



European Semester 2022-2023 country fiche on disability equality

Poland

January 2023

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Directorate D — Social Rights and Inclusion

Unit D3 — Disability & Inclusion

European Commission

B-1049 Brussels

European Semester 2022-2023 country fiche on disability equality

With comparative data Annex provided by EDE

Poland

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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 (UN CRPD).

This country report has been prepared as input for the European Semester in 2022¹ and has been developed under Contract VC/2020/0273 with the European Commission.

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

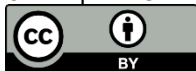
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Manuscript completed in January 2023

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023

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1 Executive summary and recommendations

1.1 Key points and main challenges for Poland in 2022

Disability and the labour market

Annual statistics collected over the last decade (between 2009 and 2019) indicate a positive trend in the labour market indicators among persons with disabilities, however, a comparison with the results for non-disabled persons reveals a continuous and substantial stagnation of the disability employment gap. The National Reform Programme (NRP) addresses the situation of persons with disabilities mainly in relation to the labour market participation, but still lacks more nuanced analysis and large-scale targeted policies, i.e. the overdue disability assessment reform or support measures for persons with disabilities fleeing Ukraine or other regions and seeking asylum in Poland. While measures addressing caregivers of persons with disabilities are key and demand substantial revisions, they cannot be treated as the main disability inclusion measures.

Disability, social policies, and healthcare

The disability gap in the extreme poverty line has maintained at approximately 3 percentage points in 2021, similar to 2011, among a general downtrend in extreme poverty measures for the general population. The data on self-reported unmet needs for medical examination reveals disability equality gap, the rate for persons with disabilities in Poland was 4.1 %, compared to 1.1 % for other persons in 2020. Poland needs to strengthen social support for refugees with disabilities, including but not limited to, those fleeing Ukraine due to Russian invasion, in accordance with the recent report of the Committee of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A Strategy for the Development of Social Services² was adopted among criticism, as it does not envision ambitious nor measurable plan for deinstitutionalisation. Long overdue changes in social benefits for caregivers are still not implemented, contributing to difficult economic situation in households, among raising inflation.

Disability, education, and skills

The consequences of the pandemic in education of students with disabilities must be mitigated, as the existing research reveal serious threat to the education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the situation of pupils and students with disabilities who fled Ukraine remains critical. This is in the context of Polish education system continuing to face multiple structural challenges, including shortage of teachers, that hinders quality education.

Investment priorities for inclusion and accessibility

The following investment priorities are recommended: (1) developing and broadening the scope of community-based independent living services and long-term care; (2) addressing the crisis in psychiatric care for youth; (3) building a comprehensive support system for refugees with disabilities; (4) focusing on disability perspective in the investment on the green and digital transition; and (5) implementing disability assessment reform in accordance with the UN CRPD.

² Social Services Development Strategy. Public policy until 2030 (with an outlook to 2035), <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WMP20220000767>.

1.2 Recommendations for Poland

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

Recommendation: Better integrate the national Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030)³ in the NRP.

Rationale: The NRP addresses disability related policies in limited way. Alignment with the newly developed disability strategy, alongside with the CRPD Concluding Observations for Poland issued in 2018, could strengthen disability perspective in the Semester documents.

Recommendation: Establish comprehensive support for refugees with disabilities.

Rationale: Efforts to support and integrate refugees with disabilities needs to be strengthened in accordance with the recent report of the UN CRPD.

Recommendation: Mitigate the consequences of the pandemic in the education.

Rationale: Research shows that remote education often was inadequate for students with disabilities, with barriers being both logistical as well as attitudinal.

Recommendation: Implement disability assessment reform in line with the UN CRPD.

Rationale: Long overdue reform is not mentioned in the NRP, there is no sign of the progress in the implementation of the reform despite it being announced in the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

Recommendation: Strengthening the human rights framework in education.

Rationale: Recent analysis of school textbooks reveal absence of contemporary, free from stereotypes and comprehensive disability education at all levels. Ensuring education about disability and rights is crucial for the implementation of the UN CRPD.

Recommendation: Ensure high-quality participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations at all levels of policy development.

Rationale: Recent disability policy development processes leave substantial field for improvement in the consultative processes. It also shows a need to better support organisations of persons with disabilities in independent monitoring of the implementation of the UN CRPD on the national and regional levels.

Recommendation: Introduce changes in social benefits, including care allowance for caregivers.

Rationale: Economic situation of persons with disabilities and their caregivers remains difficult, especially among rising inflation. The removal of restriction of undertaking employment while receiving caregiver allowance, and the lack of implementation of the Constitutional Tribunal ruling are among expected policy changes.

³ Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030), <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,170,strategia-na-rzecz-osob-z-niepelnosprawnosciami-2021-2030>.

Recommendation: Ensure higher participation in higher education.

Rationale: Recent progress in accessibility of academia offers a window of opportunity to raise proportion of graduates with disabilities that oscillates at only 1.8 % for past years.

2 Mainstreaming disability equality in the 2022 Semester documents

2.1 Country Report (CR) and Country Specific Recommendation (CSR)

The following key points highlight where a disability perspective was considered or should be considered, in the Country Report (CR) and the Country Specific Recommendation (CSR). We address the most relevant of these in the next chapters.

Disability is referred to explicitly in the CR and CSR in the context of the labour market disparities, namely stagnated wide disability gap in employment rate (CR pp. 7 and 46). The CR refers several times to these labour market challenges, as well as the employment challenges for women carers, but does not address disability policies directly. There is however the necessity to address disability perspectives in relation to other key policies, including:

- need to strengthen long-term care policies;
- integration of displaced persons, including but not limited to, persons fleeing Ukraine due to the Russian invasion;
- social impact of the rising energy prices – the need for targeted support for households;
- the unsustainable pension system projects an increase in the poverty risk among elderly;
- need for improvement in the targeting of social benefits;
- limited access to childcare;
- participation of women in the workforce;
- digital and green transformation;
- employment under temporary contracts and self-employment with low social contributions increasing the risk of the inadequacy of future pensions;
- quality and inclusiveness of education and digital skills;
- financial and organisational hinders in the healthcare system, need to accelerate e-health services;
- digitalisation within public administration;
- poor consultation with stakeholders during the law-making process, the need to ensure effective public consultations, and involvement of social partners in the policy-making process;
- lack of sufficient ambitions for climate targets;
- need to increase attractiveness and accessibility of public transport;
- need for improvement of the efficiency and transparency of public spending;
- implementation of recovery and resilience plan and previous CSRs;
- the primary care system is understaffed and overstretched;
- foster quality education and skills relevant to the labour market, especially through adult learning and improving digital skills.

It would be recommended to integrate the disability perspective in digital and green transformation analysis and recommendations.

2.2 National Reform Programme (NRP) and Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)

The following key points highlight where the situation of persons with disabilities or disability policies is relevant to the National Reform Programme (NRP) and the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP). We analyse the most relevant of these in the next chapters.

The NRP in the chapter on planned responses to challenges explicitly addresses disability in relation to five areas:

1. Labour market participation via more flexible working conditions and making the institutions of the labour market more effective, however employment of persons with disabilities is not centrally positioned.
2. Possibility of reimbursing the costs of care for children with disabilities up to the age of 18, as a tool to support labour market participation of women.
3. Supporting high-quality education and skills in line with the needs of the labour market via a Governmental programme for the development of school infrastructure and the competences of students and teachers in the field of information and communication technologies for 2020-2024 – ‘Active Board’, including evaluation of ICT teaching aids and tools for students with disabilities and blind students.
4. Increasing accessibility of environment-friendly transport.
5. Financing support for persons with disabilities fleeing Ukraine due to war from the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled People, among others.

In relation to other chapters, references to policies relevant to the situation of disability policies include:

- the Annual Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities for 2022;
- the National Action Programme for Equal Treatment for 2022-2030;
- the Accessibility Plus Programme 2018-2025;
- increment in disability pensions (The Act of 21 January 2021);⁴
- the Act of 9 January 2020 on an additional annual monetary benefit for disability pensioners;
- analysis of disability perspective in energy poverty;
- respite care schemes;
- personal assistance scheme;
- care and residential centres;
- family support centres.

It is important to highlight that among measures addressing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights implementation of Principle 17 of disability inclusion is envisioned only as increasing the professional activity of parents with children with disabilities. No measure to address persons with disabilities (not only their families) is

⁴ The Act of 21 January 2021 amending the act on pensions and disability pensions from the Social Insurance Fund and certain other acts.

envisioned which does collide with the provisions of the UN CRPD ratified by Poland in 2012.

It is crucial to ensure that the NRP better addresses disability rights and perspective in the following areas:

- increasing professional activity;
- support high-quality education in line with the needs of the labour market;
- more ambitious green transition measures that centre disability;
- healthcare improvement;
- digital transition in public administration;
- increasing the role of public consultations.

In line with the last point, it is also worth noting that the NRP does not mention inputs from disabled persons' organisations or networks in the chapter on the process of preparation and engaging stakeholders. It is crucial that the NRP process includes inputs from the organisations representing persons with disabilities in line with Article 29 of the UN CRPD.

