, accessible and inclusive preschool education for all children with disabilities; (e) Put an end to the process of placing Roma children in segregated schools for children with disabilities on the basis of their ethnic background.

4 Situation and trend analysis

The most recent data for analysis of the situation of disabled people in the EU are time-lagged. They provide a snapshot, or baseline, in 2019 and prior to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Some data is now emerging from 2020 and it will be a priority for the next Semester cycle to ensure this impact is tracked. The 2019 data will be incorporated into the EDE country fiches in 2021 and supplemented by new data from national sources, where available. Caution should be attached to data predating the crisis and a fuller retrospective analysis may be needed in one or two years from now. Nevertheless, taking the long view on disability trends since the financial crisis of 2008 highlights some of the policy risks that need to be addressed in 2021-22.

4.1 A note on the use of EU data

Unless specified, the summary statistics presented in this report are drawn from EU-SILC micro data⁴² or from corresponding statistics published in the Eurostat health database.⁴³ The EU-SILC sample includes people living in private households and does not include people living in institutions. 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’.⁴⁴ Response rates to this question vary between countries and national data sources are added in the country reports for comparison, or context, where available. These methodological issues are analysed and explained in some detail in past annual statistical reports published by ANED⁴⁵ and summarised in the most recent EDE statistical report.⁴⁶ The underpinning concepts and implementation are also explained on the Eurostat web pages.⁴⁷

The tables and charts here show the most recent data available for EU27. In most cases, this requires analysis of microdata that is two years old (e.g. presenting EU-SILC estimates from 2019 in 2021). The main indicators are then updated in the EDE country fiches during the policy cycle to include the latest year’s estimates for some items updated by Eurostat (notably for estimates of poverty or social exclusion). This allows for a closer alignment with Commission analyses during the Autumn phase of the Semester. Some of the more complex breakdowns require comparisons or aggregates of historical data, which are indicated accordingly. The available data do not cover the period of the COVID-19 crisis.

⁴² EUSILC UDB 2019 – extracted April and May 2021 from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>.

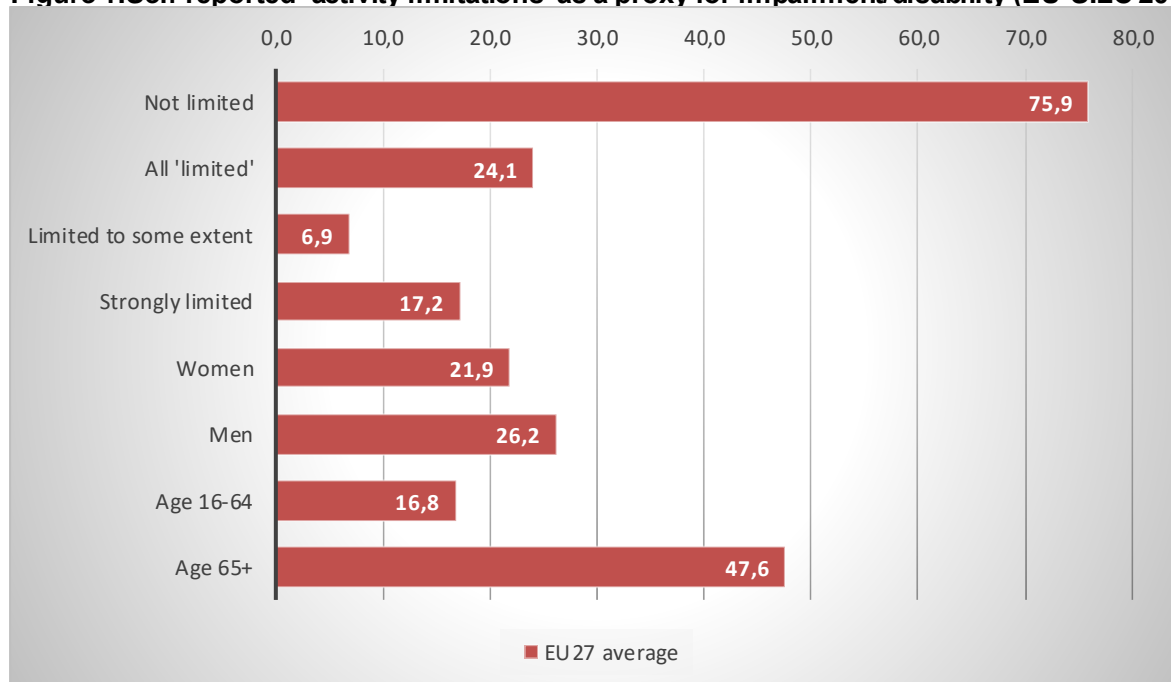
⁴³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁴⁴ The SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM) [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_\(MEHM\)](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_(MEHM)).

⁴⁵ Academic Network of European Disability Experts (2020) *Statistical indicators* <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

⁴⁶ European Disability Expertise (EDE) (2021) European comparative data on Europe 2020 and persons with disabilities, Labour market, education, poverty and health, analysis and trends, statistical report including EU SILC data 2019 (not yet published).

⁴⁷ Eurostat (2015) *Disability statistics introduced*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics_introduced.

Figure 1: Self-reported 'activity limitations' as a proxy for impairment/disability (EU-SILC 2019)

Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of May 2021.

As noted in the EDE statistical report, in 2019 about 24.1 % of persons aged 16 and over declared an activity limitation, which was a decrease on the previous year but against an underlying trend of increase in the disabled population in line with the ageing demographic of European societies.⁴⁸ This suggests an estimate of nearly 90 million people in the EU Member States (not including children aged under 16 or persons living in institutions). Of these, more than one quarter declare a severe level of activity limitation (7 % of the EU population or more than 20 million people). This proportion is rising incrementally year on year due to the ageing demographic (more women than men also declare activity limitation overall due to the gendered pattern of ageing). In 2019, more than one in five (20.3 %) of the population was aged 65 and over and more than half the population is now aged above 40 years, when the rate of onset of impairment also tends to increase.⁴⁹

Although estimates of disability prevalence from general household survey data should be treated with caution, they do evidence, consistently, that a large group of EU citizens are affected, and they underline the policy significance of disability issues for the EU and its Member States. Indeed, the population of adults who declare a functional impairment is larger than the total population of any one EU Member State.

In subsequent tables, these prevalence data are used as a proxy to estimate 'disability' equality in the main policy areas of employment, education and poverty risk.⁵⁰ Tables

⁴⁸ Anomalies in the historical EU trend have arisen from methodological changes or breaks in the time series of some Member States, including Germany and Italy, which affect the average due to the large size of these countries, and by the UK's withdrawal from the EU (France, Germany, Italy and the UK accounted for more than 50 % of the disabled population in EU 28).

⁴⁹ Eurostat (2020) *Population structure and ageing*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_structure_and_ageing.

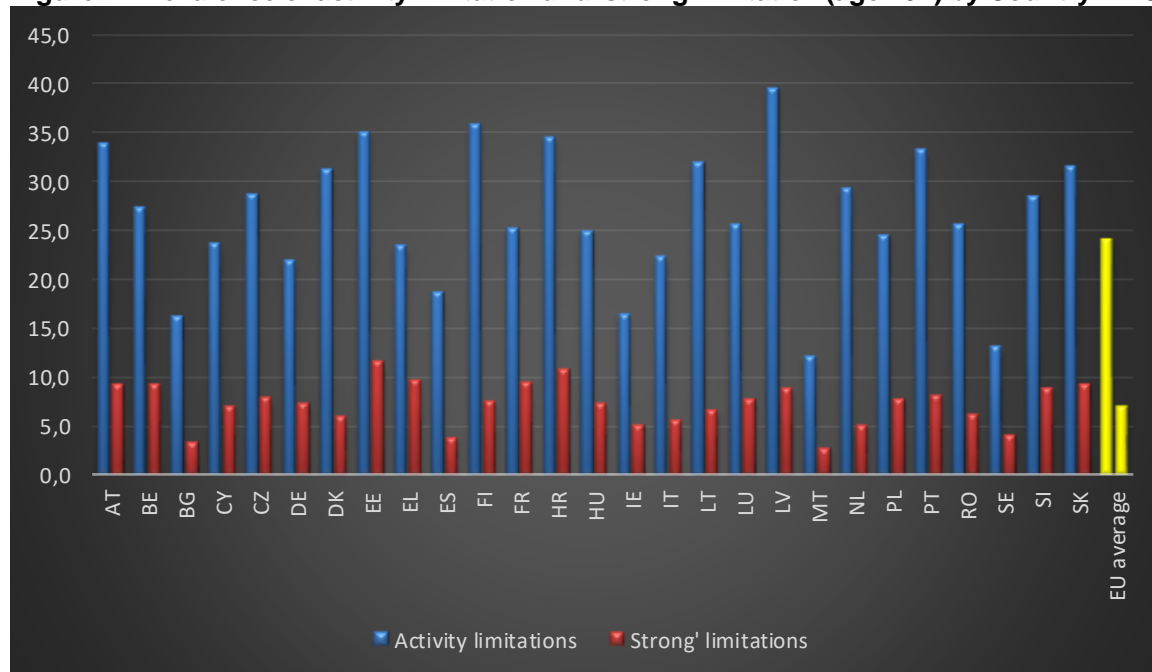
⁵⁰ The methodology is further explained in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

are presented by disaggregating the estimated proportion of people who report and do not report limitations for each indicator (e.g. among those who are employed, unemployed, at risk of poverty, etc.). The analysis combines this evidence of disability equality outcomes with documentary policy evidence from the EU and Member States.

4.1.1 Variation in prevalence estimates

The range of prevalence estimates for the Member States, in the 2019 EU-SILC data, is shown in Figure 2. There is less variation between countries in the estimate for persons declaring 'strong' limitation in activities (the proxy for severe impairment).

Figure 2: Prevalence of activity limitation and 'strong' limitation (age 16+) by Country in 2019



Estimates of disability prevalence based on self-reporting are prone to variation between countries and age groups, which may be due to differences in survey methodology, sampling or cultural-linguistic responses to questioning about health and impairment. This variation is discussed in the EDE statistical report but, to summarise, we can observe variation in both the estimated rate of prevalence and its range of variation per country and over time. There are also some distinct time-series breaks within individual countries, resulting from changes in national methodology.

Figure 3 plots the annual national averages for all available observations from 2008 to 2019 (12 years for most Member States) and for those who report more severe levels of limitation/impairment, in Figure 4. From a total of 320 observations in 27 Member States, the lowest observed prevalence rate was 9.7 % in Malta and the highest 41.6 % Latvia (mean 25.9 %, SD=6.4). The widest in-country variation was in Germany, due mainly to a change of methodology in 2015. This and other country anomalies are explained in the EDE statistical report and previous ANED reports. The range is similar if we consider the most recent three years (11.8 % to 41.3 %, mean 26.7 %) and in 2019 it was 11.9 % to 39.5 % (mean 26.4 %). It is worth noting that, while there is wide variation in the rate within and between countries, the ranking of countries on this indicator is much less variable.

Figure 3: Simple Boxplot of Prevalence of activity limitation (age 16+) by Country

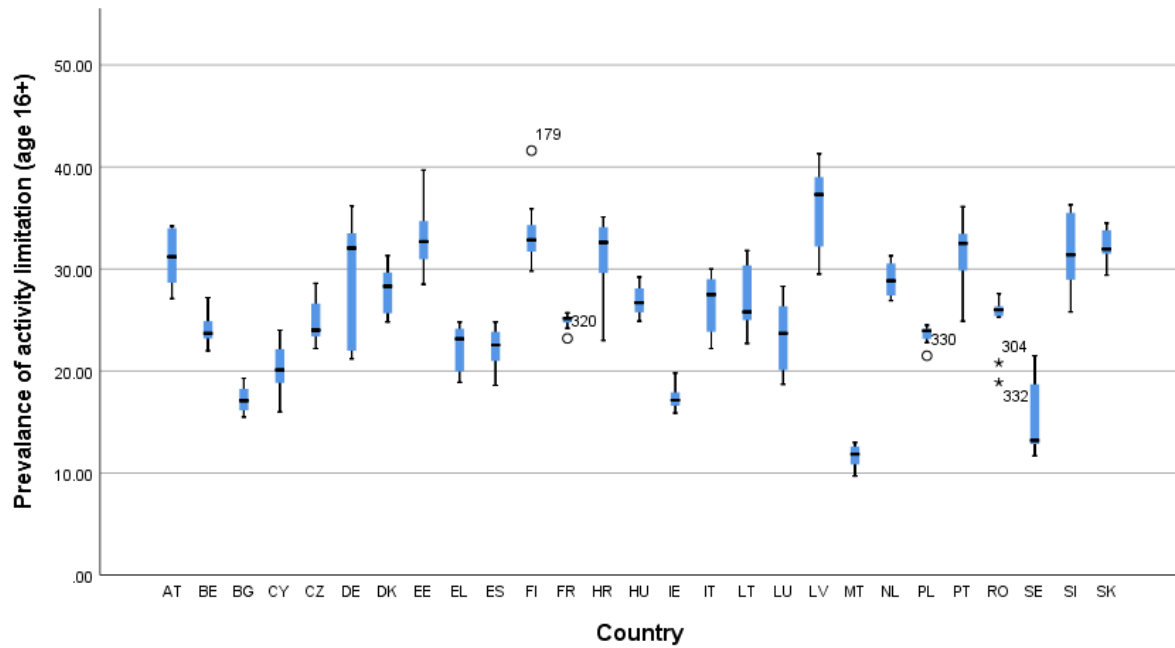
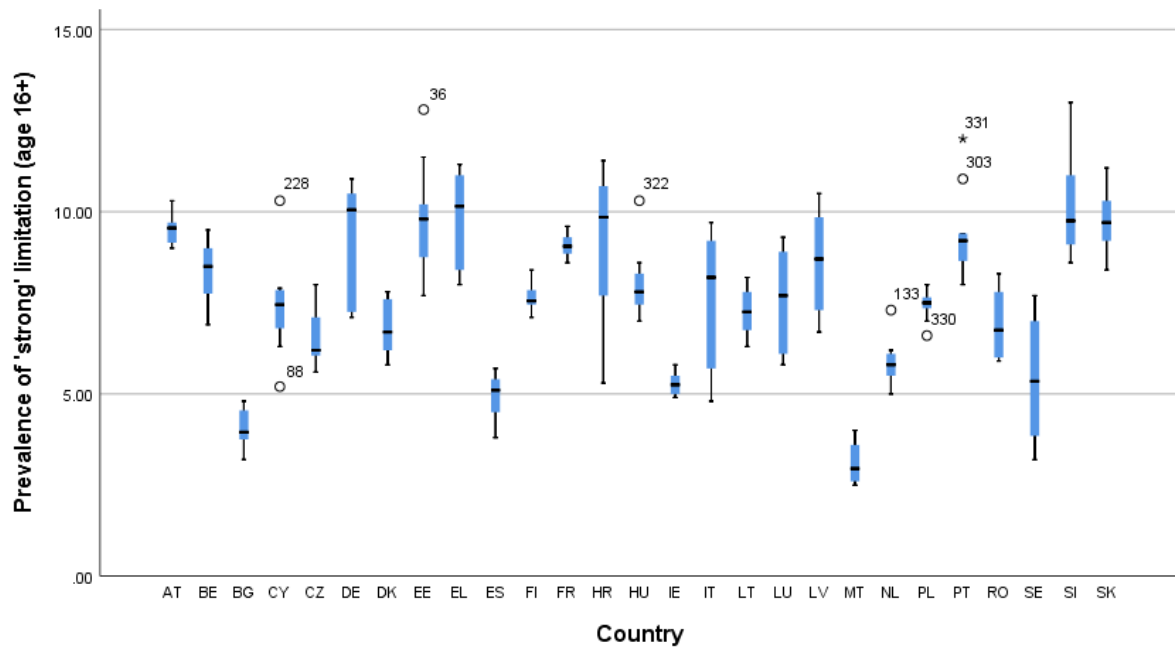


Figure 4: Simple Boxplot of Prevalence of 'strong' limitation (age 16+) by Country



Variation in disability prevalence estimates is a well-known phenomenon in social surveys.⁵¹ For example, using the Washington Group Short Set questions may underestimate inequalities on some outcome measures compared to the GALI survey

⁵¹ Mitra, S., & Sambamoorthi, U. (2014). Disability prevalence among adults: estimates for 54 countries and progress toward a global estimate. *Disability and rehabilitation*, 36(11), 940-947.

measure.⁵² Such discussions lead to some speculation about the impact prevalence estimates may have on other dependent variables when used as input to cross-national comparison (e.g. when estimating disability employment rates or disability poverty rates). These impacts of cross-country variation in prevalence are examined later but, overall, do not appear to invalidate broad comparisons if they are taken into account and controlled as a contributory factor in the analysis (e.g. by noting outliers, using a multi-year average, or adding the variable in regressions). In principle, it might be possible to construct statistical weightings for disability prevalence in the SILC data, but this would require a more advanced analysis than is possible here.

