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Austria

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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 country report has been prepared as input for the European Semester in 2022.¹

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

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1 Executive summary and recommendations

1.1 Key points and main challenges for Austria in 2022

In Austria, the main challenge is that disability politics and policies are still perceived and implemented as an add-on rather than cross-cutting. The CRPD provisions and recommendations are implemented only partially. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and drafting of the new National Action Plan Disability 2021-2030 takes the attention of key stakeholders which compounds the lack of public discussion.

Disability and the labour market

There is clear evidence that the labour market situation for persons with disabilities has significantly deteriorated already since the year 2010, contrary to the general development and not only since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participation in the open labour market remains a challenge particularly for those with more profound impairments or those who experience multiple discrimination like women with disabilities. The effectiveness of measures in place should be critically evaluated, but the lack of meaningful data makes this impossible. The outcome of a recent initiative of the National Parliament to improve the situation is to be awaited.

Disability, social policies and healthcare

Not only in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also due to the missing political will to implement measures to include persons with disabilities in society, problematic legal framework (e.g. the 2019 Basic Social Welfare Law) and the fragmentary implementation of the CRPD via the National Action Plan 2012-2020, with regard to social policies, the situation of persons with disabilities deteriorated during the last years. It is necessary to adapt policies and measures to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic - not only with regard to healthcare, but to social policies as such.

Disability, education and skills

Although there is a significant lack of meaningful data on education and skills of persons with disabilities in Austria, all available evidence indicates a distinctly lower level of educational and academic achievement for those with disabilities. Recent studies on the situation of students with disabilities at Austrian Universities and on the labour-market situation of women with disabilities indicate a lack of awareness as well as a lack of effective support structures. Disability equality and accessibility as preconditions for the inclusion of students with disabilities still need to be implemented in education.

Investment priorities for inclusion and accessibility

An effective strategy for disability equality and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in policy as well as in programmes is not in place but needs to be elaborated and implemented. Investments of the European Union for inclusion and accessibility should be done according to international standards set by the CRPD and in line with the EU Strategy for Persons with Disabilities. Controlling and monitoring needs to be done effectively accordingly on all administrative levels of the Federation, not least by the European Commission.

1.2 Recommendations for Austria

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

Recommendation: Formulate and implement concrete measures to address and reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion of persons with disabilities.

Rationale: In the context of tightening the Austrian benefit system, disability mainstreaming is necessary to highlight that persons with disabilities face a much higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than persons without disabilities. Hence, concrete measures need to be formulated and implemented to promote social inclusion of persons with disabilities and to reduce the risk of poverty of persons with disabilities.

Recommendation: Include young persons with disabilities more effectively into higher secondary (vocational) education instead of providing special programmes without distinct vocational qualification and consider the specific situation of young women with disabilities.

Rationale: Young persons with disabilities are rather excluded from higher secondary vocational education and are often referred to special programmes with no distinct vocational qualification. Instead, inclusive education in secondary higher (vocational) education should be intensified. A recent study on women with disabilities on the Austrian labour market emphasises the lack of gender sensitive approaches in Austrian disability policy.

Recommendation: Define and make visible persons with disabilities as a distinct target group for policy priorities of the European Semester and recovery plans.

Rationale: Persons with disabilities are almost completely invisible as a distinct target group in the RRP, measures described do not consider disability equality and accessibility. An evaluation of the ESF programme in Austria showed that although Disability Mainstreaming and Accessibility were defined as horizontal targets, Austria fails to implement these principles. This is supported by evidence on employment and education. There is a high need for sensitization and the building of know-how regarding the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities for programme development and programme implementation in line with the CRPD as well as with the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities of the EU.

Recommendation: Address persons with disabilities in current and future preventive approaches towards fighting the negative impact of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Rationale: In the context of the current societal and political challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, persons with disabilities become even more invisible. Policies need to address the support needs of persons with disabilities in all areas of policymaking as the current pandemic has the potential to even deteriorate the already difficult situation for persons with disabilities in Austria.

Recommendation: Systematize data collection and research on young people and adults with disabilities regarding education, health, employment and social inclusion.

Rationale: Without robust, comprehensive and meaningful evidence about the situation of persons with disabilities, disaggregated by diversity dimensions like age or gender, neither analysis of the status quo nor strategic policy planning is possible.

2 Mainstreaming disability equality in the Semester documents

Country Reports and Country Specific Recommendation of direct relevance to disability policy were not published in this exceptional policy cycle. For a commentary on the last published documents please see our country fiche for the previous Semester 2020-2021.

From a disability perspective, neither the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) nor the National Reform Programme (NRP) for Austria mention persons with disabilities in an adequate way. As mentioned in previous years, a specific disability-related perspective is missing in these documents leading to the fact that the living situation of persons with disabilities is not addressed in these documents, and hence, cannot be assessed and moreover ameliorated (as respective information does not exist).

2.1 Recovery and Resilience Plan for Austria (RRP)

The following key points highlight where the situation of persons with disabilities or disability policies was considered in these plans. We address the most relevant of these and other issues arising from the RRP/NRP in the next chapters.

- The terms 'disability' and 'health-related impairments' each show up only once in the RRP: 'Disability' in the context of education and 'health-related impairments' in the general context of equality and equalisation of opportunities.² The RRP fails to mention persons with disabilities in relation to the labour market, it just generally mentions the reintegration of persons with health impairments by providing transit employment in non-profit businesses of the circular economy.
- In the RRP, students with disabilities are explicitly mentioned³ as experiencing a particular risk of educational disadvantages during the COVID-19 crisis, but there are no references to any disability related issues in the detailed description of the actual implementation of the measures which is included in the attachment.
- The description of measures in the attachment to the RRP mentions persons with disabilities with regard to the One-Stop Shop for employable persons and the extension of activating support for persons with multiple job placement and inclusion barriers (measure 4.D.10, p. 586; on p. 587 also addressed as 'Menschen mit mehrfachen Vermittlungs- und Inklusionshindernissen').⁴
- In the attachment to the RRP, persons with disabilities are mentioned only few times - besides a reference to the Austrian Disability Equality Act (p. 332), namely in the context of the CSR 2019 EG 19 (p. 366, referring to COVID-19-related long

² See Bundesministerium für Finanzen (2021). *Österreichischer Aufbau- und Resilienzplan 2020-2026* [in German], p. 37f and p. 35.

<https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/dam/jcr:ecf30896-0861-4107-8ed9-b589a79bd623/%C3%96sterreichischer%20Aufbau-%20und%20Resilienzplan%202020-2026.pdf>.

³ See Bundesministerium für Finanzen (2021). *Österreichischer Aufbau- und Resilienzplan 2020-2026* [in German], p. 38.

<https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/dam/jcr:ecf30896-0861-4107-8ed9-b589a79bd623/%C3%96sterreichischer%20Aufbau-%20und%20Resilienzplan%202020-2026.pdf>.

⁴ See Bundesministerium für Finanzen (2021). *Anhang 1: Österreichischer Aufbau- und Resilienzplan 2020-2026* [in German].
<https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/dam/jcr:e0b131c9-f2d9-40f8-9350-d533bc9bf4c9/Anhang%20zum%20%C3%96sterreichischen%20Aufbau-%20und%20Resilienzplan%202020-2026.pdf>.

distance learning challenges), in the context of resilient communities (p. 488, referring to persons with disabilities in need of structures, measures and resources in their vicinity), and in the context of measure 4.D.10 (see above; p. 586).

Neither the Austrian Disability Council nor other DPOs or service providers for persons with disabilities made statements or comments on the Austrian RRP.

2.2 Semester links to CRPD and national disability action plans

Relevant recommendations and issues arising from participation in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are highlighted in each chapter.

It is also important that Semester plans align with the Austrian national disability strategy (National Action Plan on Disability (NAP) 2012-2020).⁵

In 2020, an academic evaluation of the NAP took place⁶ which builds one of the foundations of the new National Action Plan on Disability which will start in 2022 (until 2030). The evaluation of the NAP 2012-2020 pointed to diverse problems shortcomings and regarding the implementation of the CRPD in Austria (discussed in our European Semester report 2020-2021).

The new NAP is currently under development. Based upon the status-quo assessment by the academic evaluation team, working groups, comprising disabled people's organisations (DPOs)⁷ for each relevant issue (such as education, work/employment) are currently⁸ finishing their work on formulating the draft (including indicators, measures and responsible authorities).

⁵ See <https://broschuerenservice.sozialministerium.at/Home/Download?publicationId=225> for the National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020 [in English].

⁶ See BMSGPK (2020). *Endbericht. Evaluierung des Nationalen Aktionsplanes Behinderung 2012-2020, Strategie der österreichischen Bundesregierung zur Umsetzung der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention*. Wien [in German].
https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:ec106d2c-7346-4360-8756-975de92d9576/Evaluierung_des_NAP_2012_2020.pdf.

⁷ See e.g. Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care, and Consumer Protection (2019). *National Action Plan on Disability*, <https://www.sozialministerium.at/en/Topics/Social-Affairs/People-with-Disabilities/National-Action-Plan-on-Disability.html>. See also *Erster Entwurf Operationelles Programm Beschäftigung Österreich 2021-2027 (ESF+)* (2020), pp. 50f.

⁸ As of September 2021.

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

In 2013, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Austria:

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

‘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.’

More recently, the 2018 List of Issues requested the following:

‘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. Please provide information on measures taken to implement target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.’