2.3 Semester links to CRPD and national disability action plans

It is important that Semester plans align with the national disability strategy. In Poland, this refers to the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030),⁵ published in 2021. There is also the governmental programme Accessibility Plus 2018-2025.⁶ An Annual Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities for 2022, is mentioned in the 2022 NRP (p. 86).

Relevant recommendations arising from participation in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are highlighted in the following chapters. The last UN CRPD Committee recommendations to Poland were in 2018.

⁵ Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030), <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,170,strategia-na-rzecz-osob-z-niepelnosprawnosciami-2021-2030>.

⁶ Accessibility Plus Governmental Programme (2018-2021), https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/media/72628/Dostepnosc_angielski.pdf.

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

In 2018, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Poland:

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

‘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.’

The 2018 Concluding Observations and the state’s submission in 2018 are the most recent developments in the CRPD dialogue.

3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

According to the Social Scoreboard indicator, cited in the Semester package, the disability employment gap in Poland is considered ‘To watch’.

Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Poland of 44.8 % in 2020, compared to 77.3 % for other persons. This results in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 31 percentage points (estimated EU27 average gap 24.5, see Tables 2-4) or an employment chances ratio of 0.6. Statistics published on the Eurostat database indicate a disability employment gap of 31.3 percentage points in 2020, using a slightly different methodology, and rising again to 34.2 points in 2021 (against a pre-COVID-19 figure of 33.4 points).⁷

The same data indicate unemployment rates of 11.8 % and 6.0 %, respectively in 2020 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Poland was 50.8 %, 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.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on employment in 2020-2021, some caution is needed when interpreting trend data.

The national data sources, e.g. The Polish Labour Force Survey (*Badanie Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności*, known as BAEL) also allows for disaggregation of disability status in labour market statistics. According to BAEL data, in Q4 2021, the economic activity rate for registered persons with disabilities (18-59/64) reached only 33.9 % (28.8 % in 2019), the disability employment rate equalled 31.8 % (26.8 % in 2019), and the disability unemployment rate 6.3 % (7.2 % in 2019, and 9.3 % in 2017)

⁷ Eurostat, Disability employment gap by level of activity limitation and sex (source EU-SILC), 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dlm200/default/table.

(Table I).⁸ Annual statistics collected over the last decade (between 2009 and 2019) indicate a positive trend in the labour market indicators among persons with disabilities, increasing the economic activity rate by 4.2 percentage points, the employment rate by 5.4, and the unemployment rate decreased by 5.6 points (Table II). However, a comparison of the trends with the results for non-disabled populations reveals a continuous stagnation in diminishing the disability employment gap (see Tables III, IV and V).⁹

While we observe a higher general activity rate and employment rate, and a slightly higher unemployment rate for persons with disabilities it is crucial to apply the intersectional lenses to the analysis including a focus on gender, degree of disability as well as a place of residence (see Table VII).¹⁰ When it comes to the degree of disability (as assessed in the disability certificate), we can observe a decline in activity and employment rates for persons with a severe degree of disability (from 6.3 to 4.3 in employment rate), while a rise in the same measure for persons with moderate and minor degrees. Considering gender as a factor of analysis shows that, i.e. activity rate for women with disabilities who have a severe degree of disability diminished from 6.1 in 2020 to 4.0 in 2022, and is 1.5 percentage points lower than for men. In general, gender analysis shows lower results for both employment rate and economic activity rate for women with disabilities than for men with disabilities across all the degrees of disability.

Urban-rural divide indicators indicate that the situation of persons with disabilities living in the rural areas is characterised by lower employment rates when it comes to persons with severe and moderate disabilities, but not with a minor degree of disability. What is observed is a raise in the employment and activity rates of persons with minor disability degree in the rural areas (rise from 19 % in 2020 to 28.7 % in 2022). Persons with a severe degree of disability living in rural areas experience the lowest employment rate (2.8 % in 2022, 5.1 % in 2020) among all groups that the research disaggregates for.

Data from the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PFRON) Subsidies and Refunds Service System (SODiR) show that in 2016, the number of people benefiting from subsidies on the open labour market for the first time exceeded the number of people benefiting from subsidies on the sheltered labour market.¹¹ This trend continues as the number of employees with disabilities shows 88 500 persons in the sheltered labour market, while 141 600 in the open labour market in 2021 (accordingly 124 200 and 135 000 in 2016).¹² Yet, the total numbers of employees with disabilities registered in the Subsidies and Refunds Service System of the State

⁸ Quarterly and annual data from CSO LFS 1993-Q4 2020, updated 14 April 2021, <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

⁹ Quarterly and annual data from CSO LFS 1993-Q4 2020, <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

¹⁰ Economic activity of the Polish population – Q1 2022, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rynek-pracy/pracujacy-bezrobotni-bierni-zawodowo-wg-bael/aktywnosc-ekonomiczna-ludnosci-polski-i-kwartal-2022-roku,4,46.html>.

¹¹ *Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, 2018. Dofinansowanie wynagrodzeń pracowników niepełnosprawnych z Państwowego Funduszu Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych* (Subsidising the salaries of workers with disabilities from the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled), <https://www.nik.gov.pl/kontrole/P/17/080/LLU/>.

¹² Data from PFRON's Subsidies and Refunds Service System (SODiR), <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,83,sodir-pfron>.

Fund for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities reveals a downtrend: in 2016 there were 259 300 persons registered, while in 2021 only 230 100. Simultaneously, we can observe a growing number of employers of persons with disabilities, 28 559 in 2016 and 33 400 in 2021 of them registered in SODiR.¹³

3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see the 2022 National Reform Programme, the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Poland and the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030).

While the labour market is the main area where the situation of persons with disabilities is explicitly addressed in the National Reform Programme, it still lacks more nuanced analysis and targeted actions aimed at addressing the stagnation in the disability gap in the labour market as well as the overdue disability assessment reform.

Disability assessment reform

The challenges of labour market participation of persons with disabilities are clearly influenced by the fragmented and difficult-to-navigate disability assessment system, which constitutes of six parallel and sometimes inconsistent certification paths. Beyond being complex and difficult to navigate, the disability assessment system uses pejorative terminology (assessing, e.g. complete inability to work) that influences the position of persons with disabilities in the labour market. The Higher Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Congress of Persons with Disabilities, agree that the reform should focus on assessing the needs of a person with disabilities in the labour market instead of assessing the degree of inability.

The plan to reform the disability assessment system aiming at unification and simplification was announced in 2017 when the Inter-Ministerial Team for Developing a System of Disability and Inability to Work Assessment – chaired by the president of the Social Insurance Institution was established. The proposal has been developed and submitted to the government.¹⁴ Moreover, the reform is included in the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. As indicated in the strategy, Poland aims at creating a comprehensive system in accordance with the UN CRPD and plans the implementation of the reform between 2021 and 2023. Nevertheless, as of August 2022, there is no public information about the progress in the execution of the reform, apart from the suggestions that the implementation will be divided into phases, the first one to be concluded in 2024.¹⁵ In an answer to the Ombudsman's letter requesting information on the current state of the reform the Secretary of State and Government Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disabilities clarified that analytical and legislative work on the concept of creating a unified disability assessment system is currently

¹³ Data from PFRON's Subsidies and Refunds Service System (SODiR), <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,83,sodir-pfron>.

¹⁴ How to improve the disability adjudication system so that it complies with the standards of the UN Convention? – ROP's speech to the Minister of Family and Labour, <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/system-orzekania-o-niepelnosprawnosci-jak-poprawic-by-byl-zgodny-ze-standardami-konwencji-onz>.

¹⁵ Disability assessment reform divided into phases. Caregivers will still wait, <https://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl/emerytury-i-renty/artykuly/8485805,orzekanie-o-niepelnosprawnosci-opiekunowie-swiadczenie-reforma.html>.

underway.¹⁶ In earlier letters, the Ombudsman also pointed to the malpractices of the public consultation of the proposal claiming that ‘the participation of representatives of two NGOs with only an adviser’s voice does not meet the CRPD standard’.¹⁷ Importantly, the NRP does not refer to the disability assessment reform, while postponing the reform has consequences of stagnation in other related fields including some social benefits.

Stagnation of disability gap in the labour market

The 2022 NRP implies some measures to address the low participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market, including an amendment of the Labour Code, namely introduction of the remote working on a permanent basis. The amendment has an intention to facilitate work-life balance as well as to improve access to employment for persons with disabilities, among other groups. The NRP also plans to strengthen effectiveness of the institutions for the labour market, and envisions important role of social consultations within the investment. It would be recommended to ensure the focus on ensuring disability perspective in the task, which mentions – yet not centres – persons with disabilities.

While improvement in access to childcare remains a major issue also from a disability perspective – by influencing labour market participation and the work-life balance of parents with disabilities as well as parents and families of children with disabilities – it may not be treated as the main measure supporting disability inclusion as it is suggested now. The 2022 Country Report (p. 8) states that enrolment in formal childcare is extremely low (for children less than 3 years old) reaching only 10.2 %. The NRP in the chapter on measures addressing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights addresses principle 17 on the inclusion of persons with disabilities solely by measures aiming at improving access to childcare for parents of children with disabilities (p. 108). While this is a crucial task, it cannot be equivalent to a comprehensive disability inclusion measure. Nevertheless, it is important to address it from gender equality perspective, including the situation of women with disabilities.