4.2 Disability and inclusion in the labour market

The following analysis draws on the summary statistical tables produced from EU-SILC data by EDE to inform Commission input to the Semester process (and consistent with those produced for ANED since 2008 for the same purpose). Continuity of reporting up to 2019 assists in establishing general patterns and trends, and in controlling for some data variability effects between years. The introduction of disability items into the harmonised core of the Labour Force Survey will present new, and greatly enhanced, opportunities for disaggregation and analysis in future policy cycles.

4.2.1 Strategic context

Article 27 CRPD refers to a wide range of policy steps that need to be taken, including the prohibition of disability discrimination in ‘all matters concerning all forms of employment’, protecting ‘just and favourable conditions of work’ and ‘labour and trade union rights’, promoting equal opportunities in work and training, and ensuring ‘reasonable accommodation’ is provided in the workplace.⁵³

The EU disability strategy invokes the Employment Equality Directive and the Social Pillar as a starting point, affirming the right to participate in the labour market without discrimination and to an adapted work environment. It also proposes that ‘participation in employment is the best way to ensure economic autonomy and social inclusion’ (p. 13). The Commission is expected to report on application of the Directive in 2021 and to present a policy package on employment in 2022, with a particular focus on interpreting the employment guidelines linked to the Semester. Further practical policy guidance, and good practice, has been developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in recent years.⁵⁴

Labour market segmentation remains a concern in some Member States but this is not observable from headline employment statistical, which present a unified picture of the labour market rather than insights to employment sectors, job quality or wage differences. Segmentation should be considered among the explanatory factors for analysis at country level, where relevant, and reference to CRPD documentation may assist with this. There has been no General Comment from the UN CRPD Committee

⁵² Amilon, A., Hansen, K. M., Kjær, A. A., & Steffensen, T. (2021). Estimating disability prevalence and disability-related inequalities: Does the choice of measure matter?. *Social Science & Medicine*, 272, 113740.

⁵³ <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=287>.

⁵⁴ ILO (2021) *Disability and work*, [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/disability-and-work/lang-en/index.htm).

on this Article to date⁵⁵ but the UN Committee views the structural segregation of people with disabilities in employment in a similar light to segregated education or institutional care. For example, in its 2015 Concluding Observations to Germany, the CRPD Committee expressed concern about 'segregation in the labour market' and 'the fact that segregated, sheltered workshops fail to prepare workers for or promote transition to the open labour market'.⁵⁶ Understanding the extent to which employment policies integrate or marginalise job search and placement for disabled people is a relevant concern for analysis. Labour market segmentation has disability implications also for the Social Pillar concerns with equality, labour rights and wage setting.⁵⁷

In its 2015 Concluding Observations to the EU, the UN Committee expressed its concern at 'the high unemployment rates for persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, in comparison with other groups of population in the European Union'. Accordingly:

The Committee recommends that the European Union take effective actions to measure the employment of persons with disabilities and to increase their employment rate in open labour market, including by providing training for Member States on reasonable accommodation and accessibility in the context of employment.⁵⁸

So, there is an expectation from the UN that the EU Framework has some competence and responsibility not only to protect non-discrimination rights arising from Directive 2000/78/EC but also in its capacity for the coordination and monitoring of Member States' employment policies (i.e. in the development of employment statistics and through the advisory process of the European Semester). The Commission's new guidance on equality mainstreaming in preparation of the 2021 RRP provides a model for future guidance on Semester plans and situational analyses. This would assist the co-ordination between European Semester and the UN CRPD processes (i.e. in National Reform Programmes and Commission Country Reports).

4.2.2 Disability and employment rates

Data on the employment situation of disabled people is presented in the EDE statistical review accompanying this synthesis report (using the most recent disability data from 2019). This presents comparisons between the Eurostat employment estimations (following the Scorecard methodology, based on EU-LFS data) and disability indicators (based on EU-SILC data). The SILC indicators for disability employment provide interim estimates in the absence of a disability variable in the harmonised core of the EU-LFS questionnaire (i.e. disability statistics cannot be disaggregated in the same way gender employment statistics until this becomes available). Some individual Member States do report the employment situation of disabled people from national

⁵⁵ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/GC.aspx>.

⁵⁶ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fDEU%2fCO%2f1.

⁵⁷ These are addressed in the Social Pillar analysis provided by ANED in 2016-17, <https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/870-mainstreaming-disability-rights-in-the-european-pillar-of-social-rights-a-compendium>.

⁵⁸ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fEU%2fCO%2f1.

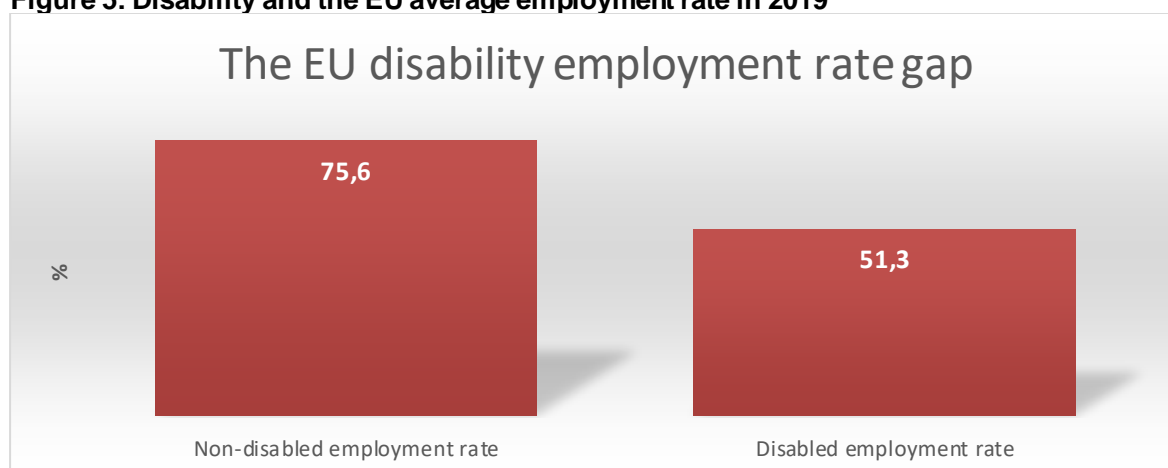
labour surveys and, where available, this should be shown in country reports for comparison. The forthcoming inclusion of a disability variable in the EU LFS core will be a major step forward in mainstreaming disability equality in the Semester.

There is some variation between the estimations based on EU-LFS and those based on EU-SILC. The latter produces an estimated employment rate for the population as a whole that averages slightly lower than the LFS estimate⁵⁹ but the evolution of the two surveys remained strongly correlated over the past decade, and previous findings have proved sufficiently consistent to justify their reliability as indicators of significant gaps and trends. Nevertheless, measurement differences between surveys are larger in some Member States than others.

Using the EU-SILC estimation, at the European level in 2019, the employment rate of disabled persons for the EU27 was about 51.3 % compared to 75.6 % for other persons (on this measure, the total population employment rate in the EU was 71.5 % compared to 73.1 % in the EU-LFS). On this measure, the EU disability employment rate rose above 50 % for the first time in 2017 (when the UK was also included) and has been rising slightly faster than the general employment rate, causing the disability equality gap to narrow below 25 points - although at 24.3 percentage points it remains very wide (see Figure 5).

In summary, there was gradual improvement in the disability employment situation during the years preceding the COVID-19 crisis but little measurable improvement in the disability employment gap. In a strengthening labour market, with labour shortages highlighted in several countries, there remained considerable under-utilised labour potential among disabled people. The disability effect reduced the EU's overall employment rate by more than 4 percentage points (4.1 points in 2019). As new data emerges concerning the economic shock of the current crisis it will be important to analyse whether the relative gains of the past decade are preserved or forfeited for disabled people in the EU.

Figure 5: Disability and the EU average employment rate in 2019

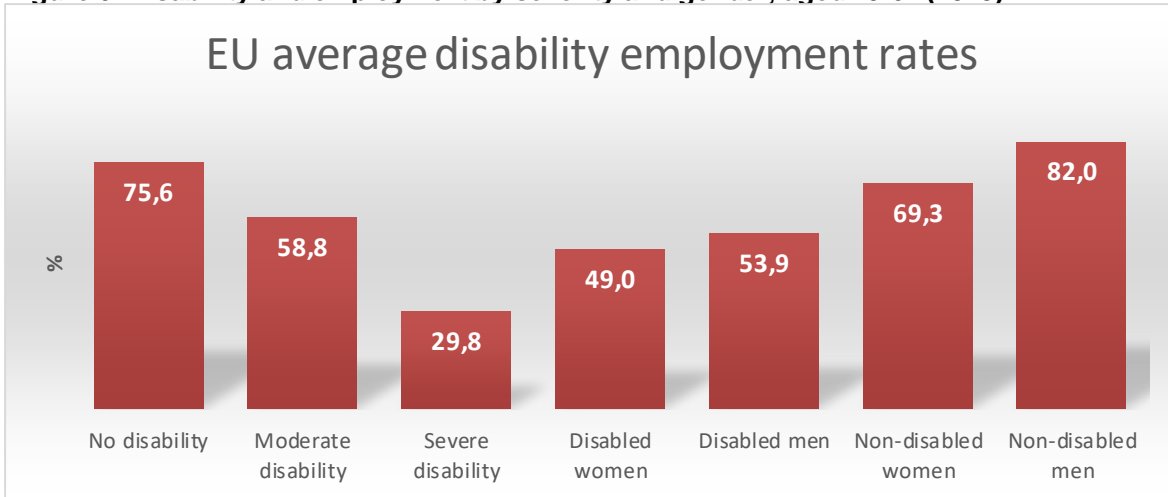


Source: *EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of April 2021*.

⁵⁹ This is due mainly to slight differences in definition and methodology, and of sampling and seasonal factors, which were demonstrated in previously published ANED statistical reports on the EU 2020 indicators. The two surveys produced general employment rates for Austria, Denmark, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland and Slovenia where the difference was larger than 5 percentage points.

Figure 6 shows a breakdown of employment rate estimates for women and men, and for persons with different levels of impairment, at the EU level. A similar table is shown for each country in the EDE country fiches, compared to the EU27 average.

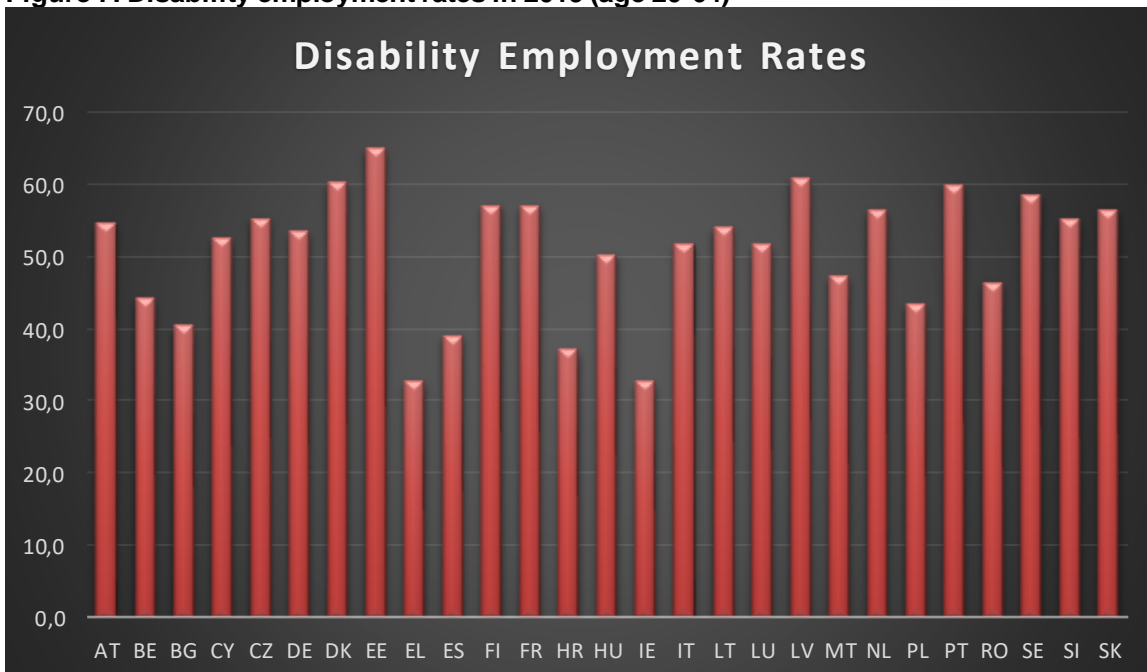
Figure 6: Disability and employment by severity and gender, aged 20-64 (2019)



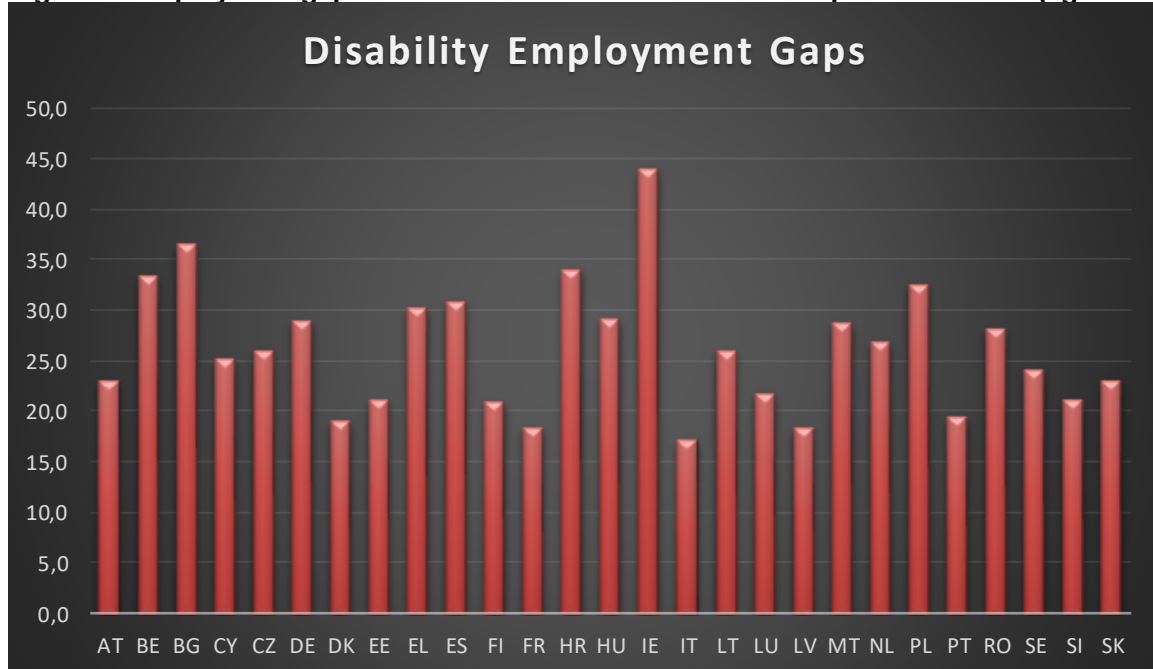
Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of April 2021.