In its reply, the State Party lists a variety of measures and regional, projects of the nine Laender, most of which in place for some time. The report neither provides any overall and analytic data nor does it describe a systematic approach to tackle the multiple barriers persons with disabilities experience on the labour market in Austria. No information is provided regarding target 8.5 of the SDGs.⁹

The National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020 (NAP) was evaluated and first steps were taken to develop a follow up NAP. With regard to the labour market situation of persons with disabilities, the NAP evaluation concludes that only minor improvements have been made. The lack of detailed and specific data makes a more comprehensive analysis impossible. The unemployment rate of persons with disabilities increased in the period of the NAP implementation (2012–2020) and measures to counter this development were not set sufficiently.¹⁰ In September 2021 the elaboration of the new NAP is still in process and no draft or final version has so far been published by the responsible authorities.

⁹ See *Combined second and third reports submitted by Austria under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2018*
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/AUT/CRPD_C_AUT_2-3_7281_E.docx.

¹⁰ BMSGPK (2020), *Enderbericht. Evaluierung des Nationalen Aktionsplanes Behinderung 2012-2020, Strategie der österreichischen Bundesregierung zur Umsetzung der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention*. Wien, p. 28 [in German],
https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:ec106d2c-7346-4360-8756-975de92d9576/Evaluierung_des_NAP_2012_2020.pdf.

3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Austria of 54.6 % in 2019, compared to 77.5 % for other persons against a national employment target of 77 % and approximately 3.3 points above the EU27 average. This results in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 23 percentage points (EU27 average gap 24.2, see Tables 2-4) or an employment chances ratio of 0.7.

The same data indicate unemployment rates of 18.3 % and 5.7 %, respectively in 2019 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Austria was 66.8 %, compared to 82.2 % for other persons (see Tables 8-10). These indications are broken down by gender and age in the respective tables in annex.

EU SILC data indicates a deteriorating development of the employment situation of persons with disabilities in Austria which has been going on since the year 2010. This was confirmed by robust national data in a recent study on the labour market of women with disabilities (see below).

In 2020 the unemployment rate of advantaged disabled persons (narrow definition of disability) was 8.4 % (+ 0.8 % compared to 2019), 8.9 % (+ 0.9) for men and 7.8 % (+0.7) for women. In June 2021, the total unemployment rate of advantaged persons with disabilities was 7.4 % (- 0.95), 7.7.% (-0.9 %) men and 6.9 % (-0.9 %) women.¹¹ Thus, it seems that the COVID-19 pandemic had a weaker effect on the labour market situation of persons with disabilities compared to non-disabled persons. However, the overall development of the labour market situation has been significantly different for persons with disabilities, with a distinct deterioration, confirmed in a study on women with disabilities by the Public Employment Service. Between 2010 and 2018, the labour market participation rate of advantaged disabled men and women decreased from 68.5 % to 63.9 %. The decrease was more significant for men (from 71.2 % to 65.9 %) than for women (64.5 % to 61.2 %) which brought about a reduced gender gap from 6.7 % to 4.7 % for persons with disabilities.¹² The development is in sharp contrast to the overall labour market before COVID-19 which was characterised by a continuous increase of the employment rate. Labour market data during the COVID-19 crisis needs to be interpreted cautiously.

In September 2021, the Minister for Social Affairs stated in a press release that the unemployment rate among persons with disabilities who are registered with the Public Employment Service declined significantly between 2020 and 2021 compared to that of non-disabled persons.¹³ However, this does not consider the overall development comprehensively.

¹¹ See <https://www.dnet.at/elis/Arbeitsmarkt.aspx>.

¹² AMS (2020). Chancengleichheit für Frauen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsmarkt. Hindernisse – Herausforderungen – Lösungsansätze. Wien: AMS, p. 73. <https://www.ams-forschungsnetzwerk.at/deutsch/publikationen/BibShow.asp?id=13302&sid=703980329&look=0&stw=Behinderung&gs=1&lng=0&vt=0&or=0&woher=0&akt=0&zz=30&mHlId=0&mMlId=0&sort=jahrb&Page=1%22%20h>.

¹³ See press release of the Minister for Social Affairs: https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20210922_OTS0003/sozialminister-mueckstein-

Further findings of the research on advantaged women with disabilities are:

- Advantaged disabled persons have a slightly higher risk of unemployment compared to others (+ 0.5 males; +0.2 % females); the risk of unemployment is above average for younger advantaged persons (up until 39 years) compared to older advantages persons (over 50 years) (p. 71) There are regional differences with higher unemployment rates in Vorarlberg and Carinthia and lower unemployment rates in Upper Austria and Styria, this applies to both men and women with disabilities.¹⁴
- The gender pay gap between advantaged disabled men and women slightly decreased between 2010 and 2018, but was still 25.2 % in 2018 and is lower compared to the gender pay gap in the group of non-disabled persons (30.4 % in 2018).¹⁵
- Advantaged persons with disabilities have a below-average level of education compared to the total number of clients.¹⁶
- Persons with disabilities have a higher risk of long-term unemployment and of becoming absent from the labour-market compared to non-disabled clients of the Public Employment Service. The data analysis showed no gender-differences.¹⁷
- Advantaged disabled women were slightly less often included in measures of the Public Employment Service compared to non-disabled women. This is mostly due to a much lower rate of participation in qualification measures: The average qualification of women with disabilities was 11.6 % compared to 19.9 % of all females in the year 2018.¹⁸

Specific support measures for persons with disabilities, provided by the Social Ministry Service, could not be analysed from a gender perspective because gender-disaggregated data was not the available to the authors.¹⁹ All these findings are confirmed by recent EU SILC data which indicate significantly higher rates of early school leavers as well as of lower educational achievement among persons with disabilities.

3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2021 [Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) for Austria, the National Reform Programme, and the National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020.

[ausgaben-zur-verbesserung-der-beruflichen-teilhabe-von-menschen-mit-behinderungen-werden-um-rund-10-erhoeht.](#)

¹⁴ AMS (2020). Chancengleichheit für Frauen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsmarkt. Hindernisse – Herausforderungen – Lösungsansätze, p. 93.

¹⁵ AMS (2020). Chancengleichheit für Frauen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsmarkt. Hindernisse – Herausforderungen – Lösungsansätze, pp 74f.

¹⁶ AMS (2020). Chancengleichheit für Frauen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsmarkt. Hindernisse – Herausforderungen – Lösungsansätze, p. 79.

¹⁷ AMS (2020). Chancengleichheit für Frauen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsmarkt. Hindernisse – Herausforderungen – Lösungsansätze, p. 80.

¹⁸ AMS (2020). Chancengleichheit für Frauen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsmarkt. Hindernisse – Herausforderungen – Lösungsansätze, p. 82f.

¹⁹ AMS (2020). Chancengleichheit für Frauen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsmarkt. Hindernisse – Herausforderungen – Lösungsansätze, p. 84.

As mentioned earlier (chapter 2.1) the RRP does not refer specifically to persons with disabilities but only very generally to persons with health impairments.

In the National Reform Programme (NRP) 2021, persons with disabilities are mentioned as one target group of the so-called Corona Job Drive, as persons with disabilities 'often face more difficulties than others, both in vocational training and on the job. To meet this specific demand and provide targeted support to persons with disabilities and young people at risk of marginalisation investments are made in expanding the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) offers. Key activities in this respect include enlarging offers for young people by the Job Assistance Network (NEBA), further expanding the easy-access prep-stage modules under the Fit for Education (AusbildungsFit) scheme, and the NEBA pilot service for counselling and assistance on work and disability for businesses.'²⁰ It must be doubted that these measures will effectively change the overall difficult and disadvantaged situation of young persons with disabilities on the Austrian labour market. Such activities neither make up for the low-quality education many young persons with disabilities receive in nor for their exclusion from higher secondary vocational education. EU SILC data shows a significantly higher rate of early school leavers as well as of lower educational achievements for the group of persons with disabilities in Austria. The study, outlined earlier, on the situation of advantaged disabled women (narrow definition of disability) provided the following comprehensive recommendations in this regard:²¹

- people with disabilities need to be made visible and destigmatized;
- special support offers which consider the multiple barriers and burdens that women with disabilities experience need to be provided;
- offers regarding job and qualification opportunities for women with disabilities need to be broadened to overcome disability- and gender-related stereotyping
- measures to encourage young women with disabilities to start a vocational training or education should be taken;
- the scope of rehabilitation measures for older persons with disabilities which currently focus on offers for men should be broadened according to the needs of women;
- employees of the labour market service should receive disability-awareness training;
- information and counselling should be provided in a One-Stop-Shop;
- financial support to take up a part-time job should be provided for women with disabilities who cannot work full time because of their disability;
- information and awareness raising needs to be carried out for employers and businesses;
- the quality of and the procedure for the assessment of disability needs to be improved;
- comprehensive and gender sensitive data on the labour market situation of persons with disabilities should be collected and analysed.

²⁰ See National Reform Programme 2021 Austria, p. 53.

²¹ AMS (2020). *Chancengleichheit für Frauen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsmarkt. Hindernisse – Herausforderungen – Lösungsansätze*. Wien: AMS, p 95ff. <https://www.ams-forschungsnetzwerk.at/deutsch/publikationen/BibShow.asp?id=13302&sid=703980329&look=0&stw=Behinderung&gs=1&lng=0&vt=0&or=0&woher=0&akt=0&zz=30&mHId=0&mMId=0&sort=jahrb&Page=1%22%20h>.

In April 2021, the National Assembly agreed to a parliamentary request regarding the improvement of opportunities on the labour market for persons with disabilities. The Federal Minister for Social Affairs as well as the Federal Minister for Labour are asked to examine the process of certifying the incapacity to work with regard to:

- is the certification process carried out in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?;
- a determination of the permanent incapacity for work up to the age of 25 should not be provided;
- all relevant parameters (among others the competences of the person including the support options) are taken into account when determining the person's ability or inability to work.