The NRP also introduces a programme ‘Active Board’ aiming at strengthening digital skills and better connecting education with the labour market. This is in line with the existing evidence on incoherence in the transition from education to the open labour market,¹⁸ yet the exact measures ensuring young adults with disabilities will benefit from the programme are not clarified.

While the described measures are important, there are several other – already well diagnosed – factors that hinder employment of persons with disabilities. Existing

¹⁶ How is the work on reforming the disability evaluation system going? MRiPS responds to the Ombudsman, <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/jak-wygladaja-prace-nad-reforma-systemu-orzecznictwa-ws-niepelnosprawnosci-mrips-odpowiada>.

¹⁷ How to improve the disability adjudication system so that it complies with the standards of the UN Convention? – ROP’s speech to the Minister of Family and Labour, <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/system-orzekania-o-niepelnosprawnosci-jak-poprawic-by-byl-zgodny-ze-standardami-konwencji-onz>.

¹⁸ Giermanowska, E., Kumaniecka-Wiśniewska, A., Raclaw-Markowska, M., i Zakrzewska-Manterys, E. (2015). *Niedokończona emancypacja: Wejście niepełnosprawnych absolwentów szkół wyższych na rynek pracy*. (Unfinished emancipation: Entry of university graduates with disabilities into the labour market.) Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

research points out challenges that include low availability of the instruments as well as lack of statutory regulation of supported employment, weak incentives to take up work, lack of job coaches, poor accessibility of public transport outside big cities, and low availability of the independent living tools.¹⁹ Importantly for employers, bureaucratic barriers are reported as fundamental, next to a general lack of available information, difficulties in navigating complex obligations and concerns about sanctions for improper spending of subsidies, and as highlighted by Katarzyna Roszewska in her analysis,²⁰ this is partly due to the fact that the employment of persons with disabilities is regulated mainly by the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, thus the well-known provisions of the Labour Code do not apply. The legislative separation contributes to the ongoing segregation of persons with disabilities as most of the employers are unfamiliar with the disability-specific regulations. According to her analysis, it is recommended to incorporate disability regulations in the Labour Code, similarly to regulations on parenthood.²¹

The NRP does not mention explicitly a needed bill on supported employment.²² While the proposal was created there is no further deliberation on the bill and the implementation of it that is crucial. It is especially important that the bill will be well consulted and developed in close cooperation with the DPOs so that their know-how is incorporated into the system.

Numerous studies have also proven that ableist attitudes are a crucial obstacle to the employment of persons with disabilities.²³ Despite some public campaigns, the efforts to dismantle ableist stereotypes that fuel resistance towards workers with disabilities are vital. It should both comply of education at all levels as well as of the exemplary role of public institutions in hiring at least 6 % of persons with disabilities, thus meeting the quota, specified in the Rehabilitation Act, exempting the employer from the obligation to pay sanctions. Notably, the 2019 report of the Supreme Audit Office states that the majority of the audited public administration units (77.2 %) did not take effective measures to remove barriers to employment of persons with disabilities, which resulted in a low average employment rate of workers with disabilities that at the end of June 2018, stood at only 3.05 %. The majority of the controlled employers did not take any additional measures to increase the employment of workers with disabilities (e.g. cooperation with DPOs). Moreover, in 46 % of units there were cases of non-compliance with the rights of employees with disabilities.²⁴

¹⁹ KSK Foundation, Alternative Report on the Implementation of the UN CRPD, 2015, <http://konwencja.org/cala-tresc-raportu/>.

²⁰ Roszewska, K. (2019). 'The Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Employment on the Basis of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)'. *Białostockie Studia Prawnicze* 24:91-100, <https://www.ceeol.com/search/viewpdf?id=794690>.

²¹ Roszewska, K. (2019), 'The Implementation of the Rights...', op. cit.

²² *Biuletyn Informacji Publicznej Kancelarii Prezesa Rady Ministrów* (Bulletin of Public Information of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister), 2019, *Projekt ustawy o zatrudnieniu wspomaganym*. (Draft Act on Supported Employment), <https://bip.kprm.gov.pl/kpr/form/r429173561,Projekt-ustawy-o-zatrudnieniu-wspomagany.html>.

²³ Giermanowska, E. (2019). Economic versus Cultural Determinants of Changes in Employment of Persons with Disabilities. Good Practices in Poland. *Studia Humanistyczne AGH*, 18(2).

²⁴ Supreme Audit Office, (2019), *Zatrudnianie osób niepełnosprawnych przez administrację publiczną i państwowe osoby prawne* (Employment of persons with disabilities by public administration and state legal persons), <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,21407,vp,24048.pdf>.

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

In 2018, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Poland:

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

'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.'

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

'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: (a) Design and adopt concrete action plans for deinstitutionalization and 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; (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; (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; (d) Ensure that the term 'community' is translated correctly in the Polish-language version of the Convention.'

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

'44. The Committee recommends that the State party withdraw its reservation to article 25 (a) of the Convention, and that it: (a) Ensure access to health services by all persons with disabilities, and the availability of such services, regardless of the type of impairment; (b) Take measures to ensure universal coverage of health services for all women and girls with disabilities, including by providing information in accessible formats on their sexual and reproductive health and rights, gynaecological services, perinatal care and adapted health-care equipment, such as gynaecological rooms; (c) Take measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to high-quality health-care products at an affordable price, and to eliminate the differences in health-care coverage for different groups of persons with disabilities; (d) Conduct training to ensure that health-care practitioners are aware of the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, under the Convention; (e) Take the measures necessary to ensure that the autonomy and decisions of women with disabilities are respected, that women's rights in relation to reproductive health are secured, that access to safe abortion is provided, and that women with disabilities are protected from forced sterilization and forced abortion; (f) Ensure that the implementation of the National Mental

Health Programme results in increasing access to community-based health services for persons with psychosocial disabilities, and provide adequate resources to these services.’

The 2018 Concluding Observations and the state’s submission in 2018 are the most recent developments in the CRPD dialogue.

4.1 Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate the poverty risk rate for working age persons with disabilities in Poland was 23.2 % in 2020, compared to 13.5 % for other persons of similar age – an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 10 percentage points (see Table 14). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was 6.3 points (22.1 % for older persons with disabilities and 15.8 % 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. Recently updated data from Eurostat indicates that this relative risk remained stable for the working age disabled population (23.1 %) but fell for the older age group (20.9 %) in 2021.²⁵

For persons with disabilities of working age in Poland (aged 18-64) the risk of poverty before social transfers was 52.7 % and 23.2 % after transfers. The in-work poverty rate for persons with disabilities in this age range was 14.0 % in 2020, and 12.7 % in 2021.²⁶

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 persons with disabilities in Poland was 4.1 %, compared to 1.1 % for other persons in 2020.

The data gathered by the Central Statistical Office report ‘The extent of economic poverty in Poland in 2021’ clearly confirms that disability is a factor that increases the risk of poverty. In 2021, the rate of extreme poverty in households with at least one person with a disability certificate was 6.7 %, while in households without persons with a disability – about 3.8 %. Importantly, extreme poverty line in households that were led by a person with disability was higher than in households with at least one child with disability up to 16 years old (Table IX).

The relative poverty line shows a similar trend in disability gap as the indicator reaches 11 % in households without persons with disabilities and 17.8 % in household with persons with disabilities. Again, the indicator for households led by persons with disabilities was higher (18.6 %) that for the household with at least one child with disability up to 16 years old (15.7 %) (Table IX).

The general trend in the past decade on the extreme poverty rate shows general decrease for households without persons with disabilities diminishing by 2.8 percentage points (from 6.1 % in 2011 to 3.8 % in 2021), while households with at

²⁵ Eurostat, People at risk of poverty by level of activity limitation, sex and age, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/HLTH_DPE020_custom_3348056.

²⁶ Eurostat, In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by level of activity limitation, sex and age, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dpe050/default/table.

least one person with disability by 2.6 (from 9.3 % in 2011 to 6.7 % in 2021). Thus, the disability gap in the extreme poverty line has maintained at approximately 3 % both in 2011 and 2021, with a general downtrend in extreme poverty measures for the general population. While we have observed a steep decrease in extreme poverty among households with children with disabilities (from 14.6 % in 2014 to 4.4 % in 2021), the households led by persons with disabilities in 2021 had slightly higher rates in all the measures (extreme, relative and statutory poverty rates) than in 2020.

In 2021, the highest percentages of people living in the sphere of deprivation were recorded among households living on unearned sources other than retirement pensions (70 %), farmer households (almost 64 %) and households whose head had at most a junior high school education (64 %). A high value of the indicator of the extent of the sphere of deprivation was also recorded among people from households with at least three children under the age of 18 (just under 58 % of people) and among people in households with at least one person with a disability (just under 51 %).