Employment rates are notably lower among disabled people than among other persons in every EU Member State (Figure 7) but the estimated disability employment gap varies widely between countries (as shown in Figure 8). The disability employment rate was below 40 % in Ireland, Greece, Croatia and Spain and above 60 % in Denmark, Latvia and Estonia in 2019. The disability employment gap was above 40 percentage points in Ireland but below 20 points in Italy, Latvia, France, Denmark and Portugal (although these observations should be contextualised for methodological factors).

Figure 7: Disability employment rates in 2019 (age 20-64)

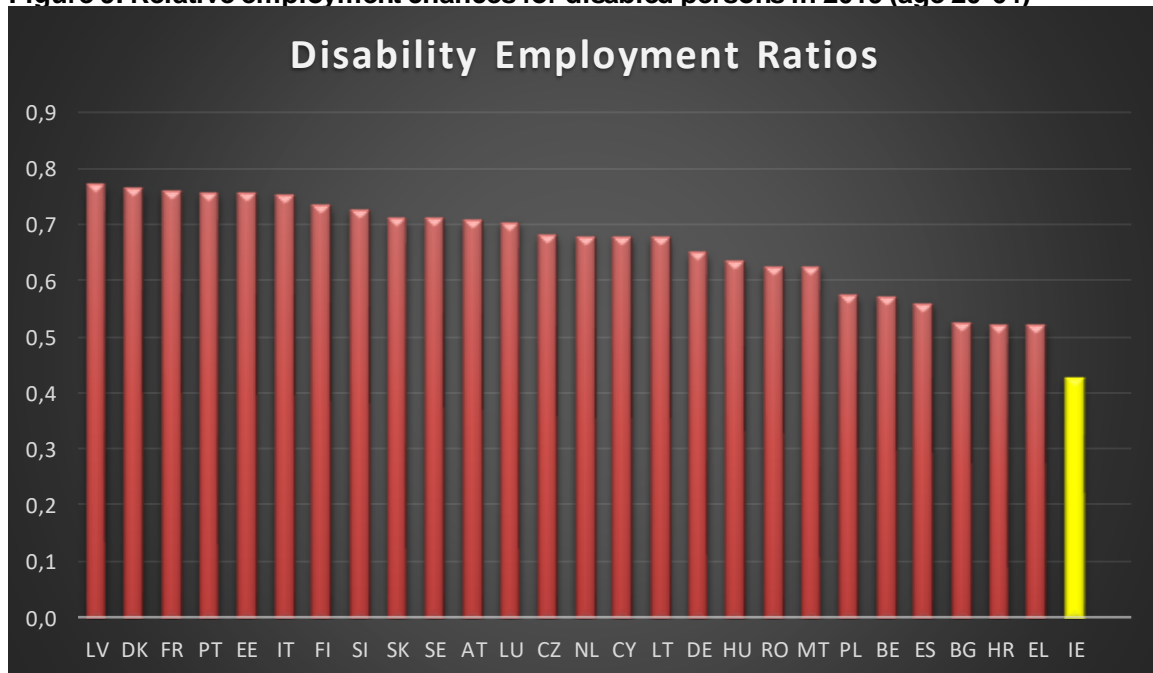


Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of April 2021.

Figure 8: Employment gaps between disabled and non-disabled persons in 2019 (age 20-64)

Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of April 2021.

To contextualise these headlines statistics, it is relevant to consider both the disability employment rate and the disability employment gap in relation to general labour market conditions in each country (the availability of jobs) and to the reported prevalence of disability in each country (the proportion of persons reporting activity limitation in the survey). An apparently low disability employment rate in a country with weak labour market opportunities might not be surprising and a narrower disability employment gap might be predicted if job opportunities are also suppressed for non-disabled people (e.g. in the years following the economic crisis of 2008 low disability employment rates in Greece and Spain were somewhat obscured by low general rates of employment, especially youth unemployment). A wide disability employment gap in a country with generally weak employment opportunities merits further analysis and explanation. One way of controlling for context is to represent the chances of employment for disabled persons relative to non-disabled persons in each country (i.e. as an odds ratio of the disability employment rate and the non-disabled employment rate). This raises an anomaly in the case of Ireland, where the odds of employment for disabled people appear particularly low (explored later). This is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Relative employment chances for disabled persons in 2019 (age 20-64)

Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of April 2021.

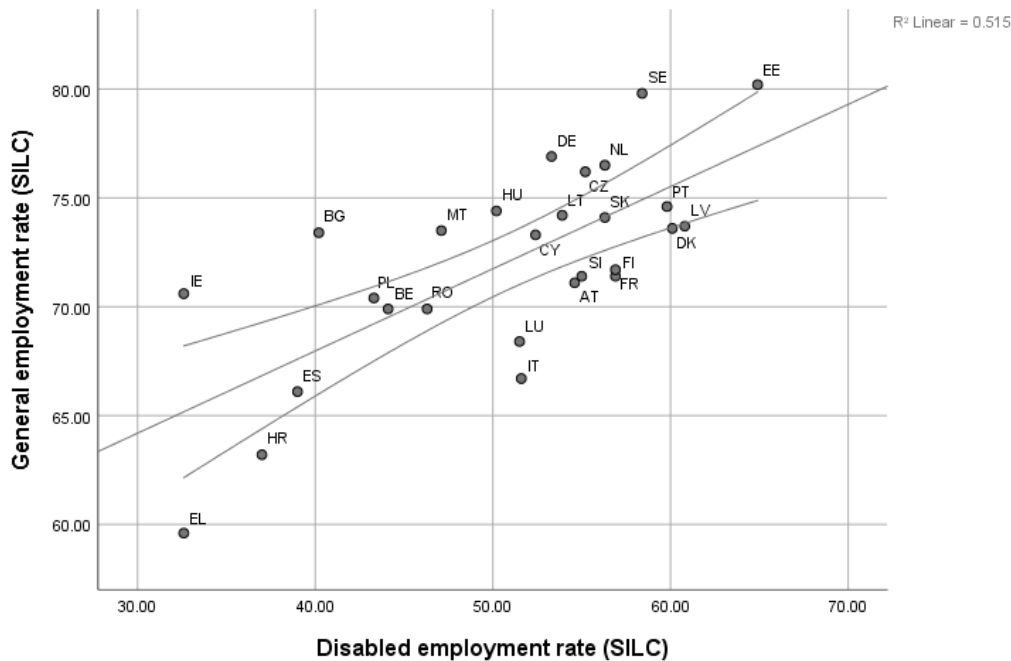
4.2.3 Controlling for variation in labour market conditions

Employment outcomes for disabled people depend on various factors. These include personal factors, the availability of supportive policies, and general labour market conditions. As suggested above, a downturn in job opportunity or job security resulting from the COVID crisis is likely to impact both non-disabled and disabled workers and jobseekers. Following the previous financial crisis disabled people were not necessarily ‘the first to be fired and the last to be hired’ and there was modest evidence of some protective effect on their employment overall, albeit a marginal improvement relative to other persons. The extent of the disability impact might depend, for example, on the degree of segmentation in the labour market (protection in sheltered or quota-based employment), the effectiveness of non-discrimination sanctions, the amount of targeted support (disability employment services and subsidies), and the accessibility of the environment (including public transport and workplaces).

Such factors cannot be easily disaggregated from general labour market data and require country-level analysis of policy factors (which is provided in the EDE country fiches). Nevertheless, it is helpful to contextualise the employment chances of disabled people in relation to general labour market conditions. This can be illustrated by plotting the disability employment rate in each country against the general employment rate (as shown in Figure 10), which confirms the strong positive association (i.e. countries with higher general employment rates tend to exhibit higher disability employment rates). This should be expected and the overall linear correlation between the general employment rate and the disability employment rate is significant ($r = .718$; $p < .01$). In the absence of other explanations, the variation in general labour market

conditions might explain about half of the variation in disability employment rates among the Member States ($R^2 = .515$).⁶⁰

Figure 10: General employment rate (SILC) by Disabled employment rate (SILC) in 2019



This general association appears to have strengthened to some extent in recent years, which is consistent with the earlier observation of a narrowing disability employment gap during the recovery preceding the COVID crisis. Disabled people's chances of employment appeared to be more closely linked to employment chances for other persons in 2019, although this might also reflect changes in data reliability. As the disability employment gap narrowed so the association with general labour market conditions strengthened slightly.

Caution is needed in interpretation at the country level as disability employment outcomes vary widely and most of the cases lie outside the predicted confidence bands for the trend (95 %) but this raises interesting policy questions. Outlier country cases may merit further analysis since their divergence might be explained by a combination of policy factors or methodological factors (in sampling, data definition or response factors). For example, a low disability employment rate in Greece was associated with a low general employment rate but in Ireland a similar disability employment rate was associated with a stronger general employment rate. Cases higher above the trend line are associated with wider disability employment gaps (weaker disability employment chances) than cases below the trend line.

⁶⁰ Since disabled people are included in both the general employment rate and the disability rate it is worth noting the exclusive comparison between disabled and non-disabled people ($r = .686$; $p < .01$; $R^2 = .471$). However, this tends to exaggerate the effect of differences in the prevalence of self-reported activity limitation between national surveys, which is addressed later.

To summarise, disability employment indicators should not be read in isolation. Any modelling of disability employment outcomes should take account of wider job opportunities because these affect all persons in the labour market, albeit to different degrees.

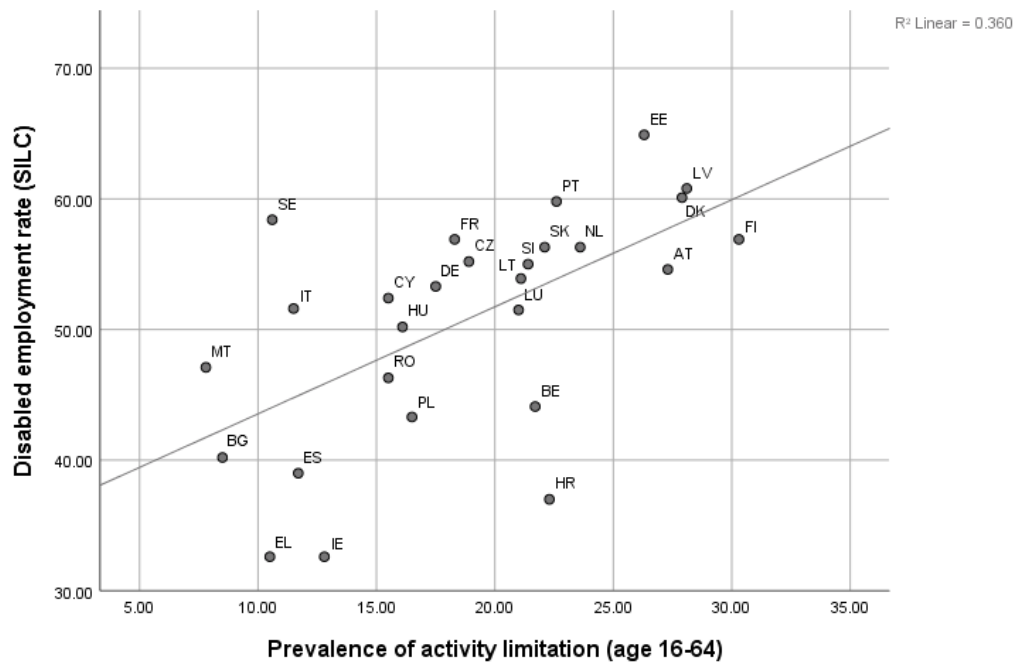
The disability employment rate will be affected by targeted disability employment policies (subsidies, quotas, incentives, accessibility) and by general labour market policies and economic conditions. If disability policies are successful, and disabled people become more integrated into the open labour market, then aggregate disability employment trends will also follow more closely general trends.

There was some evidence of improvement in disability employment outcomes during the period preceding the COVID-19 crisis. Average disability employment rates improved, and disability employment gaps narrowed slightly. The association of average disability employment outcomes with general employment also strengthened.

4.2.4 Controlling for variation in disability prevalence rates

Caution is also needed concerning methodological anomalies and variations in the prevalence of self-reported activity limitation associated with employment outcomes (i.e. countries with higher disability prevalence rates among working age people tend to average higher disability employment rates too but not in a consistent way).