The Federal Ministers are furthermore asked to develop measures that facilitate the permeability of the day structures/sheltered workshops to a to the general labour market and to provide a comprehensive concept for both issues, particularly on the issue of the incapacity to work, by the end of 2021.²²

In September 2021 the Minister for Labour hosted a summit for inclusion and afterwards presented the following to the public:

- Due to the heterogeneity of responsibilities, there is a lack of statistical data on the overall labour market situation of persons with disabilities in Austria. There is a need to improve labour and social security law for persons with disabilities.
- The labour market situation of people with disabilities is to be better mapped and evaluated.
- The situation of young people is to be considered in a more differentiated way.
- Persons with disabilities in sheltered workshops should receive wages instead of pocket money.²³

²² See Entschließungsantrag Nationalrat: *Ausbau der Chancen am Arbeitsmarkt für Menschen mit Behinderungen*, www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXVII/A/A_01277/index.shtml.

²³ See website of the Minister for Labour with information on the summit for inclusion: <https://www.bma.gv.at/Services/News/Inklusionsgipfel.html>.

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

In 2013, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Austria:

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

‘37. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the federal Government and the governments of the Länder step up efforts towards deinstitutionalization and allowing persons with disabilities to choose where they live.’

Regarding the question of deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities in Austria, in its reply to the 2018 List of Issues the State Party lists all Laender with examples and general information, arguing that the numbers decrease and that children are only placed in institutions when their wellbeing is at risk.²⁴

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

‘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.’

More recently, the 2018 List of Issues requested the following:

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.

Regarding the question of living independently in the community, in its reply to the 2018 List of Issues the State Party lists several examples in the Laender such as a ‘study on longer-term planning for requirements in terms of facilities for people with learning disabilities for the years 2020 and 2025’²⁵ in Lower Austria, a ‘living assistance programme to provide selective support for people with disabilities in their

²⁴ See *Combined second and third reports submitted by Austria under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2018*, pp. 12f (no. 106-116).

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/AUT/CRPD_C_AUT_2-3_7281_E.docx.

²⁵ See *Combined second and third reports submitted by Austria under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2018*, p. 24 (no. 213).

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/AUT/CRPD_C_AUT_2-3_7281_E.docx.

own homes'²⁶ (also in Lower Austria) and a Styrian support programme for persons with disabilities.²⁷

[Article 25 UN CRPD](#) addresses Health but no conclusion was made on this in 2013. Similarly, in the 2018 List of Issues, Article 25 was not mentioned.²⁸

In its reply to the 2018 List of Issues the State Party lists a variety of measures and some health-projects such as in Vienna (no. 37, 84).²⁹ In no. 139 it is also stated that 'The accessibility of public services, particularly in the fields of education, health and social affairs, is being gradually extended by the Länder' without any further arguments, indicators or information.³⁰

As already mentioned in our European Semester report 2020-2021, in chapter 17 (especially chapter 17.11) of the evaluation of the National Action Plan Disability 2012-2020³¹ policy recommendations are formulated, and future policy developments are discussed which directly affect persons with disabilities in the context of the next National Action Plan Disability 2022-2030: Participation of persons with disabilities, financial resources, coordination and clear responsibilities, indicators and systematic data collection will be needed to develop policies which positively affect the situation for persons with disabilities.

4.1 Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC 2019 indicate the poverty risk rate for working age persons with disabilities in Austria was 17.3 % in 2019, compared to 11.1 % for other persons of similar age - an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 6 percentage points (see Table 14). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was 3.1 points (15.2 % for older persons with disabilities and 12.1 % for other persons of similar age). The tables in annex also indicate the respective rates of risk of poverty or social exclusion and break these down by gender as well age.

²⁶ See *Combined second and third reports submitted by Austria under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2018*, p. 33 (no. 291).

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/AUT/CRPD_C_AUT_2-3_7281_E.docx.

²⁷ See *Combined second and third reports submitted by Austria under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2018*, p. 24 (no. 217).

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/AUT/CRPD_C_AUT_2-3_7281_E.docx.

²⁸ See Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2018). List of issues prior to submission of the combined second and third thematic reports of Austria. 12 October 2018, p. 4.

²⁹ See *Combined second and third reports submitted by Austria under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2018*, pp. 5 (no. 37) and 10 (no. 84).

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/AUT/CRPD_C_AUT_2-3_7281_E.docx.

³⁰ See *Combined second and third reports submitted by Austria under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2018*, p. 15 (no. 139).

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/AUT/CRPD_C_AUT_2-3_7281_E.docx.

³¹ BMSGPK (2020), Endbericht. *Evaluierung des Nationalen Aktionsplanes Behinderung 2012-2020, Strategie der österreichischen Bundesregierung zur Umsetzung der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention*. Wien, p. 692 [in German],

https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:ec106d2c-7346-4360-8756-975de92d9576/Evaluierung_des_NAP_2012_2020.pdf.

For persons with disabilities of working age in Austria (age 16-64) the risk of poverty before social transfers was 49.0 % and 17.3 % after transfers. The in-work poverty rate for persons with disabilities aged under 60 was 7.8 %. In its April 2021 data³² on the living conditions of persons in households at risk of poverty, the Statistik Austria - referring to EU-SILC 2020 - lists inter alia persons living in households with persons with disabilities: In sum, 298 000 persons (39 %) in this 'group' are living in poverty or being at risk of poverty. 631 000 persons (7 %) in households at risk of poverty are severely impaired (stark beeinträchtigt durch Behinderung), and 173 000 (2 %) persons in this 'group' are entitled to invalidity/ incapacity to work pension (Bezug einer Invaliditäts-/Erwerbsunfähigkeitspension).³³

In the first draft for the operational programme on employment in Austria (ESF+)³⁴ the fact is highlighted that persons with disabilities face a much higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than persons without disabilities; in this context it is argued that ESF+ funding should prioritise the reduction of poverty and the promotion of social inclusion (without mentioning concrete steps to be taken).

Of interest to health policy are the data on self-reported unmet needs for medical examination (too expensive or too far to travel or waiting list). Disability equality gaps are evident here too and, on this basis, the rate for disabled persons in Austria was 0.7 %, compared to 0.1 % for other persons, which is below the EU27 average of 1.7%. In general, these risks are comparatively low in Austria for all groups, although they remain higher for people with more severe impairments.

In the evaluation of the National Action Plan Disability 2012-2020,³⁵ it is plausibly argued that the high risk of poverty and poverty of persons with disabilities cannot/should not be separated from other themes of the National Action Plan Disability 2012-2020 (which is currently the case). Hence, three key points can be carved out which are relevant for ameliorating the overall situation for persons with disabilities. The three pressing key points³⁶ which need to be addressed when discussing the social situation of persons with disabilities in Austria (which partially overlap with previous European Semester Reports for Austria) are:

- lack of deinstitutionalisation for children and adults with disabilities;³⁷

³² See website of Statistik Austria (2021). Armut und soziale Eingliederung. Lebensbedingungen für Personen in Risikohaushalten (1) 2020 [in German] https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/soziales/armut_und_soziale_eingliederung/index.html.

³³ See website of Statistik Austria (2021). Armut und soziale Eingliederung. Lebensbedingungen für Personen in Risikohaushalten (2) 2020 [in German] https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/soziales/armut_und_soziale_eingliederung/index.html.

³⁴ Erster Entwurf Operationelles Programm Beschäftigung Österreich 2021-2027 (ESF+) (2020) [in German], p. 6 and p. 20.

³⁵ BMSGPK (2020), Endbericht., p. 505 [in German]

³⁶ Besides all the other points addressed in the previous ANED European Semester Reports for Austria, see ANED website.

³⁷ See ANED 'Country report on Living Independently and being Included in the community' (2019), via <https://www.disability-europe.net/country/austria>. See also Erster Entwurf Operationelles Programm Beschäftigung Österreich 2021-2027 (ESF+) (2020) [in German], where the still missing overall concept and programme for deinstitutionalisation is mentioned on pp. 48-50.

- limited/reduced access to healthcare (not only) during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- missing disability mainstreaming in the context of changing structures of social support systems.

4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2021 [Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) for Austria, the National Reform Programme, and the National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020.

Regarding the National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020 and its academic evaluation³⁸ please see our European Semester report for 2020-2021.

In November 2020, the Austrian Federal and State Monitoring Committees stated in their shadow report on the CRPD List of Issues³⁹ that in the context of excluding specific groups in community-based services since ‘the first state audit in 2013, there has been no political declaration of intent between the federalism states and local governments to implement a systematic review of existing legal norms in all areas of law. Even new legislation or amendments to existing legal norms do not systematically follow the inclusion approach from the UN CRPD.’ The report argued that no overarching inclusive approach and comprehensive plan to accessibility with regard to education, health and social services yet exists.

Regarding social policies, the RRP mentions persons with disabilities only once - and here in a very broad and unspecific sense: On p. 35, in the context of equality and equal opportunities, it is argued that particular emphasis is put on the promotion of social cohesion and support of disadvantaged groups such as persons with disabilities (with no further information how to do so).⁴⁰

In a broader sense, social policies are addressed in the NRP in the context of the massive impact of COVID-19 on the financial situation of local communities. Federal funds enable investments on the local community level, inter alia for ‘facilities caring for senior citizens and persons with disabilities’.⁴¹

Cash benefits

In the context of a problem analysis,⁴² the Armutskonferenz assessed the impact of, and developed concepts to ameliorate, the situation in the context of the recent Sozialhilfe-Grundsatzgesetz (Basic Social Welfare Law, BGBl. I No. 41/2019). This

³⁸ See BMSGPK (2020). *Endbericht. Evaluierung des Nationalen Aktionsplanes Behinderung 2012-2020, Strategie der österreichischen Bundesregierung zur Umsetzung der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention*. Wien [in German].
https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:ec106d2c-7346-4360-8756-975de92d9576/Evaluierung_des_NAP_2012_2020.pdf.