It is also important to note the new EHIS survey was conducted in 2019, and offers a comparable data for the prevalence of disability by diverse definitions of disability, and disaggregated by gender and age.²⁷

4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see the 2022 National Reform Programme, the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Poland and the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030).

Support system for refugees with disabilities

According to the NRP the number of refugees from Ukraine in April 2022 has exceeded 2.5 million. The number of refugees with disabilities is unknown. The humanitarian crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border continues for the second year leaving many asylum seekers with disabilities without any support in critical situation.²⁸ It is critical to highlight that support system for refugees with disabilities cannot be limited only to persons fleeing from Ukraine, and has to treat equally refugees escaping other territories, including persons with disabilities in the ongoing humanitarian crisis on the Polish-Belarusian boarder.

When it comes to the support of persons fleeing war in Ukraine the non-governmental organisations and civil society engagements played a key role in supporting persons with disabilities fleeing from war at the borders, in the search for accommodation, social support, as well as made efforts to support persons with disabilities who could not escape the warzone. Even though certain provisions are organised by PFRON,²⁹ creating a responsive and sustainable support system for refugees with disabilities is

²⁷ Health status of population in Poland in 2019, <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/health/health/health-status-of-population-in-poland-in-2019,4,2.html>.

²⁸ Grupa Granica, 2022, Humanitarian crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border, <https://www.grupagranica.pl/files/Grupa-Granica-Report-Humanitarian-crisis-at-the-Polish-Belarusian-border.pdf>.

²⁹ Assistance to Ukrainian citizens with disabilities, <https://www.pfron.org.pl/o-funduszu/programy-i-zadania-pfron/programy-i-zadania-real/pomoc-obywatelom-ukrainy-z-niepelnosprawnoscia/>.

still key³⁰ and should be incorporated into the Semester documents. This is in accordance with the recent report by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on the situation of persons with disabilities in Ukraine and in countries where they have fled after 24 February 2022, as a result of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation,³¹ where the committee urges the State Parties to:

- a) develop comprehensive strategies to identify and mitigate risks of exploitation, violence and abuse against persons with disabilities, in particular against forcibly displaced women and children with disabilities; and
- b) ensure adequate protection for women and children with disabilities and facilitate timely access to mainstream and specialised services, including age- and gender-appropriate medical, legal, psychological, social and educational services.³²

It is especially important to systemically address the accommodation for persons evacuated from institutions, such as the case of evacuation of care home in Chmielnicki, Ukraine, of 60 persons including persons with severe degree of intellectual disability.³³ Similarly, it is key to ensure delivery of food and basic needs to persons with disabilities who cannot leave warzone, especially those living alone or in residential institutions. Inclusive humanitarian response, rehabilitation, access to medical aids, accessible accommodation, assistance, support in employment and education, are crucial for refugees with disabilities to rebuild independent living in a new community. Depending on the type of disability specific needs that occur, e.g. among deaf communities and access to both Polish and Polish Sign Language.

One of the pressing issues is connected to the disability assessment, as refugees to obtain Polish disability certificate have to undergo the same procedure as all other groups. Due to the missing of medical documentation that might have been lost due to war, the assessment procedure is being extended. Yet, without the disability certificate persons with disabilities cannot benefit from the disability support system. Given the fact that disability certificates dates were extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that the refugees with disabilities need to undertake the assessment, serious delays in disability certification process may occur.³⁴

³⁰ Helping refugees is a marathon, not a sprint (interview), <https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/pomaganie-uchodzcom-to-maraton-nie-sprint-wywiad>.

³¹ Chapter on the situation of persons with disabilities in Ukraine and in countries where they have fled after 24 February 2022, as a result of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation – to be included in 27th Session Report, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/crpd/statements/2022-09-09/Situation-of-persons-with-disabilitie-in-Ukraine-in-CRPD-27th-session-Report.docx>.

³² Chapter on the situation of persons with disabilities in Ukraine and in countries where they have fled after 24 February 2022, as a result of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation – to be included in 27th Session Report, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/crpd/statements/2022-09-09/Situation-of-persons-with-disabilitie-in-Ukraine-in-CRPD-27th-session-Report.docx>, p. 6.

³³ Ukrainian refugees with intellectual disabilities have found refuge in Toruń, <https://naszesperawy.eu/aktualnosci/ukrainscy-uchodzcy-z-niepelnosprawnoscia-intelektualna-znalezli-schronienie-w-toruniu/>.

³⁴ Problems for Ukrainian refugees in obtaining disability certificates. Ombudsman intervenes with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/rpo-ukraina-uchodzcy-niepelnosprawnosc-orzekanie-mrips>.

Deinstitutionalisation and community-based services

Deinstitutionalisation has been named a priority by the National Congress of Persons with Disabilities in 2021.³⁵ The Council of Ministers has adopted a resolution on the Strategy for the Development of Social Services to 2030,³⁶ submitted by the Minister of Family and Social Policy.

The strategy addresses deinstitutionalisation and includes social services focusing on family and children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons with mental health diagnosis and in homelessness crisis. The draft document raised substantial criticism both from the Government Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disabilities, disability rights experts and the disability community including detailed list of objections from the Polish Forum of Persons with Disabilities.³⁷ According to the Ministry 260 comments were received to the draft policy bill.³⁸ Importantly, as described in the previous EDE report in details, the proposed plan for the deinstitutionalisation submitted in April 2021 by the Plenipotentiary with cooperation of nearly hindered organisations has been rejected, and a completely new strategy was drafted.³⁹ The Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disability expressed disappointment as the document was not developed with his participation.⁴⁰ The existing strategy does not set comprehensive and ambitious goals, nor indicators that would allow for detailed monitoring, does not build fully on the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030), does not address comprehensively supported housing, coordination between health and social services, nor specific issues related to diverse types of disabilities.

While we can observe development of the policies on Personal Assistance and Respite Care, there is no comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the programme. However, 'The standard of personal assistance service to a person with disabilities'⁴¹ has been developed in January 2022, which is a step forward.

Social benefits and the situation of family caregivers

The situation of persons (in majority women) who provide everyday support and care for persons with disabilities has not changed significantly over past years. After extensive protests in 2014 and 2018, again we observe strong criticism towards

³⁵ Resolution concluding the VII Congress of Persons with Disabilities on 23 October 2021, <https://pfon.org/aktualnosci/uchwala-konczaca-vii-kongres-osob-niepelnosprawnosciami-w-dniu-23-pazdziernika-2021-r/>.

³⁶ Resolution No. 135 of the Council of Ministers of 15 June 2022 on the adoption of a public policy called Strategy for the Development of Social Services, Public Policy to 2030 (with an outlook to 2035), <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WMP20220000767>.

³⁷ PFON, PFON's comments on the draft Social Services Development Strategy for 2021-2035, <https://pfon.org/aktualnosci/tabela-uwag-pfon-do-projektu-dokumentu-strategia-rozwoju-uslug-spoecznych-polityka-publiczna-na-lata-2021-2035/>.

³⁸ Draft resolution of the Council of Ministers on the establishment of a public policy entitled 'Strategy for the development of social services, public policy for 2021-2035', <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/projekt-uchwaly-rady-ministrow-w-sprawie-ustanowienia-polityki-publicznej-pt-strategia-rozwoju-uslug-spoecznych-polityka-publiczna-na-lata-20212035?fbclid=IwAR1ZjLMf4OGLmD4hfjC7C6n14kMG8EIO-RSt17SdyKuQQaleQlzhwNypPvg>.

³⁹ EDE 2021.

⁴⁰ Stagnation instead of change. Experts on the Strategy for the Development of Social Services, <http://www.niepelnosprawni.pl/ledge/x/1827896;jsessionid=3A919B42D6C5FA46CED9B5DD875F8219>.

⁴¹ 'The standard of personal assistance service to a person with disabilities', 2022, <http://wlaczeniespoleczne.pl/uploads/docs/opis-aon-2.pdf>.

existing schemes being expressed in the public sphere, including submitted petitions to equalise social allowance with the minimum wage.⁴² The system does not allow for undertaking any form of employment while receiving the caregiver allowance, which contributes to extremely difficult economic situation in families. Moreover, as reported in the previous years the caregivers of persons with disabilities, certified during adulthood, obtain lower support than carers of persons with disabilities certified in childhood or having congenital disabilities, despite the 2014 the Constitutional Tribunal ruling.⁴³

Healthcare

Access to health for persons with disabilities remains a vast area needing improvement, given the challenge of unmet needs revealed in the survey data. General strikes in the medical sector in recent years aimed at improving the quality of working conditions and the quality of treatment. Poland is characterised by low public expenditure on healthcare and its suboptimal allocation. According to the National of Health Accounts for 2019, current expenditure on health care accounted for 6.4 % GDP. Poland faces a severe shortage of medical professionals, as the number of practicing doctors and nurses in Poland is one of the lowest in the EU. The Ombudsman's report Access to healthcare for persons with disability⁴⁴ issued in November 2020 highlights that accessibility standards need to be put in place, that would include in contracts between health facility and the National Polish Fund, and accessible digitalisation of websites and medical documentation. Given the deeply rooted exclusion of deaf and hard of hearing patients, the amendment of the Law on Sign Language providing translation in all healthcare services is also crucial. The research also clearly states the need for introduction of the trainings for medical staff and the content of equal treatment of persons with disabilities to medical schools.