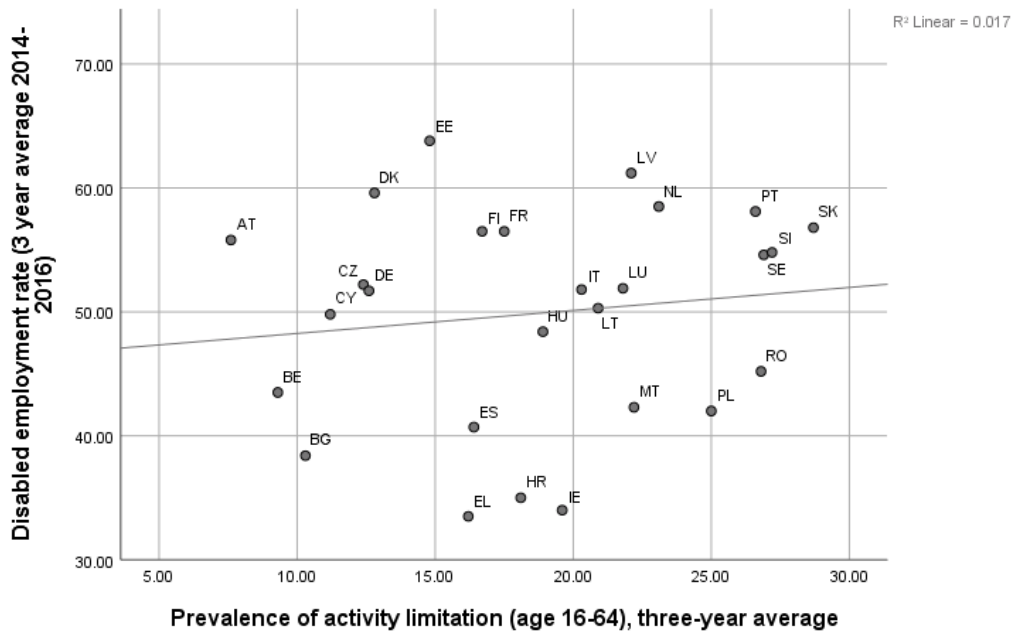
Taking all the data points for the 27 countries in all years since 2008, where available (valid observations N=319), there is a statistically significant but only moderate positive correlation between the reported prevalence of activity limitation in the age group 16-64 and the disability employment rate per country overall ($r=.626$, $p<.01$). This association is shown for the most recent year (2019) in Figure 11. This illustrates the variation as well as the moderate association. For example, while Sweden, Portugal, Denmark, Latvia and Estonia appear to have high disability employment rates they have rather varying prevalence rates. Likewise, Sweden, Italy, Malta, Bulgaria, Spain Greece and Ireland report low prevalence rates but widely varying disability employment rates.

Figure 11: Disabled employment rate (SILC) by Prevalence of activity limitation (age 16-64) in 2019

There have been some large changes in the reported prevalence rates in some countries in some years, and breaks in the time series, for example due to changes in survey methodology (e.g. Germany since 2015, Italy since 2016). This results in some large standard errors across time within countries and within years between countries. There is less variation among the working age population than among older people, but it may be useful to consider an average (e.g. three years) or a trend when assessing prevalence as an artefact effect on outcomes. There is still wide variation between countries on this measure, with fewer than one in ten people aged 16-64 reporting disability in Latvia or Bulgaria on average and more than one in four in Slovenia, Estonia, Denmark, Austria, Finland and Latvia.

Using a three-year average to control for variation in self-reported prevalence weakens the correlation with 2019 employment outcomes slightly ($r=.600$, $p<.01$) but the positive association loses explanatory power ($R^2=0.0180$). The effect is similar when plotting the three-year average prevalence against a three-year average employment rate (Figure 12, $r=.662$, $p<.01$, $R^2=0.017$). Using this control, the countries with the lowest disability employment rates (Ireland, Greece, Croatia and Spain) are not those with the lowest prevalence rates but rather closer to the average.

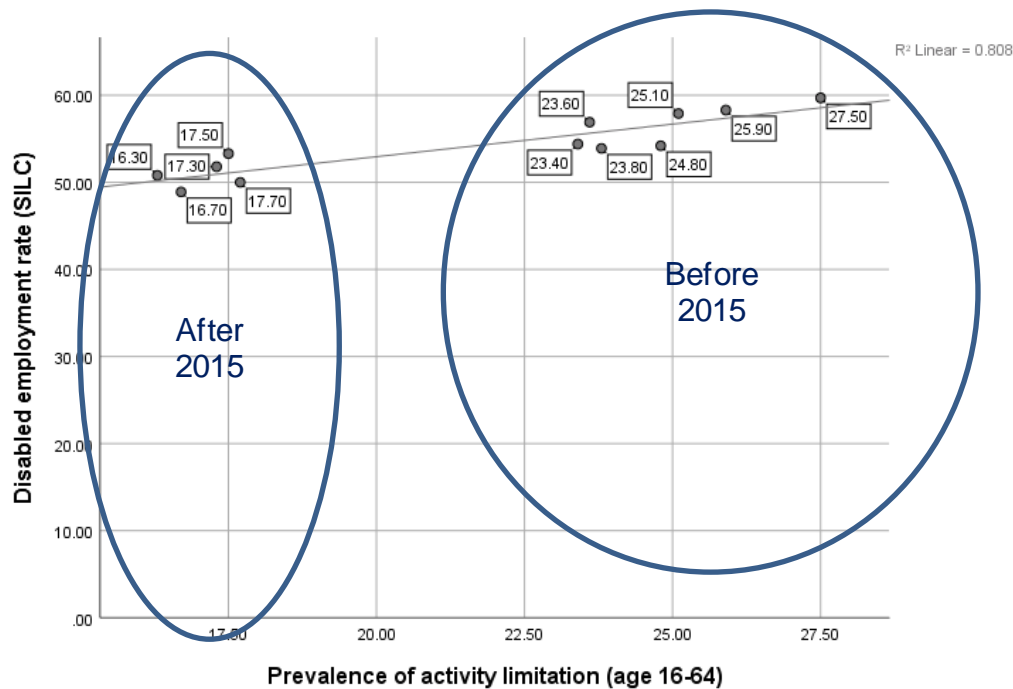
Figure 12: Disabled employment rate by Prevalence of activity limitation (age 16-64), using three-year averages (2017-2019)



In summary, there is greater variation in prevalence rates than in the estimation of employment rates, which are both based on self-reporting in EU-SILC. Prevalence estimates may play a part in some cases as an artefact of the survey methodology, but other factors are needed to explain the patterning of employment outcomes.

Taking Portugal as a country example, there was only a weak positive association between variation in national prevalence estimates and national disability employment rate over the period 2008-2019 ($R^2=0.32$, for 12 data points) despite a wide range in employment rate, which improved over time independently. The sample is limited by the small number of observations but illustrates the weak association between prevalence and outcome within most countries where there are no time-series breaks.

By contrast, a 2015 methodological change in Germany significantly reduced prevalence estimates (restricting the definition towards persons with more severe impairments) and this change was strongly associated with worse disability employment outcomes (two distinct clusters of annual observations, before and after this break, are evident in Figure 13).

Figure 13: Disability employment rate by Prevalence of activity limitation (age 16-64) in Germany (2008-2019)

When considering EU survey estimates it is also useful to triangulate these against national data sources, where they exist. For example, the National Disability Authority in Ireland used 2016 Census data to observe an overall disability prevalence of 13.5 % in the general population,⁶¹ which is smaller than the SILC estimate of 16.4 % for persons aged 16 and over in 2019. The Census question was based on self-reporting against different categories of impairment or difficulty rather than the global activity item used in SILC.⁶² This national data produced a disability employment rate of 36 % in 2016, compared to a SILC estimate of 32.6 % among those aged 20-64 in 2019 (or a three-year average of 34 %). In this example, a lower prevalence in national data resulted in a more optimistic employment rate, although the differences are not great.

A popular hypothesis to explain the prevalence effect is that estimated disability employment rates might be inflated optimistically in countries that over-report persons with low levels of functional impairment in the disability category (because such persons might be closer to the labour market and more likely to be in employment). A more expansive disability definition may dilute negative outcomes, based on averages, while a restrictive definition may intensify them. This is clearly shown by comparing the employment rates of persons with moderate impairments and those with severe impairments in the EU-SILC data (see Figure 6). However, such effects do not so easily explain country variations on equivalent measures, except in specific cases. The German example illustrates this with a known definitional change in the disability category, but it would be misleading to imply that all cases of low reported prevalence

⁶¹ National Disability Authority (2018) *NDA Factsheet 1: Disability Statistics*, <http://nda.ie/resources/factsheets/nda-factsheet-1-disability-statistics-briefing-information1.docx>.

⁶² Central Statistics Office (2018) *Census of Population 2016 – Profile 9 Health, Disability and Carers: Types of Disability*, <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp9hdc/p8hdc/p9tod/>.

result from restrictive disability definitions in survey design (the artefact effect might also be cultural/linguistic or random).

To control for this effect a linear regression was run to predict disability employment rate from the general employment rate and from the working age disability prevalence rate, but without consideration of national policy factors (see Table 13). Taken together, these two variables do predict the pattern of reported employment outcomes in a strong and statistically significant way overall. $F(2, 24) = 22.855$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .722$ (adjusted to .698). Indeed, these two contextual variables might appear to explain around two thirds of the total variation in estimated disability employment rates among the EU27 Member States in 2019. Both variables added significantly to the prediction when the other was controlled but around a third of the variation in disability employment rates still cannot be accounted for by these factors.

On average, in 2019, a one percentage point increase in the general employment rate predicted an increase of 1.17 percentage points in the disability employment rate per country (when variation in the rate of prevalence was controlled), suggesting a small disability employment bonus consistent with a narrowing disability employment gap. The effect of the prevalence rate was rather less, at 0.64 points on average, consistent with the weak positive association outlined earlier.⁶³

Table 13: Predicting disability employment from general employment and prevalence rates in 2019

Coefficients: Dependent Variable: Disabled employment rate (SILC)						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-45.589	14.785		-3.083	.005
	General employment rate (SILC)	1.172	.210	.616	4.216	.000
	Prevalence (age 16-64)	.636	.151	.465	4.216	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Disabled employment rate (SILC)

The range of confidence in these predictions at the country level remains very wide, which underlines that, general predictions do not always hold true for specific countries. This does not devalue the relevance of an EU level headline indicator but, for policy analysis at the national level, a more focused approach is needed in country reports.

In summary, it is important to be aware of a weak positive association between estimates of prevalence, based on self-reporting of activity limitation in EU-SILC. It is also relevant to be aware of significant time series breaks within countries. Prevalence should be factored into modelling outcomes as it varies rather more between countries and years. The effect is rather less than the effect of general labour market conditions, and its association can be largely controlled by taking a multi-year average, but anomalies should be highlighted. Differences in disability outcomes should not be

⁶³ If a similar regression is run for all countries and data points since 2008 the contributions of general employment rate and prevalence are more evenly matched but similarly significant ($F(2, 159) = 24.902$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .712$ (adjusted to .709), with a contribution of .894 and .819 respectively).

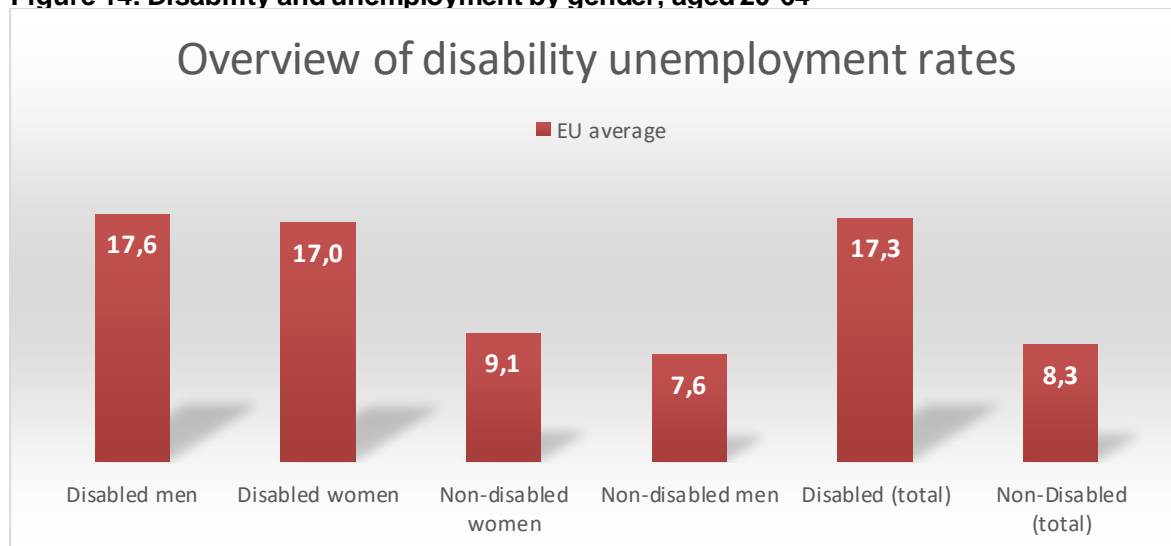
discounted solely on this basis and should be investigated further. From 2022-3, the disaggregation of disability data from the EU-LFS should allow for increasingly robust statistical estimates and breakdowns to be obtained, due to larger sample sizes.

4.2.5 Unemployment

The challenges in comparing disability employment rates are compounded for unemployment rates, for two reasons – the numbers of disabled people in the unemployment category are smaller and national administrative rules and definitions of ‘unemployment’ vary in relation to disability (e.g. whether people in vocational ‘rehabilitation’ programmes are counted as job seekers, trainees or employees). In some countries only ‘registered’ disabled persons are counted by the employment service. The SILC and LFS methodologies also differ⁶⁴ and analysis will be greatly assisted when the disability variable is available in the EU-LFS core.

Disabled women and men report much higher levels of unemployment across the EU, compared to other persons, as shown in Figure 14. The pattern across age groups mirrors the employment rate trend with inequalities at all ages but a widening disability equality gap among older workers, as shown in Figure 15.⁶⁵

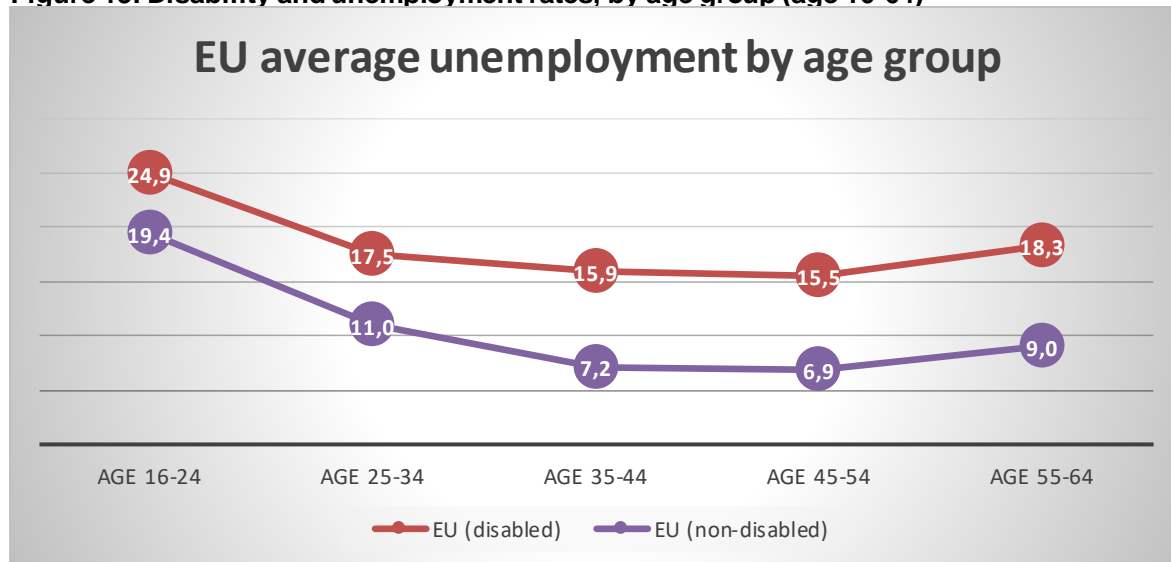
Figure 14: Disability and unemployment by gender, aged 20-64



Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of May 2021.