³⁹ See Austrian Federal and State Monitoring Committees (2020). Shadow report on the List of Issues in connection with the forthcoming State Audit by the UN Committee of Experts, p. 2.

⁴⁰ See 2021 Recovery and Resilience Plan for Austria, p. 35.

⁴¹ See National Reform Programme 2021 Austria, p. 25.

⁴² See Armutskonferenz (n.y.). *Sozialhilfe-Grundsatzgesetz - Problemanalyse und gesetzliche Sanierungsvorschläge* [in German].
http://www.armutskonferenz.at/files/sozialhilfe_grundsatzgesetz_probleme_sanierungsvorschlaege.pdf.

was discussed in our previous European Semester report, regarding inter alia the abolition of including care allowance into the income of caring relatives (Anrechnung des Pflegegeldes als Einkommen bei pflegenden Angehörigen abschaffen) and the abolition of including 'pocket money' of persons with disabilities and persons with psychological challenges (Anrechnung des Taschengeldes Menschen mit Behinderungen, psychische Beeinträchtigungen und in der Wohnungslosenhilfe).

In July 2021, the Armutskonferenz discussed⁴³ the impact of the Basic Welfare Law, articulating that in the context of the current pandemic it becomes even more obvious that a solid guaranteed minimum income would be preferable to a weak social welfare system. In September 2021, again, the Armutskonferenz pointed to the deterioration of the situation of persons with disabilities regarding social welfare.⁴⁴ It argued in favour of a general social welfare reform, as the current system has negative impact on persons with disabilities, for example in partially assisted living context, in transitional homes (Übergangswohnen) and in homes for persons with psychosocial challenges.

The evaluation of the current social welfare law and system is backed by several other analyses, such as by Norbert Krammer⁴⁵ who used concrete cases in Salzburg to show the negative impact of the law and also, of respective Laender legal frameworks regarding social welfare. The VertretungsNetz for example argued in February 2021 that the care allowance should not be included in income.⁴⁶

In September 2021, the VertretungsNetz criticised discrimination against young persons with disabilities seeking work in Vienna: The VertretungsNetz exemplified the current situation for persons with disabilities with the case of M. who is eligible for supplemented means-tested minimum income (aufstockende Bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung) because of her low unemployment benefits. Even though M. (a young women with learning disabilities) meets all obligations for persons seeking a job, after seeking a job and then acquiring an illness she is now only eligible for a reduced means-tested minimum benefit. This is because from 1 October 2021 onwards, additional tightening of the benefit system will come into force. In the context of the 2018 amendment of the Viennese Minimum Benefit System, persons under the age of 25 who are neither in training nor employed are only eligible for a very low benefit. The measure aims at reducing the number of young persons neither employed nor in training and seeks to improve vocational integration and chances at the labour market. This measure applies in full to persons with disabilities and has a negative impact on their already dramatic situation. In the course of this amendment, the suspension of the four months for orientation ('Orientierungsmonate') before reducing the benefits for young persons with disabilities seeking a job is further deteriorating

⁴³ See Armutskonferenz (2021). Folgen und Auswirkungen der eingeführten Sozialhilfe [in German]. https://www.armutskonferenz.at/files/armutskonferenz_folgen_und_auswirkungen_sozialhilfe_2021.pdf.

⁴⁴ See Armutskonferenz (2021). 'Sozialhilfe': Zum Sterben zu viel, zum Leben zu wenig! [in German] <https://www.bizeps.or.at/sozialhilfe-zum-sterben-zu-viel-zum-leben-zu-wenig/>.

⁴⁵ See Krammer, Norbert (2021). Schwierige Wege zur Unterstützung: Armutsbekämpfung verkommt zum Hürdenlauf [in German] <https://www.bizeps.or.at/schwierige-wege-zur-unterstuetzung-armutsbekaempfung-verkommt-zum-huerdenlauf-beispiel-salzburg/>.

⁴⁶ See VertretungsNetz (2021). Pflegegeld nicht als Einkommen rechnen! [in German] <https://www.bizeps.or.at/pflegegeld-nicht-als-einkommen-rechnen/>.

the situation. The VertretungsNetz hopes that the Viennese State Parliament will annul/amend this provision.⁴⁷

*Health and social care*⁴⁸

Regarding health and long-term care, the EC working paper on the Austrian recovery and resilience plan mentions persons with disabilities one time: On p. 46, it is argued in Box 4.3b with regard to social challenges that due to the COVID-19 crisis more persons are likely to fall back on the basic safety nets. Hence, a 'preventive approach to long-term care is envisaged by a measure establishing community nurses. Advice and support by the latter would enable older people and persons with disabilities to have access to care, while enabling them to live in their home environment. The measure aims to ensure the sustainability of the health and long-term care systems.'⁴⁹

Regarding flagship projects at the province level, in the NRP, Salzburg is mentioned with regard to a hygiene training in facilities for persons with disabilities.⁵⁰

In their shadow report on the CRPD List of Issues, the Austrian Federal and State Monitoring Committees argued in November 2020 that especially 'in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it has become apparent that large institutions particularly endanger vulnerable groups, among which are people with disabilities, and that the lack of data due to the federal structure in this area made it difficult for the health authorities to react quickly and purposefully.'⁵¹ Also, it is argued that the 'availability of accessible housing and community services and a personal budget are the basic requirements for the possibility to freely choose one's place of residence. The lack of these basic conditions makes it almost impossible for people with disabilities to choose their place of residence themselves. In addition, it is virtually impossible to change one's place of residence to another federal state in this situation, as benefits from so-called disability assistance are linked to the existing place of residence.'⁵²

⁴⁷ See VertretungsNetz (2021). Gekürzte Mindestsicherung statt Jobangebot [in German], https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20210922_OTS0055/gekuerzte-mindestsicherung-statt-jobangebot.

⁴⁸ For the situation of persons in the context of COVID-19 please see the report on COVID-19.

⁴⁹ See Commission Staff Working Document - Analysis of the recovery and resilience plan for Austria. Accompanying the document COM(2021) 338 final, p. 46.

⁵⁰ See National Reform Programme 2021 Austria, p. 91.

⁵¹ See Austrian Federal and State Monitoring Committees (2020). Shadow report on the List of Issues in connection with the forthcoming State Audit by the UN Committee of Experts, p. 10.

⁵² See Austrian Federal and State Monitoring Committees (2020). Shadow report on the List of Issues in connection with the forthcoming State Audit by the UN Committee of Experts, p. 14.

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

In 2013, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Austria:

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

‘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.’

More recently, the 2018 List of Issues requested the following:

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.

5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

The EU-SILC 2019 estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with additional caution due to relatively wide confidence intervals, but they consistently indicate disability equality gaps (an average of 2-3 years provides a more stable indication). Table 16 indicates early school leaving rates disaggregated by disability status in Austria. Youth with disabilities (aged 18-24) tend to leave school significantly more than non-disabled peers of the same age groups (and this is reinforced by widening the sample size to age 18-29). Table 17 shows completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (age 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider age range 30-39).

No new data is available for the primary and secondary education sector. Thus, it is not possible to analyse and evaluate the educational situation of persons with disabilities in these sectors.

New data collected in the tertiary education sector indicates that students with disability/health impairments experience barriers and discrimination in the context of their academic studies.⁵³ Only to a small extent do they receive sufficient and individualised support according to their disability related needs. Comprehensive disability equality, accessibility and the provision of reasonable accommodation have yet to be implemented in the tertiary education sector. Relevant findings from this inquiry on the situation of chronically ill, health-impaired and disabled students at universities include:

- 12 % of all students state, that they have (at least) one health impairment which has at least a slight or intermittent effect on their studies - women report this slightly more frequently than men (14 % women vs. 11 % men).
- The proportion of students with impairments has increased slightly since the last survey in 2015, but the proportion with psychosocial disabilities has increased sharply, from 3.8 % to 4.9 %. Another 3.2 % have a chronic somatic illness. Mobility impairments, learning difficulties, visual or hearing impairments, and allergy/respiratory disorders are each cited by up to 1 % of all students. The majority of these are impairments that are not readily perceivable by third parties (70 %). 60 % of students with an impairment report (very) strong effects in their studies due to their impairment.
- At art universities, the proportion of students with a health impairment is above average at 16 %. At universities of education for teacher training (8 %), universities of applied sciences (9 %) and private universities (9 %), the proportion is significantly below average.
- Only 20 % of students with health impairments are aware of the contact person for the specific concerns of students with disabilities at their university, 80 % are not aware of the offer or do not know whether such an offer exists at their university.
- The majority of students report specific impairment / disability-related difficulties in the academic year 2019. Frequently mentioned difficulties are the mode of examination, time requirements for examinations and deadlines, the organization of studies (e.g. compulsory attendance, registration procedures, density of examinations) and the organization of courses. Overall, the university is perceived as providing rather little support for impairment / disability related problems. Only 12 % feel well supported by their teachers, 8 % by specific counselling centres and 5 % by the university administration.
- The majority of students with health-impairments/disabilities prefers that as few people as possible at the university know about their impairment / disability. The main reason is the expectation that speaking up about difficulties would have made little difference to their situation. Nevertheless, findings indicate that those students who turned to someone when they had problems did receive support in the majority of cases.
- According to their own assessment, they are less well integrated socially (contact with other students) and academically (finding their way in the academic environment) than students without impairments.

⁵³ IHS (2020). Zur Situation behinderteter, chronisch kranker und gesundheitlich beeinträchtigter Studierender. Quantitativer Teil der Zusatzstudie zur Studierenden-Sozialerhebung 2019, p. 5 f http://ww2.sozialerhebung.at/images/Berichte/Studierenden-Sozialerhebung-2019_Zusatzbericht_Gesundheitliche_Beeintraechtigung.pdf.