⁴² Petition 44-2022 regarding the amount of social pension, attendance allowance and the valorisation of pensions, annuities and attendance allowance, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/petycja-44-2022-dotyczaca-dot-wysokosci-renty-socjalnej-zasilku-pielegnacyjnego-oraz-waloryzacji-rent-emerytur-i-dodatku-pielegnacyjnego>.

⁴³ RPO, 2018, *Informacja o stanie przestrzegania wolności i praw człowieka i obywatela w 2017 r. oraz o działalności Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich*, <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/informacja-o-stanie-przestrzegania-wolnosci-i-praw-czlowieka-i-obywatela-w-2017-r>.

⁴⁴ RPO, *Dostępność usług opieki zdrowotnej dla osób z niepełnosprawnościami. Analiza i zalecenia*. https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/Dostepnosc_uslug_opieki_zdrowotnej_dla_OzN.pdf.

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

In 2018, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Poland:

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

'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.'

The 2018 Concluding Observations and the state's submission in 2018 are the most recent developments in the CRPD dialogue.

5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

The EU-SILC 2020 estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with 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 Poland. Youth with disabilities (aged 18-24) tend to leave school significantly more than non-disabled peers of the same age group (and this is reinforced by widening the sample size to age 18-29). Table 17 shows the completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (aged 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider age range 30-39).

Alternative data on the education of persons with disabilities is available in various Central Statistical Office reports. The data shows, among others, that in the school year 2020/21 27,514 children with disabilities have been enrolled in nurseries. They constituted only 2.4 % of the total number of children (Table IX). Participation of children with disabilities in pre-primary sections in primary schools shows a similar low trend of 2.4 % of children with disabilities in this type of education (Table X).⁴⁵

The participation of pupils with disabilities in special education is still high – for example, the data for I stage sectorial vocational schools shows that 12 143 pupils attend special education which amounts to 65 % of pupils with disabilities attending sectorial vocational schools. Additionally, there has been a gradual increase in the number of special job-training schools. In the 2020/21 school year, there were 550 special job-training schools teaching 12.6 thousand students.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Central Statistical Office, 2022, Education in school year 2020/21, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/oswiata-i-wychowanie-w-roku-szkolnym-20202021,1,16.html>.

⁴⁶ Central Statistical Office, 2022, Education in school year 2020/21, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/oswiata-i-wychowanie-w-roku-szkolnym-20202021,1,16.html>.

The data from the report on ‘Higher education and its finances’ clearly shows that the number of graduates with disability constantly diminishes from 2011 when it reached 8 617, while for the academic year 2019/20 the number accounts for 5 196. This is reflective of a general trend of a smaller overall number of graduates, that in the 2019/20 academic year reached 293.4 thousand.⁴⁷ However, it is important to note that while in the general population of graduates the number declined by 6.5 % in comparison to 2018/19, for the population of graduates with disabilities it declined by 9.5 %. Students with disabilities accounted only for 1.7 % of all students, while graduates with disabilities – 1.8 % of all graduates.

5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see the 2022 National Reform Programme, the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Poland and the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030).

As highlighted in the last EDE report,⁴⁸ the strained situation in education in Poland continues, with serious consequences for children, adolescents and young adults with disabilities. The Education and Training Monitor (ETM) notes that the general spending on education understood as a share of GDP has lowered from 5.5 % in 2019 of the GDP to 5.0 % in 2020.⁴⁹ The ETM 2021 points out that improving teacher well-being, coupled with appropriate support and removal of systemic barriers, is critical to improving student well-being. This is especially important in the context of recent reforms, protests, continued shortage of teachers and low attractiveness of the profession, which as raised by the Ombudsman may threaten children’s right to education.⁵⁰ In this overall context, education of students with disabilities is still characterised by insufficient financial support (e.g. including costs of transportation, and accommodation),⁵¹ a substantial part of education happening in segregated contexts, the need for improvement in individual support, insufficient support for parents, shortage of qualified teachers, and limited awareness on inclusive education among school teachers and parents of non-disabled children.⁵²

Importance of mitigating the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

The report from a qualitative empirical interview states that the period of the pandemic has shown that for the majority of students with various degrees of disability, remote learning is not adequate to their needs and specific disabilities. The results of the research reveal a serious threat to the education of children with disabilities in

⁴⁷ Central Statistical Office, Higher Education and its finances in 2020, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/szkolnictwo-wyzsze-i-jego-finanse-w-2020-roku,2,17.html>.

⁴⁸ EDE 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1540&langId=en>.

⁴⁹ See: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2021/pl/poland.html>.

⁵⁰ Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich (2021), *Brakuje nauczycieli – prawo do nauki zagrożone, pismo do Ministra Edukacji i Nauki z dnia 14.09.2021 r.*, https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/2021-09/RPO_do_MEiN_14.09.2021.pdf.

⁵¹ Sochańska-Kawiecka M., Kołakowska-Seroczyńska Z., Zielińska D., Makowska-Belta E., Ziewiec P., 2017, *Badanie potrzeb osób niepełnosprawnych. Raport końcowy* (Research on the needs of persons with disabilities. Final report.), Warszawa: PFRON, https://www.pfron.org.pl/fileadmin/Badania_i_analizy/Badanie_potrzeb_ON/Raport_koncowy_badanie_potrzeb_ON.pdf?utm_campaign=pfron&utm_source=df&utm_medium=download.

⁵² Kubicki P., 2019, *Wyzwania polityki publicznej wobec osób z niepełnosprawnościami* (Public policy challenges towards persons with disabilities), https://pie.net.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Raport_PIE-Wyzwania-polityki-publicznej.pdf.

integrated settings. Among the main hindrances of inclusive education, the report states insufficient ideas on how to conduct remote lessons, the unclear role of support teachers, absence of teachers and specialists, lack of development opportunities for teachers, health, family, logistical constraints, limited access to equipment and ICT competence, challenges related to rehabilitation, lack of support for parents, lack of psychological support. Moreover, researchers highlight principals' attitudes that influenced how schools functioned and how accessible they were to pupils with disabilities, previous (pre-pandemic) limited practices of school cooperation with parents, as well as lack of motivation for development in teaching children with disabilities among teachers in mainstream and integrated schools.⁵³

According to the Ombudsman:

'The lack of a systemic approach to school operation in the epidemic, including the failure of the Minister of Education to define standards for remote or hybrid learning, as well as instances of digital exclusion of students, has led to inequality in the learning process. The effectiveness of the measures taken depended on the attitude of each director. It was also repeatedly stressed that the decisions of the Ministry of Education did not consider the specifics of working with students with disabilities.'⁵⁴

It is reiterated that The National Support Programme for Pupils after the COVID-19 pandemic considers the specific needs of students with disabilities. Similarly, the possibility of developing and implementing individual educational and therapeutic programmes that consider the conduct of classes in remote or other forms due to the prevailing emergency is vital.

Children and adults with disabilities fleeing war in Ukraine in education

Integration of students with disabilities who fled Ukraine due to Russian invasion in 2022 became a central task for the education system in Poland. The Ministry of Education has informed that children with disabilities can benefit from psychological and pedagogical assistance in Polish kindergartens and schools regardless of whether they have additional documents confirming their special needs. It is especially important as some of the migrant families did not manage to bring the medical documentation while escaping. Students can continue education remotely in Ukraine or in Poland – both in special schools as well as in integrative settings – depending on the decision of the parent or guardian.⁵⁵ However, non-governmental organisations that offer support for persons with disabilities fleeing Ukraine state that there are not enough places in schools, especially for children with disabilities.⁵⁶ Moreover, the shortage of specialists who know Ukrainian hired in schools hinder the integration

⁵³ Education of students with disabilities during the pandemic, <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/2022-08/Edukacja%20uczni%C3%B3w%20z%20niepe%C5%82nosprawno%C5%9Bciami%20w%20czasie%20pandemii.pdf>, p. 10.

⁵⁴ 'The situation of students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.' RPO about the study, <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/rpo-badanie-uczniowie-niepelnosprawnosc-pandemia>.

⁵⁵ See: https://edukacja.um.warszawa.pl/documents/66399/46468077/ulotka_dla_rodzicow_npns_2022-03-29_PL.pdf/bc5c631a-dc9c-8971-e8b7-6b901ca791c5?t=1648542419521.

⁵⁶ See: <https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/pomaganie-uchodzcom-to-maraton-nie-sprint-wywiad>.

process – including for children with intellectual disabilities or with autism spectrum. Thus, structural efforts to hire more Ukrainian professionals in education (including speech therapists and psychologists) need to be undertaken. The Ombudsman points out also the need of creating a fast path for acknowledging the disability certification needed for Special Educational Needs (SEN) children as well as the need of comparison of the Ukrainian and Polish educational systems for persons with disabilities to create better learning environment need to be undertaken.⁵⁷ Moreover, mental health support for children with disabilities who experienced trauma should be developed on the systemic, not individual level.