⁶⁴ EU SILC relies on self-declared current ‘main activity status’, and produces higher estimates of unemployment, but trends from the two surveys run systematically in parallel.

⁶⁵ At the national level, there are limitations of small sample size in the younger age groups for some countries.

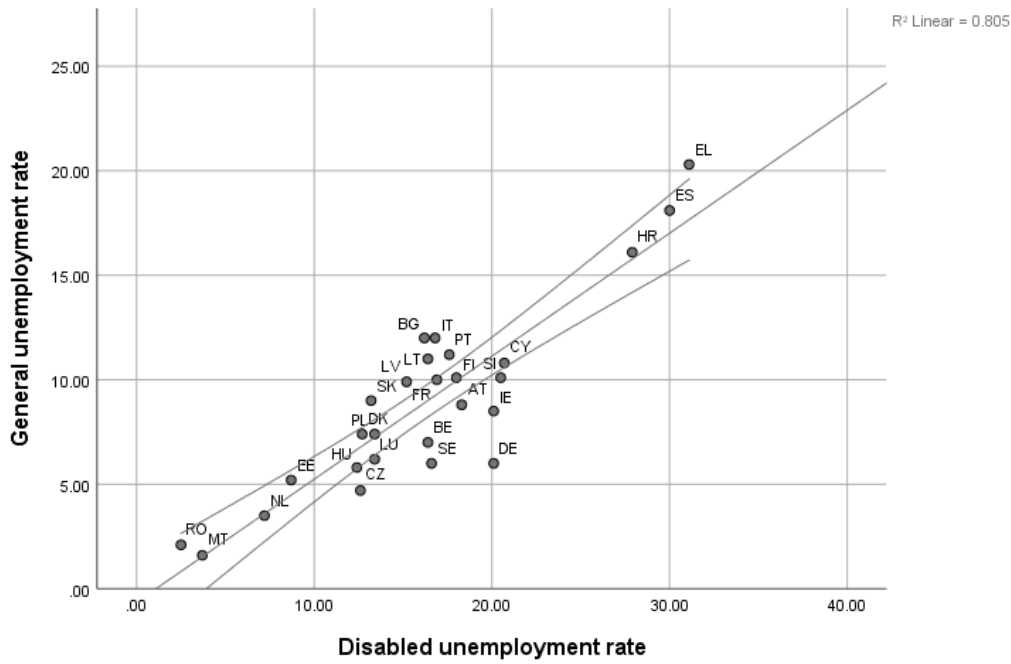
Figure 15: Disability and unemployment rates, by age group (age 16-64)

Source: *EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of May 2021.*

Repeating the same type of indicative analysis provided for employment data, there is a strong positive association between the general unemployment rate and the rate for persons who declare activity limitations, which is also highly statistically significant ($r=0.897$; $p<.01$). Disabled people are much more likely to be unemployed in countries that have generally high unemployment, and to a greater degree. The association between disability and general unemployment rates is stronger than the association between disability and general employment rates. There is no significant association between reported prevalence and unemployment rates so an analysis of country-level factors, including policy approaches, might be even more important in explaining differences in outcomes.

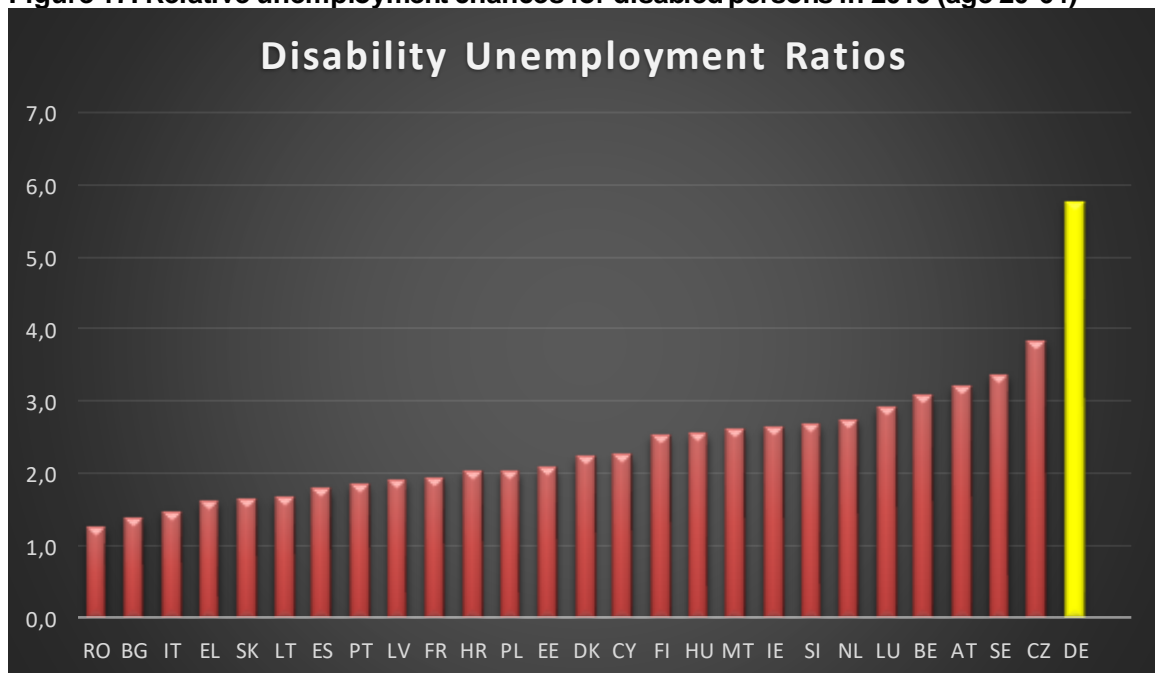
The clustering of countries around the average trend is closer than for employment rates, and there are fewer discernible clusters. For example, the very high rates of general unemployment in Greece, Croatia and Spain are reflected in correspondingly high rates for disabled persons (but still around ten percentage points higher). Conversely, countries with low levels of general unemployment tend to report low levels of unemployment for disabled persons too. Some countries report disability rates above the trend expectation, and some below. The reported rate of disability unemployment in Romania has remained notably low (as it is generally), while higher than expected rates are observed in Ireland, Germany, Sweden, Czechia, and Belgium. Such cases might merit further analysis (for example, examining the policy relationship between disability, unemployment status and economic activity).

Figure 16: General unemployment rates and disability unemployment rates



To standardise an indication of the relative chances of disabled people being unemployed compared to other persons in each country an odds ratio is again helpful, as shown for the example of employment rate earlier. This reveals an anomaly in the case of Germany, where the odds of unemployment for disabled persons are 5.7 higher. This is shown in Figure 17 but it is important to note that comparisons of disabled and non-disabled groups should be considered in context of the prevalence rates discussed earlier (which requires further analysis).

Figure 17: Relative unemployment chances for disabled persons in 2019 (age 20-64)



Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of April 2021.

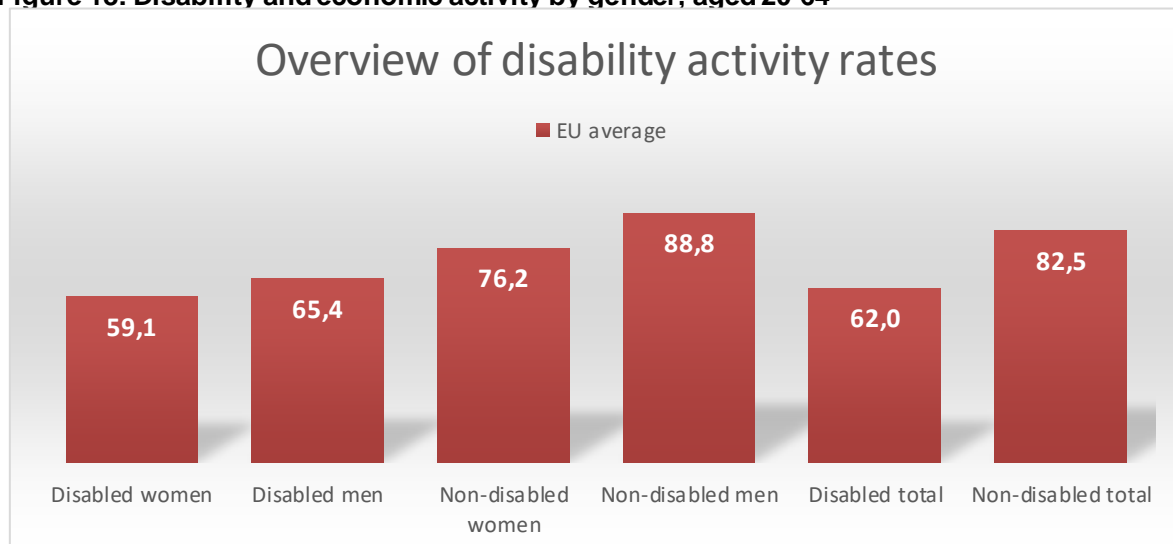
In summary, in a fully inclusive and non-discriminatory labour market, with provision of appropriate employment support, rates of unemployment among disabled and non-disabled people should be similar (assuming all who enter the labour market are capable of work). Clearly this is not the case. Unemployment rates are higher for disabled persons than for other persons in every EU Member State. A range of supply and demand side explanations are possible, which may operate in combination, for example the extent to which:

- Employers discriminate against disabled people when hiring from the general pool of job seekers.
- Disabled job seekers lack some of the skills or qualifications needed for the job opportunities available in the labour market.
- Insufficient accessibility or support is available to help suitably qualified disabled job seekers into work, or to sustain them in work.
- Employment policies are directing more disabled people into the labour market than have realistic chances of finding a job.

4.2.6 Economic activity

Across the EU and in every Member State (gendered) activity rates of working age disabled persons fall well below those for other persons in the population. There have been increases in economic activity, which may reflect improving labour market conditions and/or policy advances but the key policy question is whether access to the labour market results in employment chances (rather than adding to unemployment). Figure 18 presents an overview of activity for women and men at the EU level.

Figure 18: Disability and economic activity by gender, aged 20-64

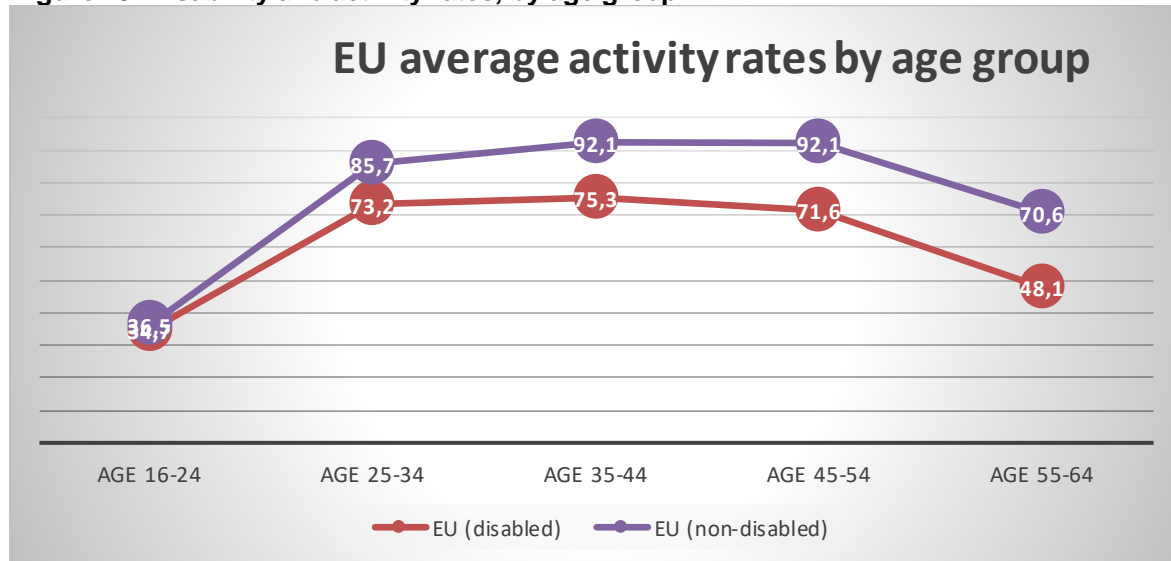


Source: *EUSILC UDB 2017 – version of April 2019.*

A familiar pattern is evident across the working age life course, with accentuation of exclusion among older workers (see Figure 18). This reinforces the tendency, discussed earlier, for early exit among workers who acquire impairment later in their

working careers (via disability or early retirement schemes). The extent of this gap varies between countries, as shown in the EDE country fiches.⁶⁶

Figure 19: Disability and activity rates, by age group



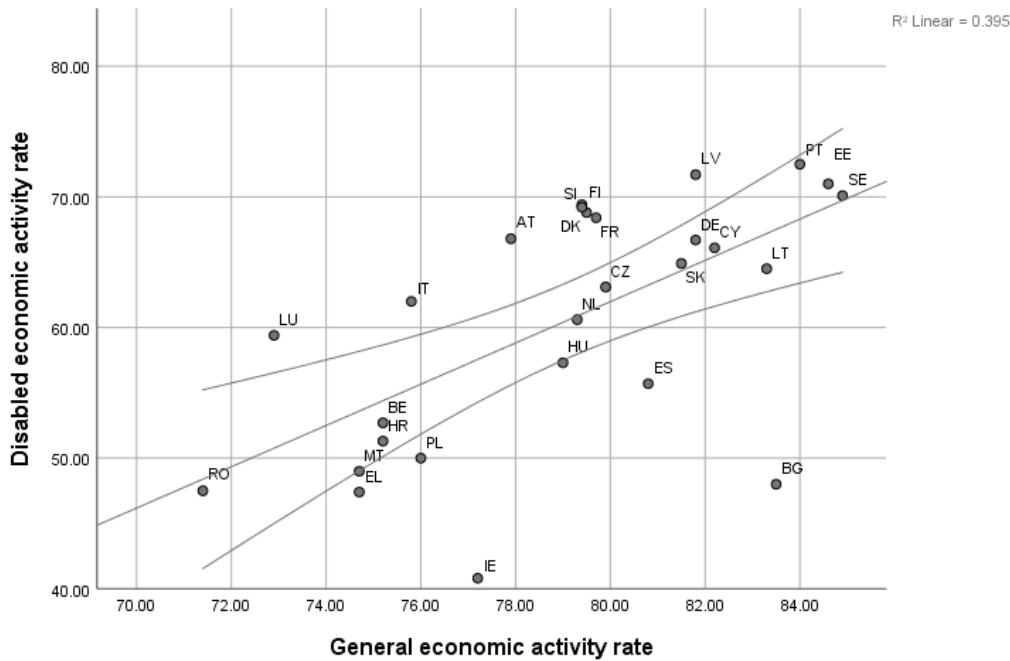
Source: EUSILC UDB 2017 – version of April 2019.