- Students with health-impairments / disabilities are more likely to drop out: 11 % of them seriously consider giving up studying altogether compared to 5 % among students without impairments.

Their financial situation is more difficult compared to other students: Because they earn a lower income on average from their employment, their average budget is somewhat lower overall. At the same time, they have higher expenses on average; three quarters of students with impairments report additional costs due to their impairments (including for living expenses such as food, medication, hygiene articles, doctor's visits and costs for therapy). Students with health-impairments/disabilities report being very or somewhat affected by financial problems almost twice as often compared students without impairments (35 % vs. 19 %).

5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2021 [Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) for Austria, the National Reform Programme, and the National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020.

The main measure described in the RRP to cope with educational repercussions related to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is to offer remedial lessons to either single students or small groups of students.⁵⁴ Although students with disabilities are explicitly mentioned as having a particular risk of educational disadvantages in the general document, they are not mentioned in the detailed description of actual implementation of the measures.⁵⁵ Thus, it is not clear if remedial lessons will be adapted to the needs of students with disabilities or if students with disabilities will equally be included. Furthermore, by focusing mostly on remedial lessons the government missed the opportunity for an overall improvement of the educational sector in Austria which is known for its strong discriminating effects on disadvantaged groups of students.

The same applies to measures regarding the digitalisation of schools: The description emphasizes that all students shall have the same opportunities but fails to mention any special measures to make sure that students with disabilities are included on an equal basis with others.⁵⁶ The focus of the digitalisation programmes is on federal schools, but special schools fall under the competence of the Laender and it is unclear if and how far special schools participate in this programme.

In the NRP, students with disabilities are mentioned in the context of their underrepresentation at universities. On p. 75 it is argued that 'The National Strategy on the Social Dimension of Higher Education offers support for underrepresented students and students with specific needs (e.g. because of work, chronic illness, care responsibilities). Such support is designed to improve equal opportunities as well as a well-balanced mix of social backgrounds at tertiary institutions.'⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Bundesministerium für Finanzen (2021). *Österreichischer Aufbau- und Resilienzplan 2020-2026*, p. 38.

⁵⁵ See Bundesministerium für Finanzen (2021). *Anhang 1: Österreichischer Aufbau- und Resilienzplan 2020-2026*, p. 371ff.

⁵⁶ See Bundesministerium für Finanzen (2021). *Anhang 1: Österreichischer Aufbau- und Resilienzplan 2020-2026*, pp. 202-215.

⁵⁷ See National Reform Programme 2021 Austria, p. 75.

6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

6.1 Updates on use of existing EU funds (up to 2021)

As in previous years it is challenging to find meaningful and comprehensive information on projects co-funded by ESIF and to assess their consideration and inclusion of persons with disabilities. This applies to projects with a focus on persons with disabilities as well as to other projects and their consideration of persons with disabilities.

The list of projects co-financed by the European Social Funds was last updated in July 2021. As in previous years, projects which mention persons with disabilities explicitly are mostly youth coaching and so-called production schools (now: Fit for Training). These programmes were repeatedly critically reviewed in previous European Semester reports.⁵⁸ Again, it is not clear in how far disability equality or accessibility for persons with disabilities are being considered in any other implemented projects. The same applies to projects co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Although there is a website which informs about many activities and projects implemented in this programme, no information on disability equality and accessibility is available for the single projects.⁵⁹ A few of the selected projects which are presented on the website focus on persons with disabilities, they are mostly special offers only for persons with disabilities. One project in Styria, however, aims at providing regular schools with special equipment and devices for the inclusion of students with disabilities.⁶⁰ This can be considered a good example of improving quality inclusive education for children with disabilities.

In April 2021, Independent Living Austria (ILA) and the European Network for Independent Living (ENIL) filed a second official complaint to the European Commission against Austria. Again, it concerns the use of EAFRD for renovating existing and constructing new institutions for disabled people in Tyrol. The second complaint concerns five residential institutions and three sheltered workshops for adults as well as a large institution for children with disabilities.⁶¹

6.2 Priorities for future investment (after 2021)

Persons with disabilities are almost invisible in the RRP. They do not appear as a target group for policy and programme makers like other specific groups in Austria. Commonly, they are referred to in brackets following the term 'and other disadvantaged groups' in a text. This has been repeatedly pointed out as a major

⁵⁸ See e.g. European Semester 2017/2018 country fiche on disability http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/ede/AT_ANED2017_EU2020%20report_final_web.docx, European Semester 2020-2021 country fiche on disability equality http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/ede/AT%20-%20ANED%202018%20-%20Task%20-%20EU2020%20report%20-%20final%20for%20web.docx.

⁵⁹ See English version of the website <https://www.zukunftsraumland.at/seiten/22>

⁶⁰ See description of the project (in German) <https://www.zukunftsraumland.at/projekte/2584>.

⁶¹ See press release by ENIL and ILA (2021) <https://enil.eu/news/press-release-disability-groups-file-second-complaint-against-austria-for-eu-funds-misuse/>.

problem in European Semester reports. Disability Equality and the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities are not yet fully understood and far away from being implemented in Austria. This was also the conclusion of an evaluation of the operational program for ESF which was published in 2019. The authors conclude that Disability Mainstreaming is no established approach in Austria and that there is not enough knowledge on how to implement it.⁶² Thus, sensitization, awareness raising and the building of know-how for programme development and programme implementation in line with the CRPD and the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities of the EU are necessary. This is still true in September 2021.

Special courses or programmes only for young persons with disabilities should be replaced by a focus on inclusive education in secondary higher vocational education. Another focus should be on community oriented personal support services for persons who currently live in residential facilities. Austria needs to elaborate an effective programme for deinstitutionalisation and inclusive support services for all persons with disabilities.

⁶² Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (WIFO) (2020). *Das Operationelle Programm Beschäftigung des Europäischen Sozialfonds – Österreich 2014-2020. Bericht der Begleitenden Evaluierung zu Konzeption und Umsetzung*, p. 145f, https://www.esf.at/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ESF_Evaluierung_Bericht_Umsetzung_2019.pdf.

7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database⁶³ and statistical reports.⁶⁴

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

The proxy used to identify people with disabilities (impairments) is whether ‘for at least the past 6 months’ the respondent reports that they have been ‘limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do’.⁶⁵

Table 1: Self-reported ‘activity limitations’ as a proxy for impairment/disability (2019)



Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1.

In subsequent tables, these data are used to indicate ‘disability’ equality gaps and trends relevant to the analytical chapters – for the labour market, social policies and healthcare, and education – by comparing outcomes for persons who report and do not report ‘activity limitations’.⁶⁶ National estimates for Austria are compared with

⁶³ Eurostat health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁶⁴ Eurostat (2019) *Disability Statistics* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics.

⁶⁵ The SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM) [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_\(MEHM\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_(MEHM)).

⁶⁶ This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.⁶⁷ In general, more people reported limitations in Austria than the EU average.

7.1 Data relevant to disability and the labour market

Table 2: EU and Austria employment rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2019)

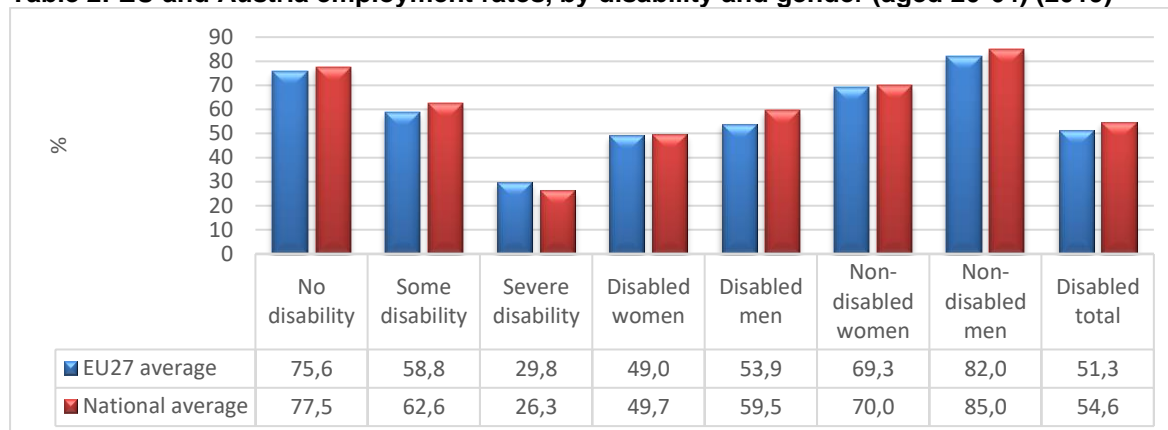


Table 3: Employment rates in Austria, by disability and age group (2019)