Violence prevention and anti-discrimination measures shall be strengthened

A low sense of belonging to the school community is one of the main weaknesses of the Polish education system. 2018 WHO study found that the percentage of 13- and 15-year-olds who reported that they could count on significant support from teachers was the lowest among all countries surveyed, while the percentage of students reporting high levels of support from classmates was lower than average.⁵⁸ As proven by research, mental health in education remains a key issue, especially with experiences related to the war in Ukraine, COVID-19 pandemic and the rise in cyberbullying. According to OECD the percentage of students who reported being bullied at least a few times a month increased by 5.3 percentage points between 2015 and 2018 to 26.4 % (22.1 % in the EU) among the general population of students.⁵⁹ Moreover, Education and Training Monitor states that bullying is it is less condemned by peers in Poland than in other countries.⁶⁰ The scale of bullying experienced by persons with disabilities in schools is not comprehensively measured. Still, stereotypical and discriminatory approach to persons with disabilities is among the factors influencing the isolation of this group.⁶¹ It should be stressed that anti-discriminatory and safety measures should be put in place to avoid isolation and bullying of children and youth with disabilities.⁶² Moreover, the prevalence of homophobic, transphobic, racist and xenophobic violence is intersectionally influencing students with disabilities who belong to those communities. It is recommended that comprehensive research on violence prevalence, including cyberbullying and its gender dimension, among children and adolescents with disabilities is conducted.

⁵⁷ Ukrainian students with disabilities need support. RPO writes to MEiN, <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/ukraina-uczniowie-z-niepelnosprawnosciami-wsparcia-mein>.

⁵⁸ Mazur J., Małkowska--Szkutnik A. (red.), 2018, *Zdrowie uczniów w 2018 roku na tle nowego modelu badań HBSC*. Warszawa: Instytut Matki i Dziecka, <http://www.imid.med.pl/files/imid/Aktualnosci/Aktualnosci/raport%20HBSC%202018.pdf>.

⁵⁹ PISA, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa_19963777.

⁶⁰ Education and Training Monitor 2021, <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2021/pl/poland.html>.

⁶¹ RPO, 2015, *Dostępność edukacji akademickiej dla osób z niepełnosprawnościami. Analiza i zalecenia* (Accessibility of academic education for persons with disabilities. Analysis and recommendations), https://www.rpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/BIULETYN_RZECZNIKA_PRAW_OBYWATELSKICH_2015_nr_5.pdf.

⁶² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2015, Violence against children with disabilities: legislation, policies and programmes in the EU, <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/children-disabilities-violence>.

Education about disability in school textbooks

The analysis of schoolbooks reveals a huge field for improvement when it comes to education about disability and disability rights. The recent research report 'The (Non)Attendance List: Disability in School Textbooks'⁶³ indicates the absence of disability as a topic in education at all levels, showcasing that among 75 schoolbooks that were included in the research sample (science schoolbooks were excluded), only half of them reference issues related to disability at all. On more than 15 000 pages of text, disability was explicitly mentioned only 64 times. Among the ones who addressed disability, 54 % included only one sentence, and only 6 % included more than one page related to the topic of disability. Among the mentions only 13 % of references disability was addressed as a topic on its own. The analysis shows that medical and charity models were the dominant ones, disability was presented mostly in the context of dependence, only as a physical disability, and rarely from the perspective of a person with disability. The schoolbooks also repeatedly used pejorative terminology.

Even though the schoolbooks were published after the ratification of the UN CRPD by Poland (date of publication 2012-2020) none of them refers to the convention nor the human rights system in the context of disability. Given the absence of education on disability and disability rights in schoolbooks, the authors conclude that efforts must be strengthened to include disability as a horizontal issue, in comprehensive and contemporary ways and dismantle stereotypes and prejudices. Disability rights perspective must be included at all levels of education, as a part of diversity in society, and persons with disabilities need to be included as narrators of their stories.

As stated by the authors:

'It can be concluded that from textbooks, regardless of the level of education, students and pupils do not have the opportunity to acquire reliable and comprehensive knowledge about disability and persons with disabilities. In addition, students and pupils with disabilities are unable to find in school textbooks significant voluminous and diverse representations of disabilities.'

This gap needs to be addressed at a systemic level as it contributes to the challenges in integration in education, negative prejudices as well as hinders the broader implementation of the UN CRPD in the future.

Need for high-quality bilingual education for deaf children and youth

It is crucial to emphasise that deaf and hard of hearing children still do not enjoy their right to Polish Sign Language communication as bilingual education⁶⁴ is rare in most schools, even those dedicated to deaf students despite clear recommendations to introduce it in accordance with the CRPD.⁶⁵ As highlighted by the Commission of the Experts on Deaf Issues, there are cases of discrimination when deaf children cannot

⁶³ Sałkowska M., Kocejko M., Szarota M., Greniuk A., *Lista (nie)obecności. Niepełnosprawność w podręcznikach szkolnych*, Collegium Civitas, Warszawa 2021, <https://civitas.edu.pl/pl/nauka-i-rozwoj/lista-nieobecnosci-niepelnosprawnosci-w-podrecznikach-szkolnych>.

⁶⁴ RPO, 2014, *Edukacja głuchych*. Warszawa: Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich, https://www.rpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/Edukacja_%20głuchych.pdf.

⁶⁵ Dunaj M., 2016, *W stronę edukacji dwujęzycznej dzieci głuchych w Polsce Co wiemy? Czego nie wiemy? Co należy zrobić?* (Towards bilingual education for deaf children in Poland. What do we know? What do we not know? What should be done?), Łódź: Polski Związek Głuchych.

obtain education in their language.⁶⁶ It is crucial that the education in Polish Sign Language is introduced especially in the schools for deaf pupils, and that a strategy on how to integrate Sign Language in the integrative settings is developed in cooperation with organisations of deaf persons.

Participation of persons with disabilities in higher education

Given the investments in the accessibility of higher education, improvements in the processes and infrastructure, as well as higher numbers of graduates with disabilities in previous academic years – the upcoming period constitutes a window of opportunity for raising the percentage of students and graduates with disabilities in higher education. The participation of students with disabilities has not raised substantially, even with the general lesser number of students in past years and oscillates at approximately 1.7-1.8 per cent of the general student population. Efforts must be strengthened both at the level of secondary education as well as higher education to ensure the transition into higher education of young adults with disabilities.

⁶⁶ On the education of deaf children and the importance of Polish Sign Language: a meeting of the EC for the Deaf, <https://bjp.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/ke-ds-osob-gluchych-edukacja-dzieci-gluchych>.

6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

There has been a lack of explicit attention to disability issues in the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP), endorsed by the Commission in June 2022. Nevertheless, the Commission's assessment of the RRP indicated that:

Poland has indicated that a pre-screening of different projects was made with equality criteria in mind, and that certain projects that were proposed were not included in the plan as they did not meet accessibility criteria for persons with disabilities or were otherwise not compliant with equality principles (p. 6).⁶⁷

In the commentary annexed to the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision, Poland was encouraged to pay particular attention to disability issues in specific areas of the Plan.⁶⁸ For example, the inclusion of persons with disabilities should be addressed in Action A3.1 'Workforce for the modern economy' (p. 11), and E2.3 'Enhance transport accessibility, security and digital solutions' or E2.3.1 'Regional railways' should include accelerated implementation of EU Regulations to passengers with reduced mobility (p. 196).

A number of priorities for investment could be more clearly identified as relevant from a disability perspective, including:

- developing and broadening the scope of community-based independent living services;
- focus on disability perspective in the investment on the green and digital transition;
- addressing the crisis in psychiatric care for youth;
- building a comprehensive support system for refugees with disabilities;
- raising public expenditure on long-term care services;
- disability assessment reform in accordance with the UN CRPD;
- allocating resources to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations at the local, national, and international levels; including independent support for self-led DPOs not only in the disability-related areas, but that will also allow Europe to be closer to citizens;
- investment in accessible healthcare to diminish the self-reported unmet medical needs for persons with disabilities; and
- investment in digital competences and devices for disabled children, youth, and adults.

⁶⁷ Summary of the Commission's assessment of the Polish recovery and resilience plan (2022), https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/poland_rrp_summary_en.pdf.

⁶⁸ European Commission, 2022, Annexes to the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Poland, COM(2022) 268 final, https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/com_2022_268_1_annex_en.pdf.