A comparative analysis of economic activity data helps to complete the picture of variation in labour market outcomes for disabled people. We should expect the activity rate of disabled persons to vary in proportion to the economic activity rate of the general population but at a lower rate, reflecting a proportion of persons who may be unable to work, temporarily or permanently. As Figure 20 shows, there is a positive association, and it is statistically significant ($r=0.629$; $p<.01$) although it is not as strong as the link with general employment or unemployment rates. *Little of the variation in disability activity rates between EU Member States can be explained by differences in the general activity rates of those countries.* This means that other factors must be involved.

In particular, the data for Ireland continues to indicate very low disability activity rates (while the general economic activity is not exceptional). The disability activity gap was also much wider in Bulgaria than would be predicted from the EU trend, and to a lesser extent in Spain. While Bulgaria and Romania report similarly low levels of disability activity they diverge on the general activity rate. On the other hand, the cases above the trend line in Figure 20 suggest higher rates of activity among disabled people than might be predicted from their average activity rates in 2019. The disability activity rate was particularly high in Sweden, Estonia and Portugal.

⁶⁶ Data for the youngest age group may be limited for some countries due to smaller sample sizes.

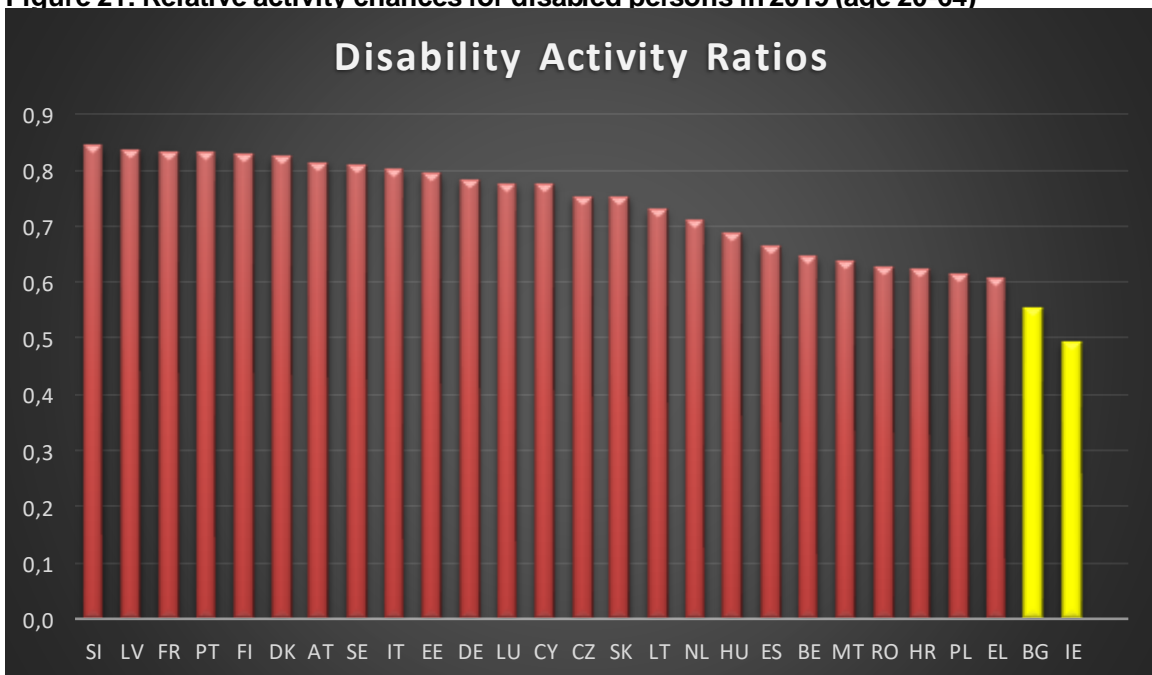
Figure 20: Disabled economic activity rate by General economic activity rate



Source: EUSILC UDB 2017 – version of April 2019.

Again, an odds ratio may help to indicate the relative chances of disabled people being economically active compared to other persons. This is shown in Figure 21, noting the above anomalies.

Figure 21: Relative activity chances for disabled persons in 2019 (age 20-64)



Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of May 2021.

For context, the positive association between self-reported prevalence and the disability activity rate is strong and significant ($r=0.602$; $p<.01$). In countries where more people report in the disability category the activity rate for this group tends also

to be higher (according to the hypothesis outlined earlier, this might suggest that the survey captures more persons with low levels of impairment in these countries who are, on average, also closer to the labour market). This observation requires some control and, as with employment outcomes, it is helpful to look also at activity rates for persons declaring a more severe (strong) level of impairment. This analysis (shown in previous ANED reports) confirms the lack of any clear association between economic activity rates for the general population and those for more severely disabled people. The interactions between disability, employment, unemployment and economic activity will be open to more detailed analysis when the disability variable becomes available in the EU-LFS core dataset, and this should be explored in future years.

In summary, there is wide variation in economic activity. Among countries with generally high levels of economic activity there are several with apparently low rates for disabled persons. General rates of economic activity do not explain the variation in economic activity for severely disabled people and this requires national level explanation, including explanations of policy approach.

The policy mixes that funnel those who are not in employment towards either unemployment or inactivity categories include both employment policies and social protection policies (e.g. the availability of disability pension schemes and the gateway eligibility conditions attached to them).

4.2.7 Comparing indicators of employment, unemployment and activity

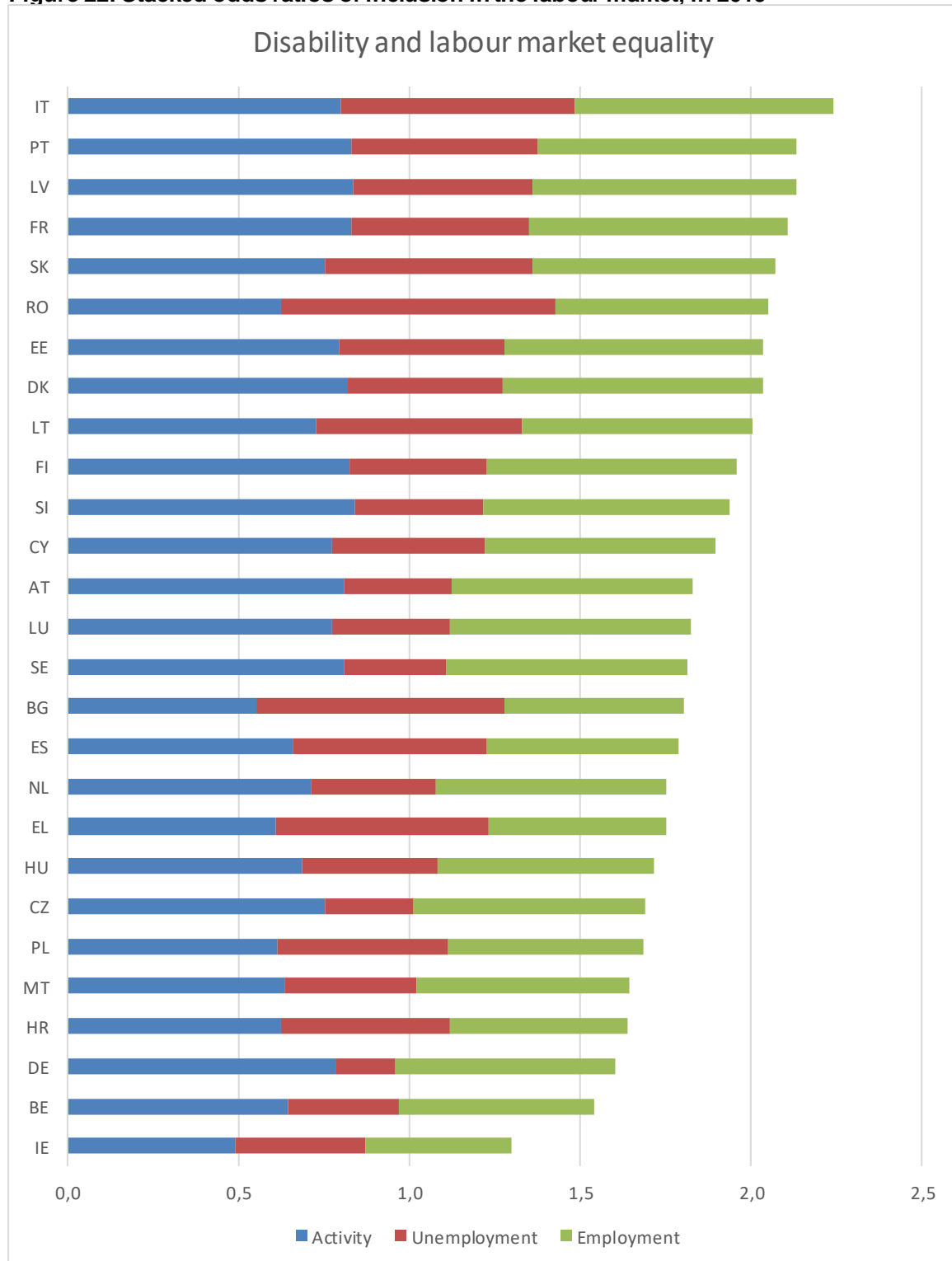
The previous analyses of headline indicators suggest a complex and often unpredictable interaction between key labour market indicators for disabled people in EU Member States. A high general employment level does not always predict a high disability employment level at the country level, although there is an average trend to this effect across the EU. The same is true for unemployment rates and activity rates, but not in equal measure or even in equal direction – a low disability employment rate might be associated with a high unemployment or a high activity rate (depending, for example, in which direction non-working disabled people are funnelled by national policy options or definitions).



The following summary table provides an overview of the three different indicators in 2019, expressed as odds ratios. They compare the relative chances of being economically active, employed or not unemployed in each country (the unemployment ratio is inverted to express all three as a positive chance). An odds ratio of 1.0 would mean that disabled people's chances were equal to those of other persons, on

average.⁶⁷ By stacking these ratios the combined total suggests a broad synthetic indicator of labour market inclusion, although this would need to be contextualised with examination of methodological artefacts (such as the prevalence factor).

Figure 22: Stacked odds ratios of inclusion in the labour market, in 2019



⁶⁷ For the purpose of policy analysis, shorter component bars might suggest areas of policy concern for further analysis at country level. A score of 1.0 in each component approaches parity with other persons.

4.3 Disability and poverty reduction

Several of the insights arising from analysis of the labour market situation are relevant also to indicators on poverty and social exclusion. These indicators are better established as they follow the same EU-SILC methodology as the Semester and because the summary tables are already published in the disability and income distribution section of Eurostat's health database.⁶⁸ This affords an opportunity to examine some breakdowns beyond the headline indicators and also to consider the additional dimension of access to healthcare, which has been highlighted as a concern during the COVID crisis, along with long-term social care.

4.3.1 Strategic context

Article 28 CRPD refers to 'social protection programmes and poverty reduction programmes' as well as 'assistance from the State with disability-related expenses' and 'retirement benefits and programmes', access to 'affordable services, devices and other assistance for disability-related needs' and to 'public housing programmes', while Article 19 refers to 'in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance' schemes.⁶⁹

In its concluding observations to the EU, in September 2015, the UN Committee noted 'with deep concern the disproportionately adverse and retrogressive effect the austerity measures in the EU have on the adequate standard of living of persons with disabilities'. It recommended that the EU should:

...take urgent measures, in cooperation with its Member States and representative organisations of persons with disabilities, to prevent further adverse and retrogressive effect of austerity measures on the adequate standard of living of persons with disabilities, including by the provision of a minimum social protection floor.⁷⁰

In 2017, the UN Committee recommended Slovenia to 'Restore all support measures curtailed under the austerity policy and prevent any hardship that may be faced by persons with disabilities whose income was reduced as a result of that policy'.⁷¹ In its 2017 Recommendation to Cyprus the UN Committee also picked up the concept of a 'social protection floor that is not affected by expenses for disability-related costs and assistive devices and user payments for social services and support'.⁷² This is highly relevant to the Social Pillar principles, from a disability perspective. In its 2018 recommendations to Bulgaria the Committee sought to 'incorporate the human rights

⁶⁸ Eurostat (2021) Health database <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁶⁹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx#28>.

⁷⁰ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fEU%2fCO%2f1.

⁷¹ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fSVN%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en.

⁷² http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fCYP%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en.

model of disability in the assessment process',⁷³ a topic also explored at length by ANED.⁷⁴ Addressing Poland, the Committee looked for disability mainstreaming in 'the national strategy for reducing poverty with concrete measures and relevant budget'. It also recommended to 'Ensure that the employment of persons with disabilities does not make them ineligible for disability-related protection schemes, such as disability allowances'.⁷⁵ For example, in the UN's 2015 examination of Croatia concern was expressed about the number of people living in poverty (notably among Roma and rural communities) but also about 'the use of a restrictive financial assets test, which has downgraded the disability benefit'. The Committee recommended that 'poverty reduction programmes be strengthened' in this respect.⁷⁶

Within the sphere of social policies, Article 19 CRPD is also particularly relevant to the Semester concerns with long-term care. Guidance and interpretation is provided in the UN Committee's *General Comment No. 5 on independent living and being included in the community*, adopted in October 2017.⁷⁷ Most social care concerns support for people regarded as disabled, whether or not identified as such, including the increasing number of older persons with care needs. These populations have been significantly affected during the COVID-19 crisis, with those in residential care at higher risk of disease and those supported in the community at higher risk of isolation and exclusion. Article 25 CRPD addresses rights to health, including rights to 'the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care and programmes as provided to other persons' as well as 'health services needed by persons with disabilities specifically because of their disabilities'. Statistics on unmet need for medical care were introduced to the EDE country fiches and may provide an important indicator of any differential impacts for disabled people evolving from the crisis.

These policy reference points are important for the Semester reviews. Social policies are, on the whole, within the competence of the Member States but the new EU disability strategy clearly acknowledges that disabled people and their families are at higher risk of financial poverty, due to weaknesses in the labour market and social protection (including disability benefit rules). A new study and guidance on social protection is planned for 2022 and the Commission has called on Member States 'to further tackle gaps in social protection for persons with disabilities to reduce inequalities, including by compensating extra costs related to disability and eligibility for disability benefits' (p. 13). The strategy also underlines the need for equal access to healthcare without discrimination.

⁷³

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fBGR%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en.

⁷⁴ Waddington, L., & Priestley, M. (2021). A human rights approach to disability assessment. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 37(1), 1-15. doi:10.1017/ics.2020.21.

⁷⁵

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fPOL%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en.

⁷⁶

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fHRV%2fCO%2f1.

⁷⁷

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/GC/5&Lang=en.