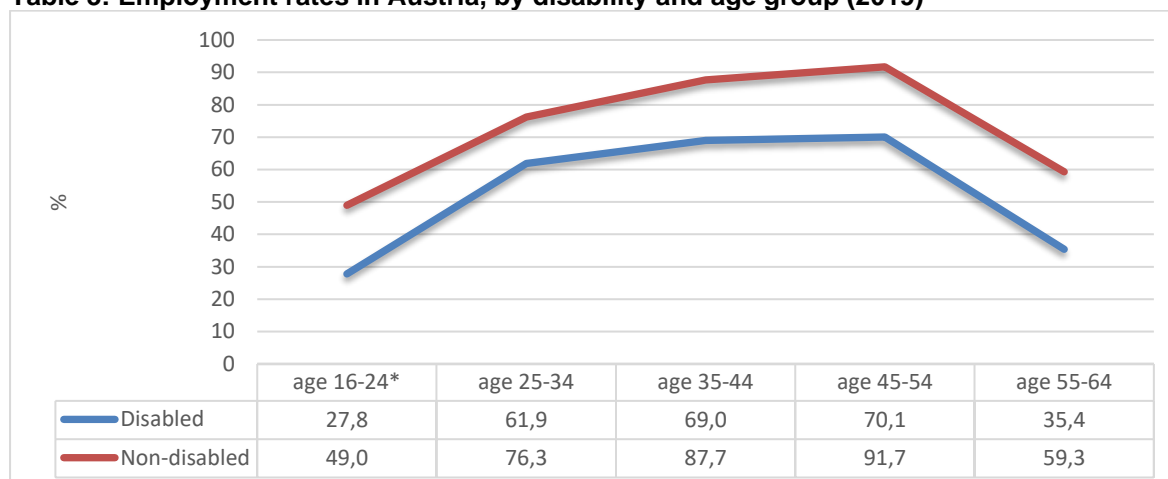
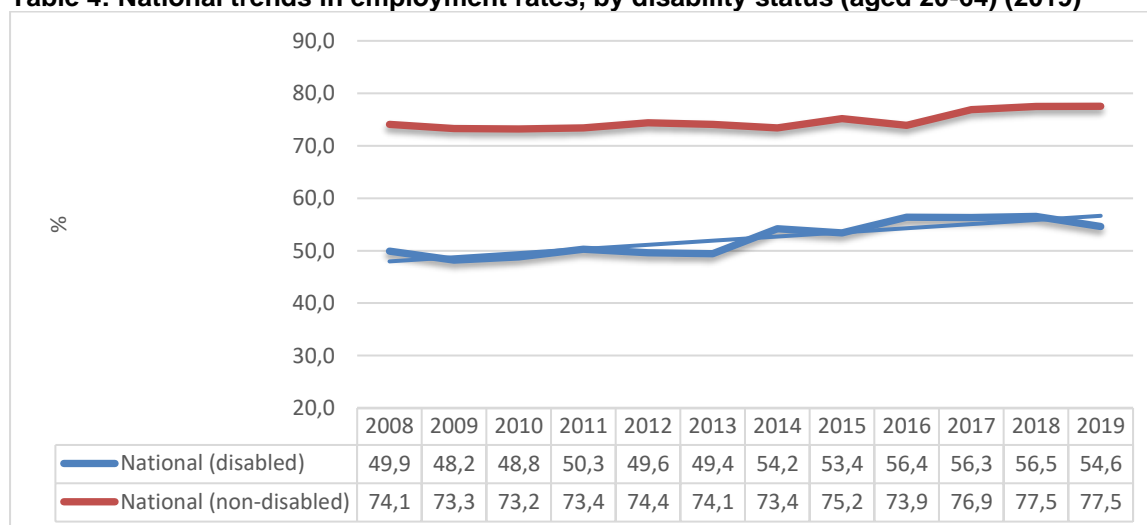


Table 4: National trends in employment rates, by disability status (aged 20-64) (2019)



⁶⁷ The exit of the United Kingdom from the EU changes the EU average. Averages were also affected in 2015 by a discontinuity in the German disability data due to a definitional change.

Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and preceding UDBs).

7.1.1 Unemployment

Table 5: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2019)

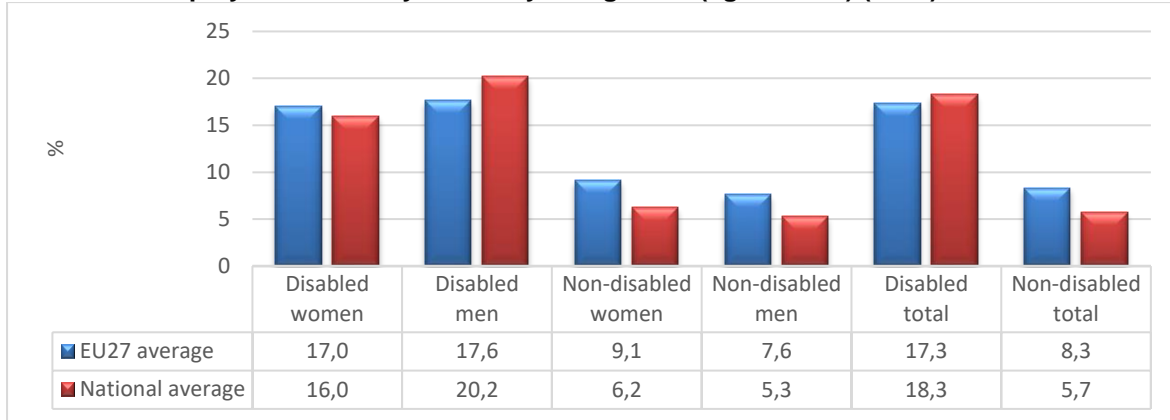


Table 6: Unemployment rates in Austria, by disability and age group (2019)

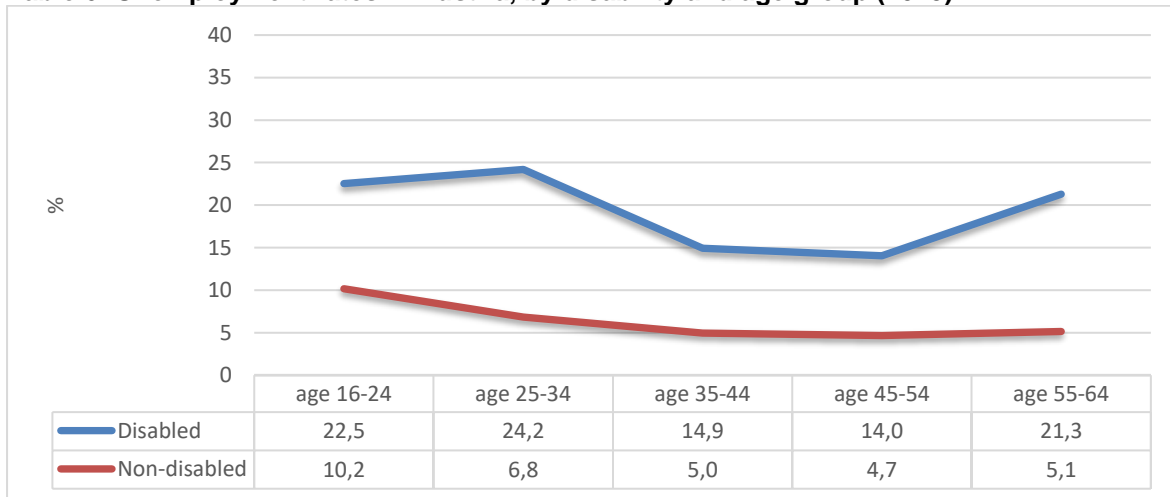
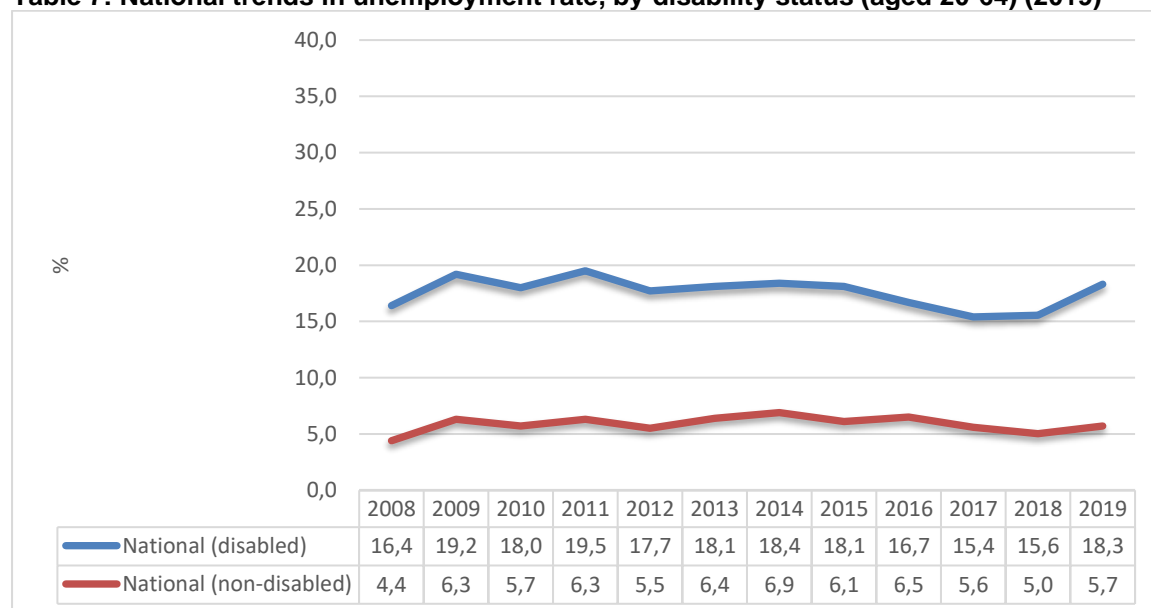


Table 7: National trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64) (2019)


Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and preceding UDBs).