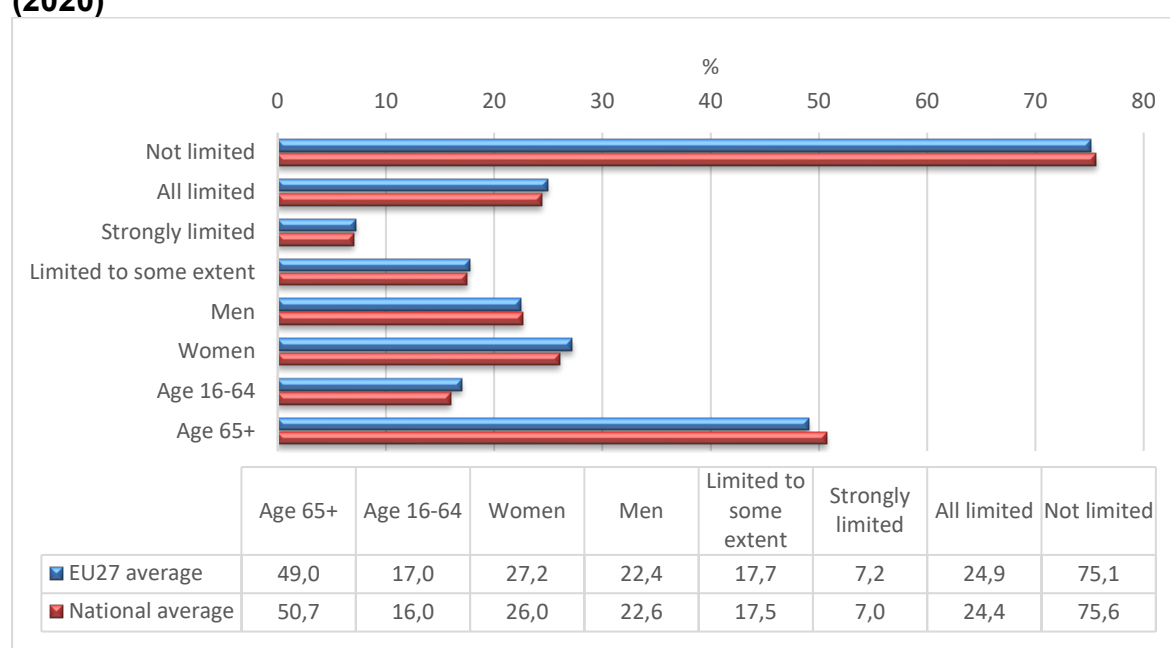
7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database⁶⁹ and statistical reports.⁷⁰

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 persons 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’.⁷¹

Table 1: Self-reported ‘activity limitations’ as a proxy for impairment / disability (2020)



Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022

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’.⁷² National estimates for Poland are compared with EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.⁷³

⁶⁹ Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁷⁰ Eurostat (2019) Disability Statistics: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics.

⁷¹ The EU-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)).

⁷² This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at: <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

⁷³ The exit of the United Kingdom from the EU changed the EU average. EU27 averages have been affected also by time series breaks in other large countries, such as Germany.

7.1 Data relevant to disability and the labour market

Table 2: EU and Poland employment rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2020)

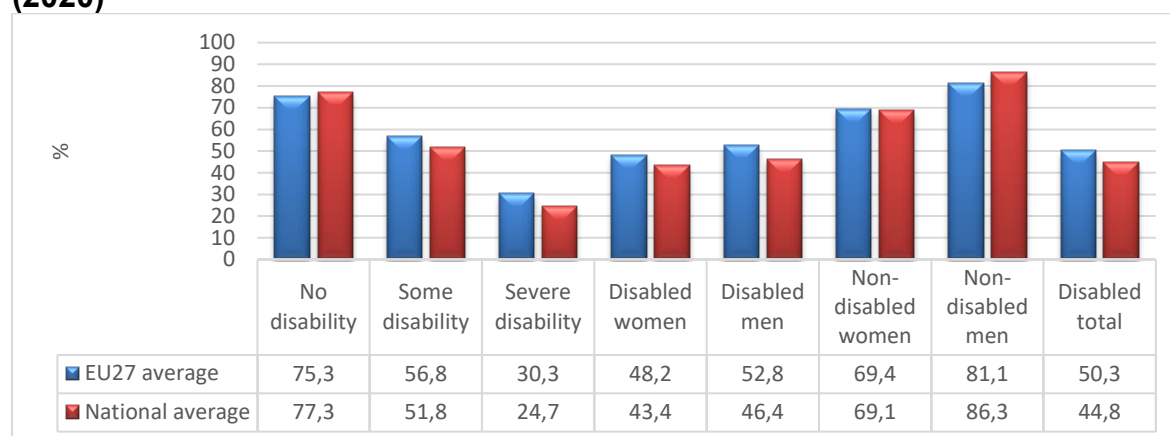


Table 3: Employment rates in Poland, by disability and age group (2020)

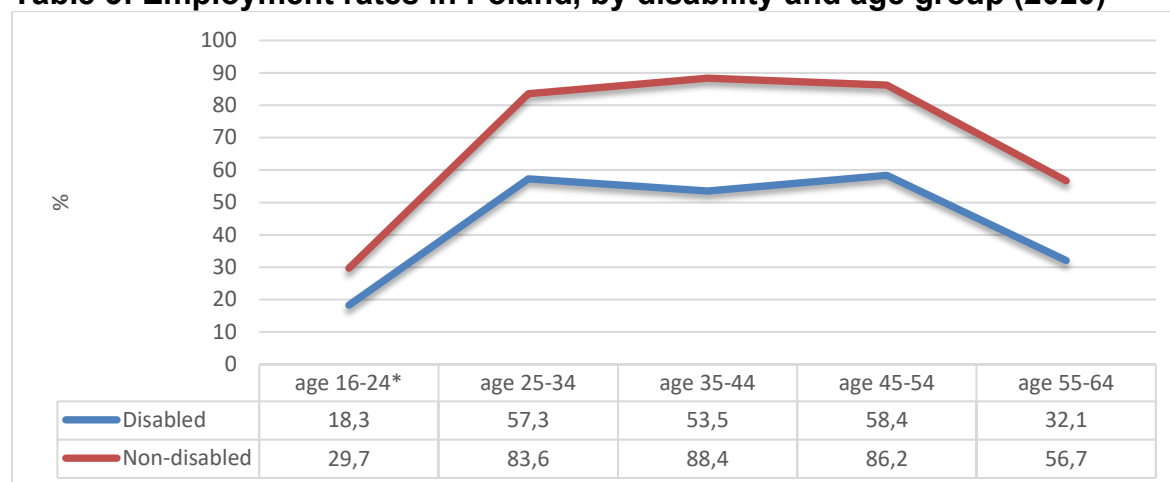
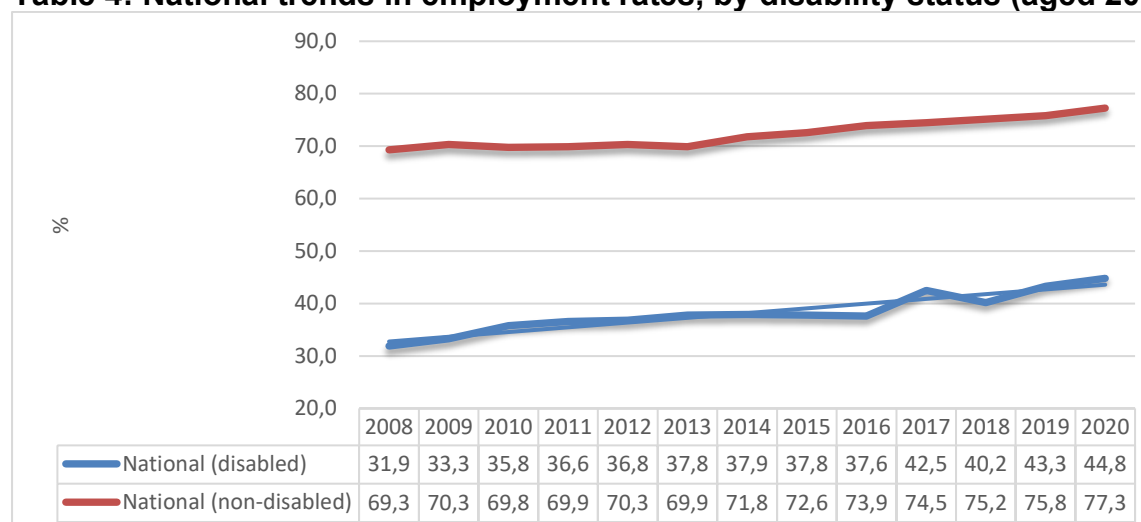


Table 4: National trends in employment rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)



Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and preceding UDBs)

Note: Microdata concerning employment status was not available for Germany and Italy in this data release, which affects the EU27 average (which is therefore estimated).