4.3.2 Disability, poverty and social exclusion

Data on the situation of disabled people is presented in the EDE statistical review accompanying this synthesis report (using the most recent disability data from 2019) and following the Eurostat methodology for social indicators derived from EU-SILC. In this case it is not necessary to make comparisons with the EU-LFS, although it may present interesting and important data from a large sample when the disability variable becomes available for analysis by 2023 (e.g. on wages).

This data provides indicators of the key risks for disabled people, including household risks of low work intensity, low income (after social transfers), and material deprivation. These three measures are combined in the overall estimate for risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE).⁷⁸ Relevant data from national sources is provided in each of the EDE country fiches, where available. These are divided by main age groups (for all persons aged 16 and over, 16-64, and 65+). The EU-SILC survey does not distinguish 'activity limitation' for children under the age of 16 so it has not been possible to disaggregate disability estimates of child poverty from this survey.⁷⁹ A 2017 ad hoc module included items on children's health and this survey estimated prevalence of around 4 % disabled children (3.2 % moderate, 0.8 % severe) among private households with dependent children (the survey does not include congregative/institutional households). The sample data for several Member States was not sufficient to report poverty outcomes reliably.

Table 14 summarises the aggregate data on poverty or social exclusion risks from which the EDE statistical indicators. These are shown in the EDE country fiches with comparisons of national averages and the EU27 average. These confirm that, on average and across the EU, disabled people experience relative disadvantage on all three main measures. This is the case in every Member State to varying degree.

There is a clear association with severity of reported impairment and with gender equality (shown in Table 15). Persons reporting more severe levels of impairment face higher risks of poverty and exclusion also, as do women when compared to men. Importantly, there are also large differences in the average risks for adults of working age and for older adults (aged 65+). These are shown in Table 16. The elevated risks for adults of working age are mainly linked to the importance of employment income. Employment and the adequacy of working age disability benefits remain key factors when predicting poverty risk for disabled people in the EU.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ The risks for older people do not include work intensity (Eurostat refers to the age group 0-59 for this measure).

⁷⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions/data/database?node_code=ilc_hch

⁸⁰ <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/social-protection>; <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

Table 14: Disability and the risks of poverty or social exclusion (age 16-59)

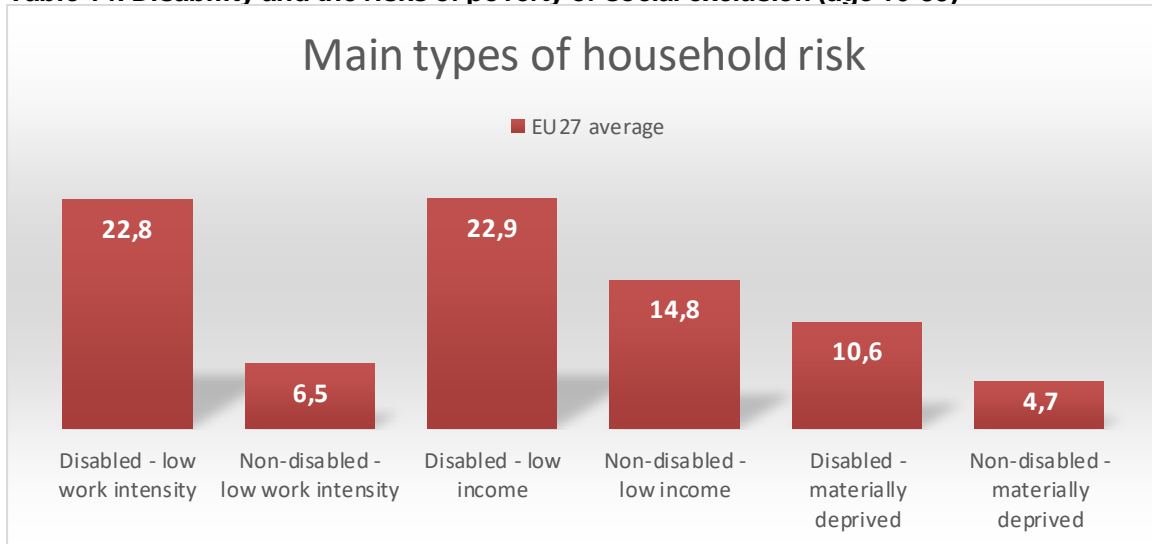


Table 15: People living in household poverty or exclusion by disability and gender (aged 16+)

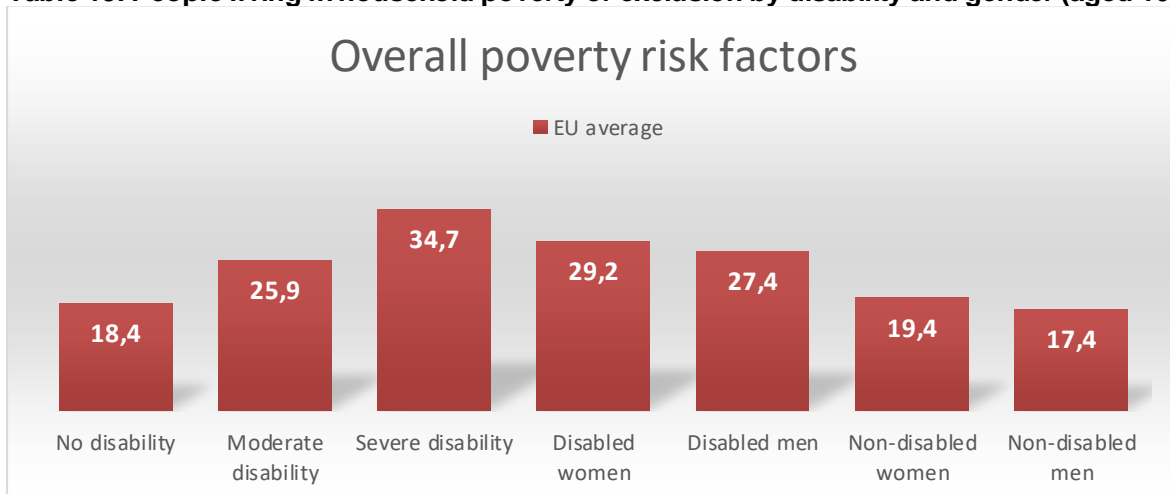
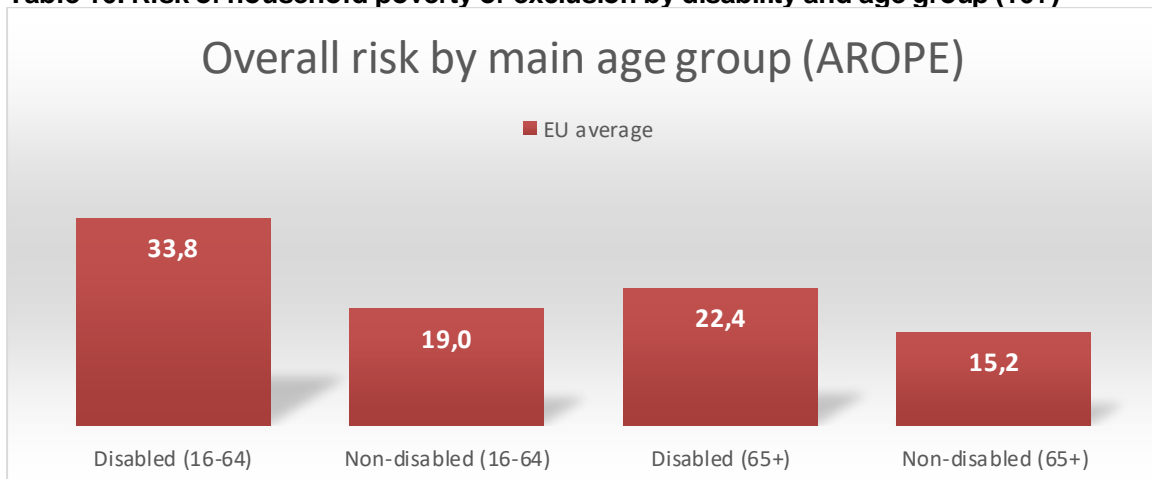


Table 16: Risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age group (16+)



Source: *EUSILC UDB 2017 – version of April 2019.*

Following the analysis of the labour market situation it is relevant to consider policy priorities and to contextualise general trends or anomalies arising from the headline

statistics. It is important to acknowledge, for example, that the socio-economic situation varies considerably among the Member States and that this should be considered when measuring disability equality. In essence, disabled people have rights to equality of opportunity and participation compared to other persons in the same population. For this reason, equality gaps and ratios per country are as important as headline rates (e.g. countries with lower levels general poverty should have lower levels of disability poverty too and a higher national average rate does not necessarily imply greater equality within a country).⁸¹

Rates of financial poverty, before and after social transfers, for different age groups, appear to be the most policy-relevant measures. A measure of in-work-poverty is also relevant from a policy perspective.

4.3.3 Age factors in poverty risk

As mentioned earlier, age plays a significant part in explaining average risks of poverty among disabled people in European countries. The prevalence of impairment increases rapidly with age, from mid adulthood onwards. Disabled people in old age are at higher risk of poverty than other persons of similar age. They include two groups that cannot be easily disaggregated from the SILC data. Some experienced disability during their younger life and have grown old with impairment but many older persons acquire impairments later in life. In terms of poverty risk, the latter group might benefit from the protective influence of occupational or public pension rights accumulated previously as non-disabled adults (with less risk of exclusion from employment).

To understand the differences in poverty risk for older and younger disabled adults it is helpful to examine the comparison with other persons in the same age group in more detail. Figure 23 plots the general risk of poverty among 16-64 year-olds in each Member State with the risk for disabled persons in that age group (using a similar methodology to the plots summarising the labour market situation earlier). Figure 24 shows similar comparison for those aged 65 and over. This suggests that average risk of poverty after social transfers, among older people in general, very strongly predicts poverty risk among older disabled people ($r = .987$; $p < .01$). This positive association explains more than 90 % of the variation between countries in disability poverty risk rates in this age group but only about half of the risk among the working age group ($R^2 = 0.977$ and 0.563 , respectively).⁸²

⁸¹ The effect of prevalence estimates is also relevant for consideration as context to the interpretation of these measures.

⁸² This is partly accounted for by the fact that an increased proportion of the general population contains the comparator group of disabled persons, but the general comparison helps to dilute the prevalence effect discussed earlier.

Figure 23: General poverty risk and disability poverty risk rates (ager 16-64) in 2019

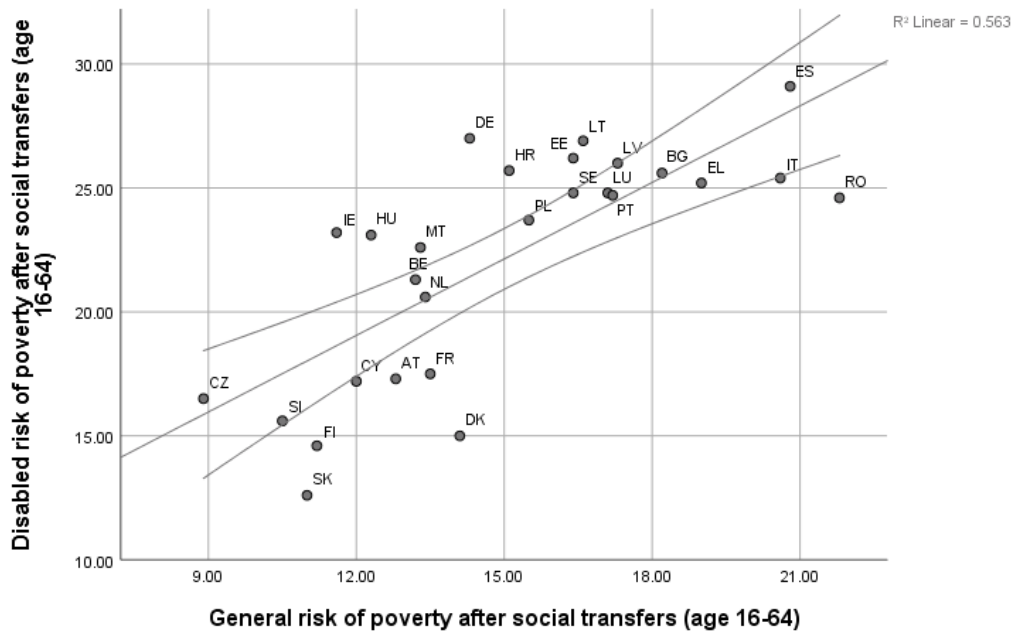
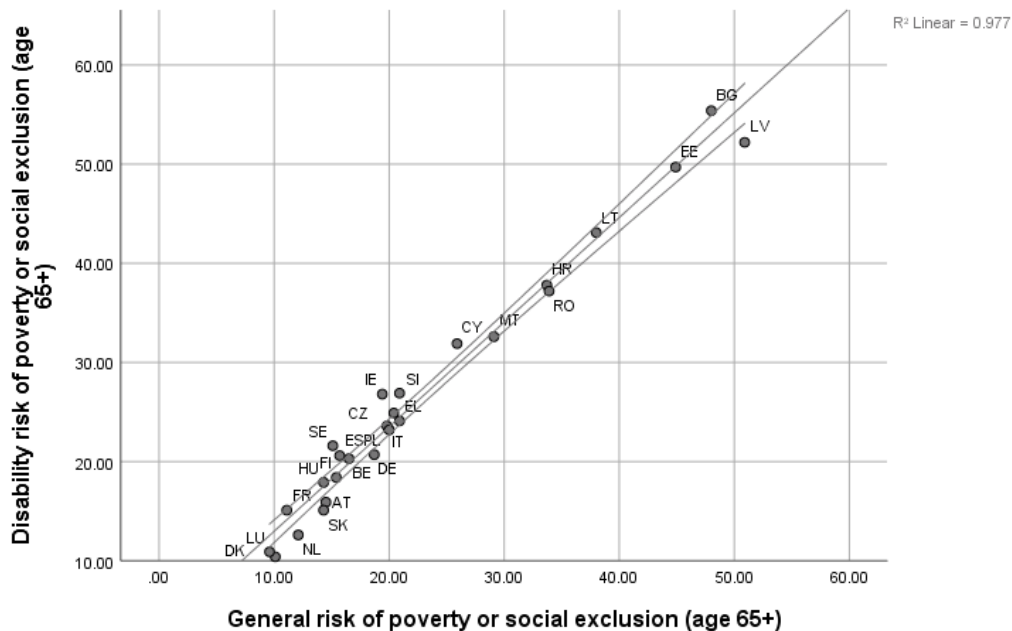


Figure 24: General poverty risk and disability poverty risk rates (ager 65+) in 2019