7.1.2 Economic activity

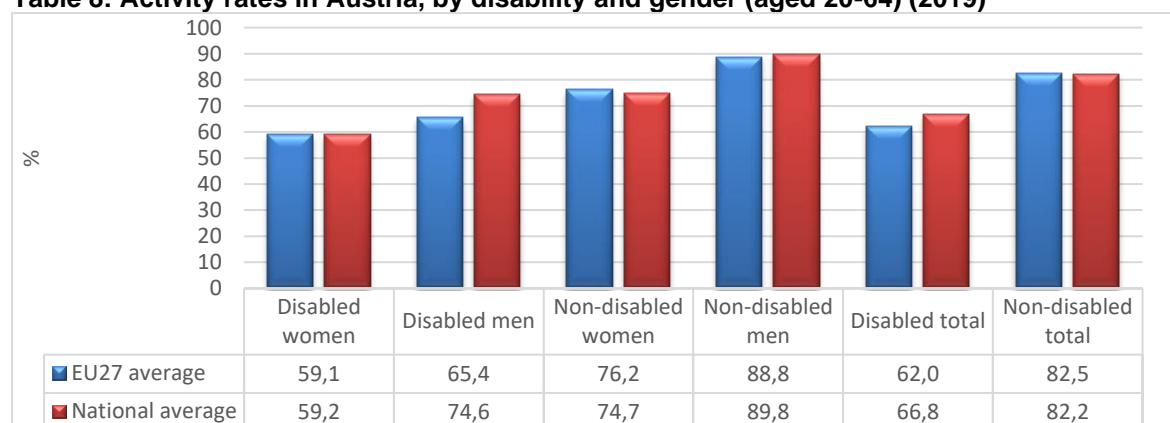
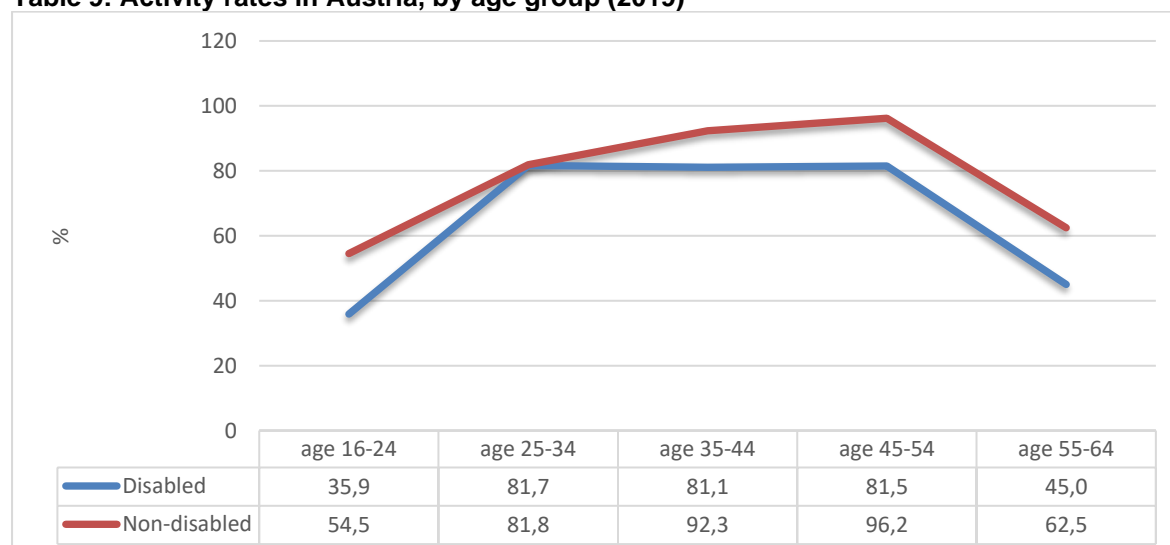
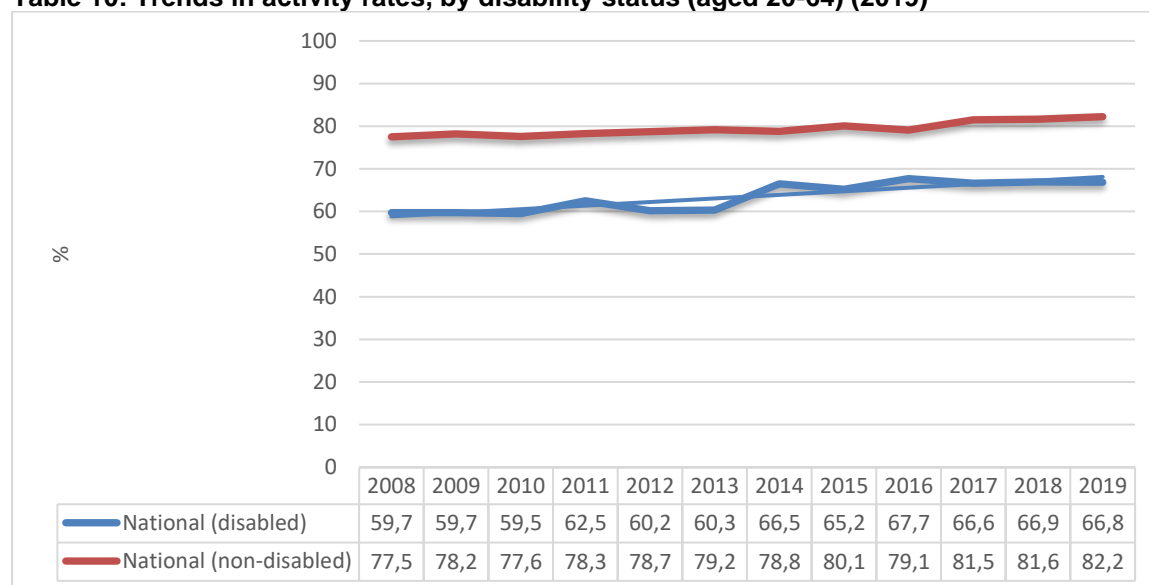
Table 8: Activity rates in Austria, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2019)

Table 9: Activity rates in Austria, by age group (2019)


Table 10: Trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64) (2019)

Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and preceding UDBs).

7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Austria

Disability data is not yet available from the core European Labour Force Survey but labour market indicators for Austria were disaggregated from ad modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.⁶⁸

Detailed data on the labour market situation of persons with disabilities is not published on a regular basis in Austria, only the unemployment rate of advantaged disabled persons (narrow definition of disability) is made public consistently on a website of the Federal Ministry for Labour.⁶⁹ The available data refers to numbers of officially recognised persons with disabilities according to the Federal Disability Employment Act and those with health-related restrictions for placement. However, this data does not include persons of working age who are legally considered incapable to work and thus no longer fall under the regulation of the Federal Disability Employment Act.

7.2 EU data relevant to disability, social policies and healthcare (2019)

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

⁶⁹ See <https://www.dnet.at/elis/Arbeitsmarkt.aspx>.

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

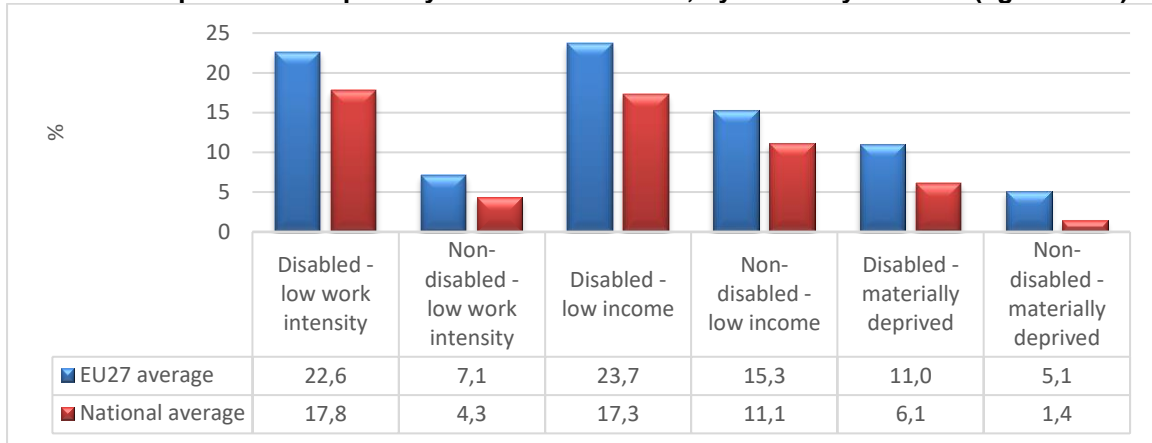


Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)