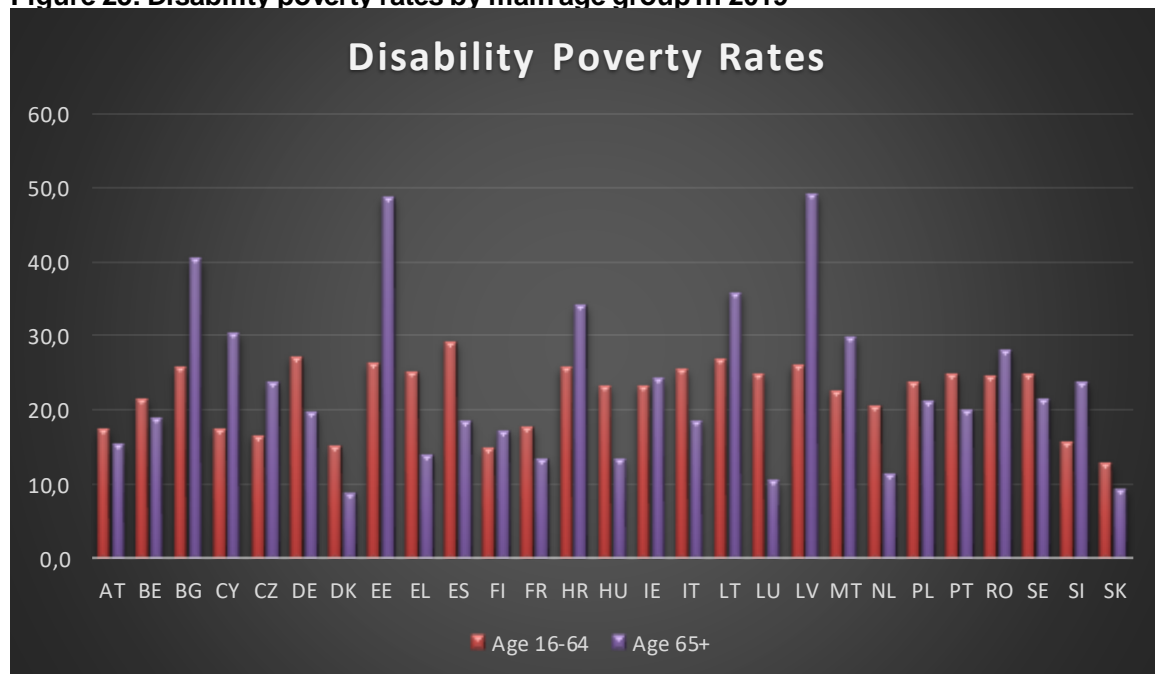


This is relevant from a policy perspective because it suggests that general poverty alleviation measures, including old age pensions, might benefit a significant proportion of disabled people. However, the use of an average indicator can also mask the hidden costs of living with disability in old age and the accumulated disadvantage faced by the minority who have long-standing or more severe impairment conditions. Added to this are the potential costs of means-tested long-term care services. Targeted disability policies are still needed to close the disability poverty gap in old age.

By comparison, general levels of poverty risk do not predict the variation of risk for younger disabled adults as clearly. Countries with lower poverty risks in this age group do tend to have lower risks for disabled people ($r = .750$; $p < .01$) but the explanatory power of this positive association is weaker. This is due to the variable influences of employment chances (discussed earlier) and the adequacy of social protection benefits (including disability benefits) in different countries.⁸³

Observing the differences between the main age groups reveals several anomalies of policy interest. In particular, while the average risk of poverty after social transfers is higher for working age disabled people in some Member States the reverse is observed in others. This is shown in Figure 25.

Figure 25: Disability poverty rates by main age group in 2019

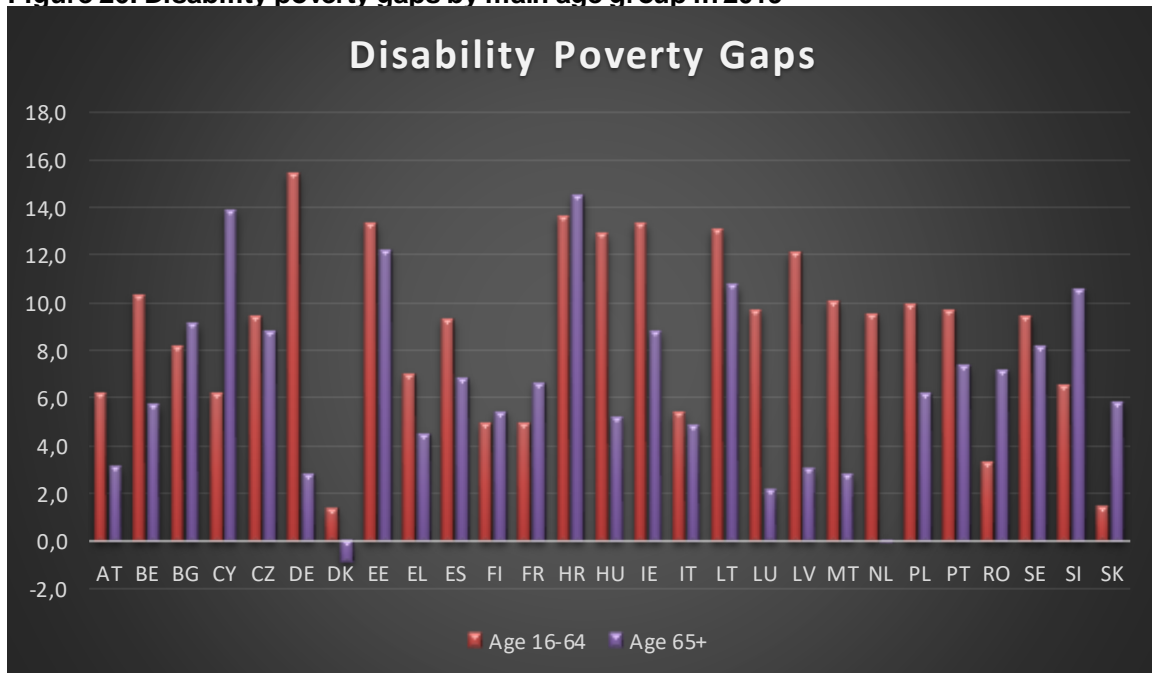


Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of April 2021.

These anomalies are further evident when we look at disability equality gaps in the risk of poverty. In most countries these gaps are wider among younger adults but in some countries this pattern is reversed (notably in Latvia, Estonia and Bulgaria).

The poverty gaps between the rate of risk for disabled and non-disabled people in each age group are shown in Figure 26. Some of these risk gaps are substantial, for example there is a large poverty risk gap in Germany for the younger age group (which might arise from a combination of high dependency on wages and employment-related benefits, and a more restrictive definition of disability arising from the survey design since 2015). In Denmark, where poverty risk is very low, older disabled people have a slight advantage over their non-disabled peers, on average (and there is equality of risk in the Netherlands). These apparent anomalies draw attention to the relative nature of the disability poverty measure, relative to average income and relative to non-disabled people.

⁸³ It may also be affected to some extent by variations in the reported rate of disability prevalence, as discussed earlier (but this is not the determinant factor).

Figure 26: Disability poverty gaps by main age group in 2019

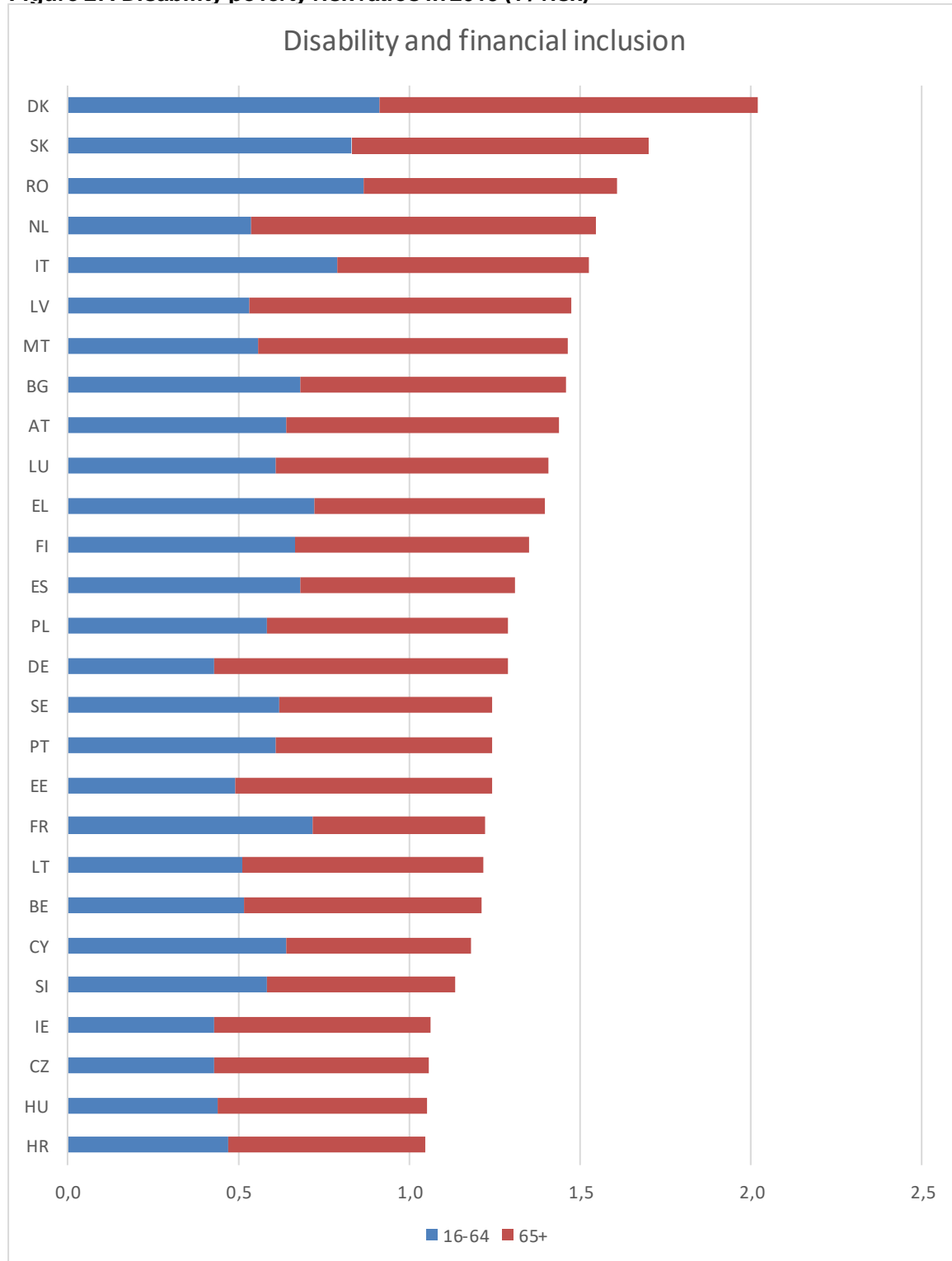
Source: EUSILC UDB 2019 – version of April 2021.

4.3.4 A summary indicator of poverty risk

On the basis of this review and analysis it is certainly useful to distinguish indicators of poverty risk for the two main age groups in policy discussions (and to ensure that child poverty can be added in the future). It is also useful to compare relative disability risks within countries (using an inverted odds ratio may again be helpful here, as shown in Figure 27). This has the effect of standardising the two age group indicators to represent the relative chances of disabled people in each group not being in poverty, compared to other persons.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ I.e., the risk estimation is reversed as a ratio of non-disabled poverty risk to disabled poverty (so that 1 rather than 0 equates to parity between groups, as indicated for Denmark in 2019).

Figure 27: Disability poverty risk ratios in 2019 (1 / risk)



5 Summary and conclusion

This synthesis report provides an overview of policy challenges identified by the EDE country experts in 2020, by the UN CRPD Committee over the past decade, and by the available summaries of statistical data from 2019. The format of the EDE country reports will change slightly in the next policy cycle, reflecting the interim arrangements for the Semester. There has been more limited documentation to inform a forward-looking prioritisation of disability equality issues this year (in the absence of National Reform Programmes, Commission Country Reports and socially-oriented CSRs in the first half of 2021). However, this report provides new information from the CRPD dialogue, concerning the types of evidence that may be also important for disability mainstreaming in the Semester, and new information about updates to national disability action plans in 2021. It highlights the significance of investment decisions made this year for future accessibility and inclusion. It also adds new insights into questions raised about the reliability of disability equality data from EU-SILC (with regard to age and impairment prevalence) and presents new synthetic indicators derived from the headline statistics, which may aid future analysis. It sets the scene for the 2021-22 policy cycle, in preparation for the next round of EDE country reports.

To optimise scarce administrative resources in the Member States and the Commission, there should be increased attention to synergies between the disability evidence collected for national action plans, that reported in the Semester and that reported to the UN. The EDE country reports aim to show how this can be achieved by making connections between national disability strategies, the UN CRPD process, the Semester reviews and data available from EU sources. Facilitating these synergies would help to spread good practice in disability mainstreaming among the Member States and also bolster the EU's supportive role as a regional integration organisation under the UN CRPD. The introduction of more explicit guidance on equality mainstreaming in the Recovery and Resilience Plans in 2021 is a promising development and should be continued in guidance on National Reform Programmes in future Semester cycles. Similar expectation should be applied internally within the Commission in preparation of the next staff country reports supporting the Semester.

The strong Semester policy focus on labour market dynamics is important but introduces an analytical bias towards persons of traditional working age. This should not obscure the importance of analysing the risks in other age groups (notably among older workers and retired persons, but also children) and these would make useful future studies. Most disabled persons in Europe are older persons, impairment onset increases with age and Europe's populations are ageing. The sustainability challenges of longer working lives, pensions, healthcare and long-term care affect older disabled people disproportionately. While their average risk of poverty remains lower than younger adults this should not mask the challenges they face (including housing, additional costs of living, accessibility and so on). Many of the policy debates presented in the Semester as challenges of ageing are in fact disability challenges and should be analysed from that perspective.

The raised profile of the Social Pillar, as well as the pandemic response, have heightened concerns with flexible support for employment and for social policies (including income protection, social care and access to health care). There is an opportunity to capitalise on these high-profile concerns now from a disability

perspective – for example, to argue for investment in flexible working accommodations that support more disabled people in quality jobs, including teleworking where appropriate. The attention drawn to vulnerabilities in the pandemic draws attention to the need for rapid deinstitutionalisation but also for adequacy of social support in communities to promote independence and minimise social isolation. All of these factors contribute to relative poverty, across the life course, which remains a constant concern in any analysis of the disability situation and must be addressed.

The following scheme suggests how the interaction of the various policy factors might be integrated in a disability-focused and co-ordinated policy approach. There is increasing evidence of convergence at the level of policy values concerning disability equality, driven by synergies between the UN CRPD, the EU Disability Strategy and national disability action plans. The EU has a significant role to play in fostering accessibility, political participation, non-discrimination and the co-ordination of a social protection floor (as envisaged in the Social Pillar principles). The Member States hold the primary competence to realise social policies that support equal participation in inclusive education, the open labour market, and community living while ensuring coverage of additional costs of living. The Semester process provides a cyclical opportunity to support and reinforce the co-ordination of these diverse and inter-connected policy components.

Figure 28: Common values, shared goals, shared competences