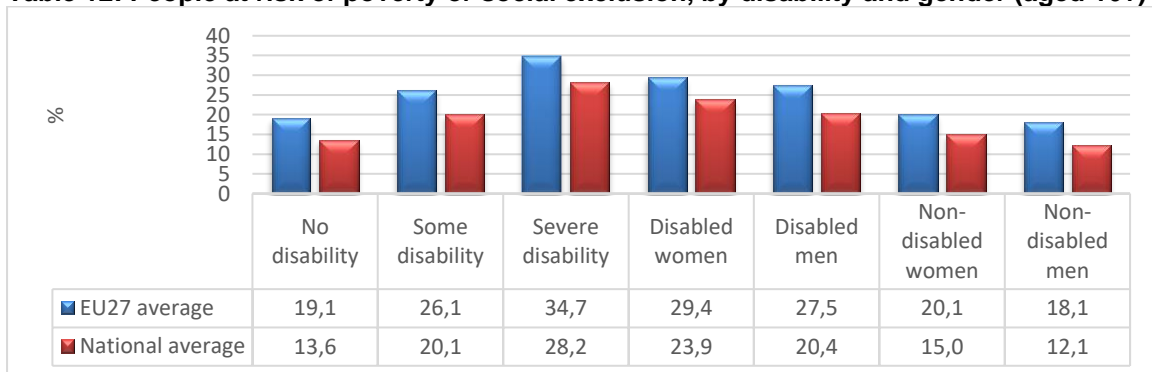
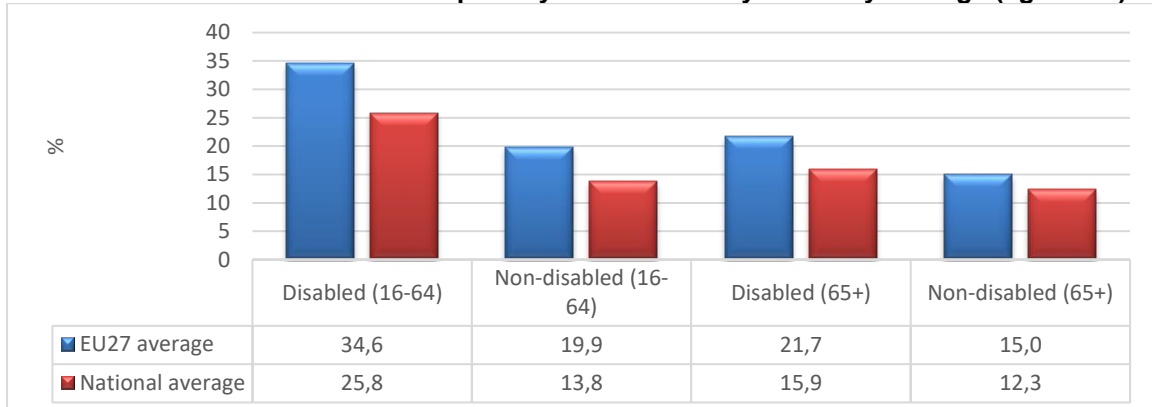
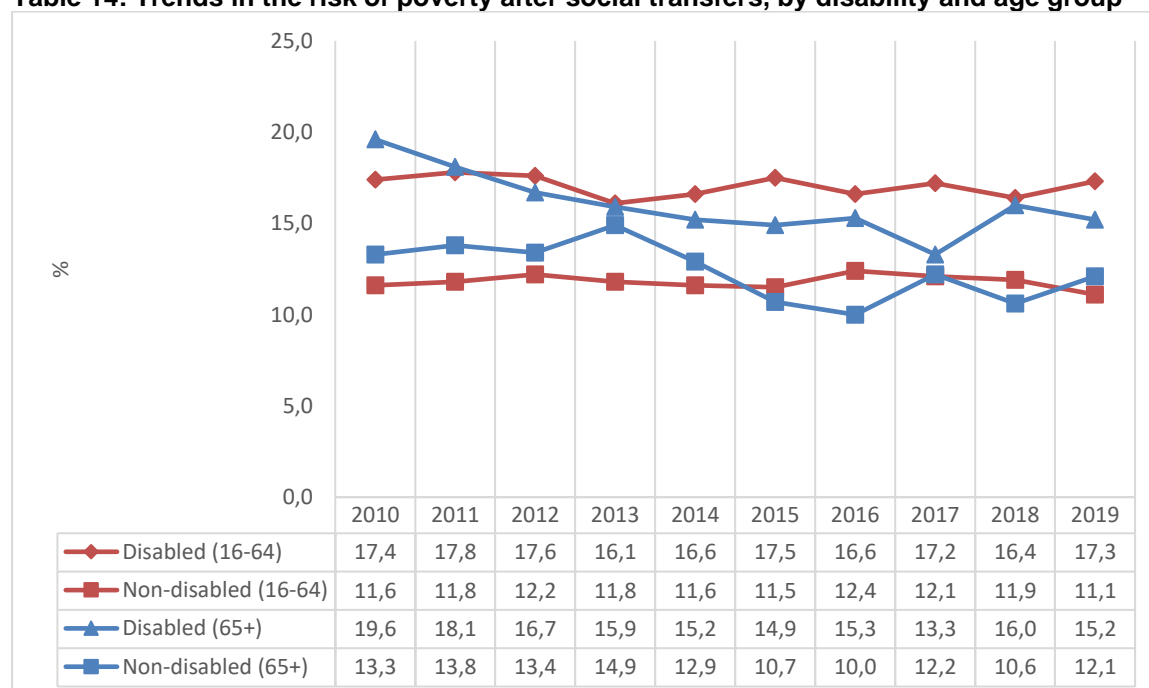


Table 13: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)

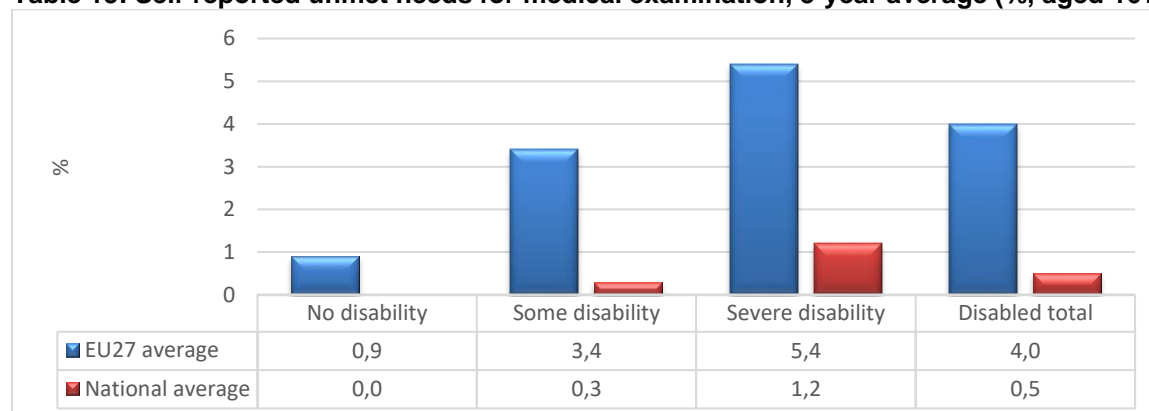


Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and previous UDB).

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

Source: Eurostat Health Database [[hlth_dpe020](#)] - People at risk of poverty.

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

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

Source: Eurostat Health Database [[hlth_dh030](#)] – 'Too expensive or too far to travel or waiting list'.

Note: due to large variations an average of three years is indicated. EU mean averages are also skewed by high values in a minority of countries within disability groups but median averages for the total disability and no disability groups in 2019 are consistent with the 3-year mean values.

7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or health care data in Austria

The EU-SILC data provides a comprehensive and reliable source concerning poverty or social exclusion rates. In addition to the summary tables presented so far, the Eurostat disability database also contains breakdowns concerning disability and poverty before and after social transfers, as well as in-work-poverty.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

Table 24: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)⁷¹

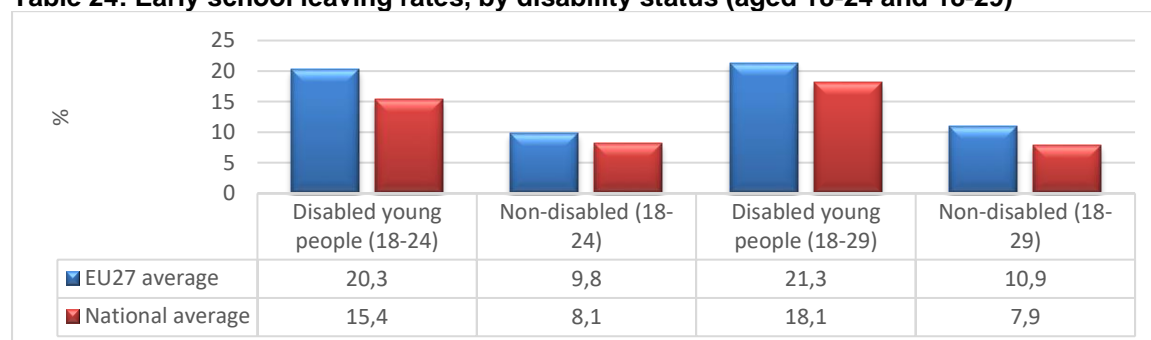
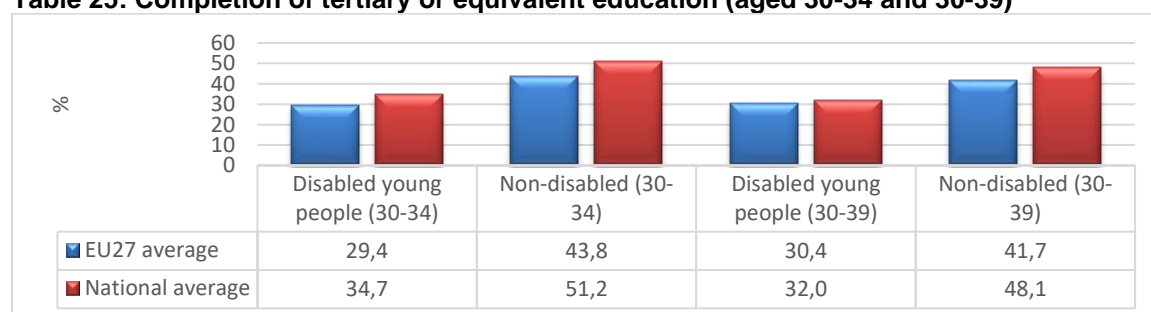


Table 25: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)



Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1 (and preceding UDBs).

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

7.3.1 Alternative sources of education data in Austria

The only newly available source of data on disability and education is the inquiry on the situation of chronically ill, health-impaired and disabled students at universities in Austria. Relevant findings are summarized in chapter 5.⁷²

⁷¹ There was a change from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011 qualification definitions in 2014 although some Member States continued to use the older definition after this time.

⁷² IHS (2020). Zur Situation behindert, chronisch kranker und gesundheitlich beeinträchtigter Studierender. Quantitativer Teil der Zusatzstudie zur Studierenden-Sozialerhebung 2019, p. 5 f http://ww2.sozialerhebung.at/images/Berichte/Studierenden-Sozialerhebung-2019_Zusatzbericht_Gesundheitliche_Beeintraechtigung.pdf.

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