7.1.1 Unemployment

Table 5: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2020)

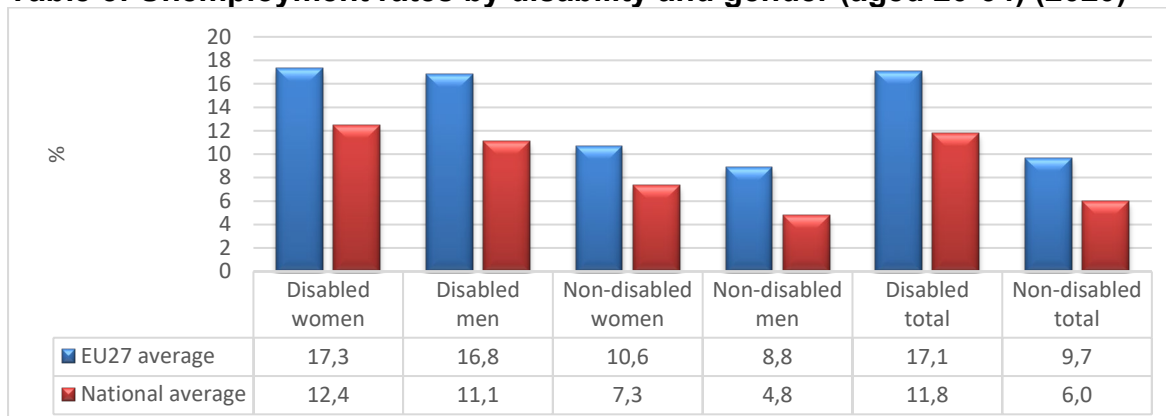


Table 6: Unemployment rates in Poland, by disability and age group (2020)

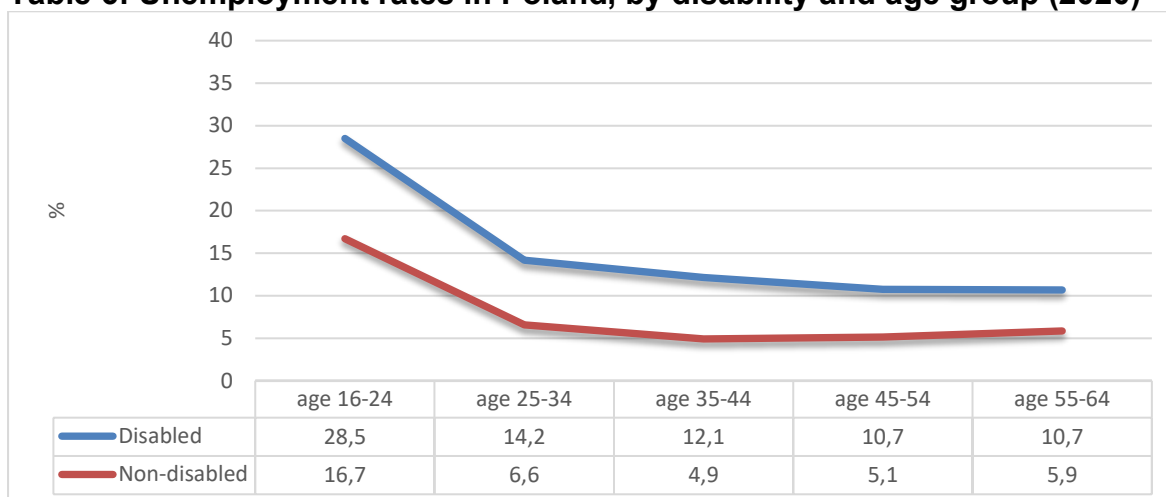
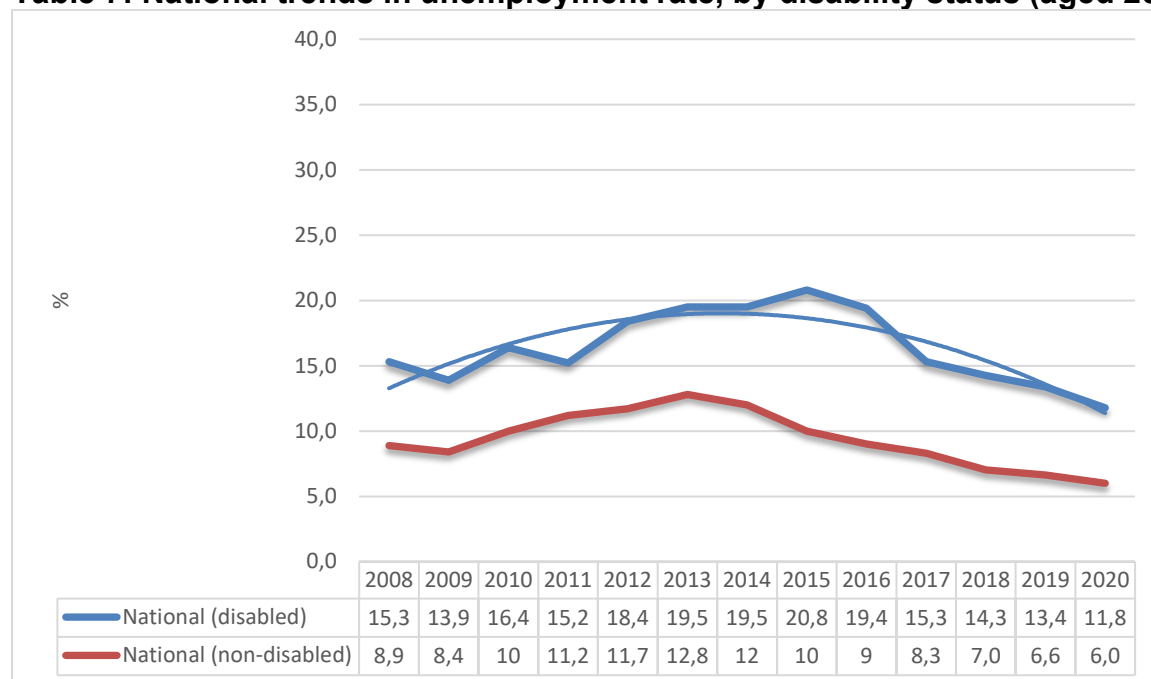


Table 7: National trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64)


Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.2 Economic activity

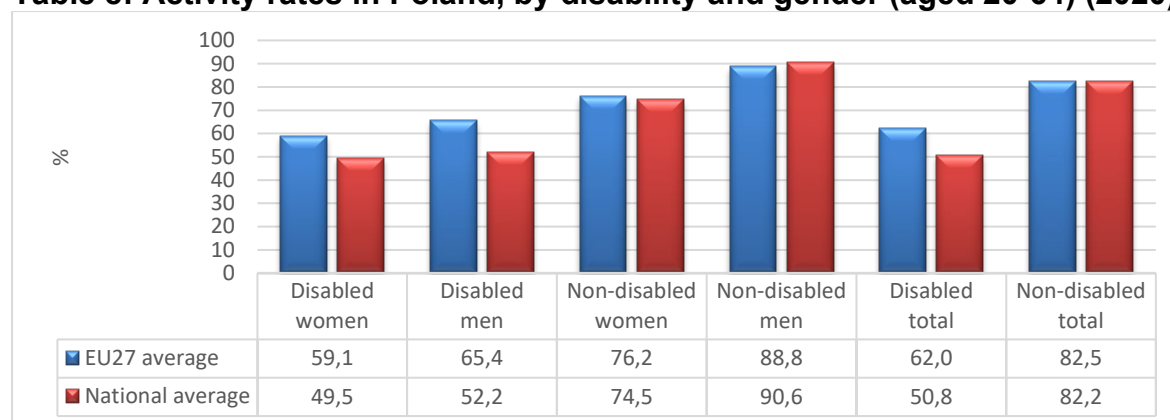
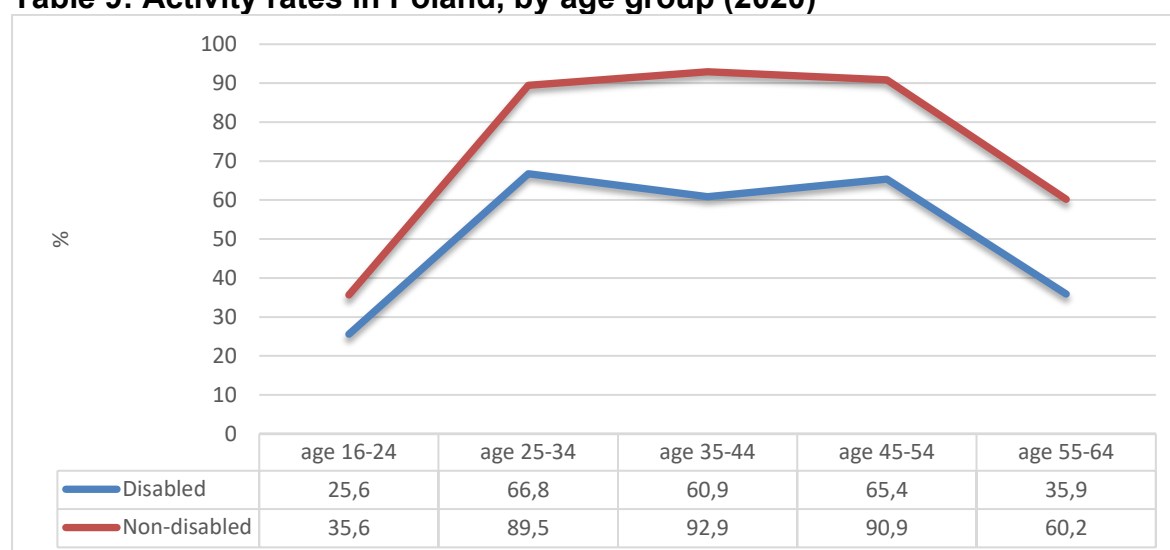
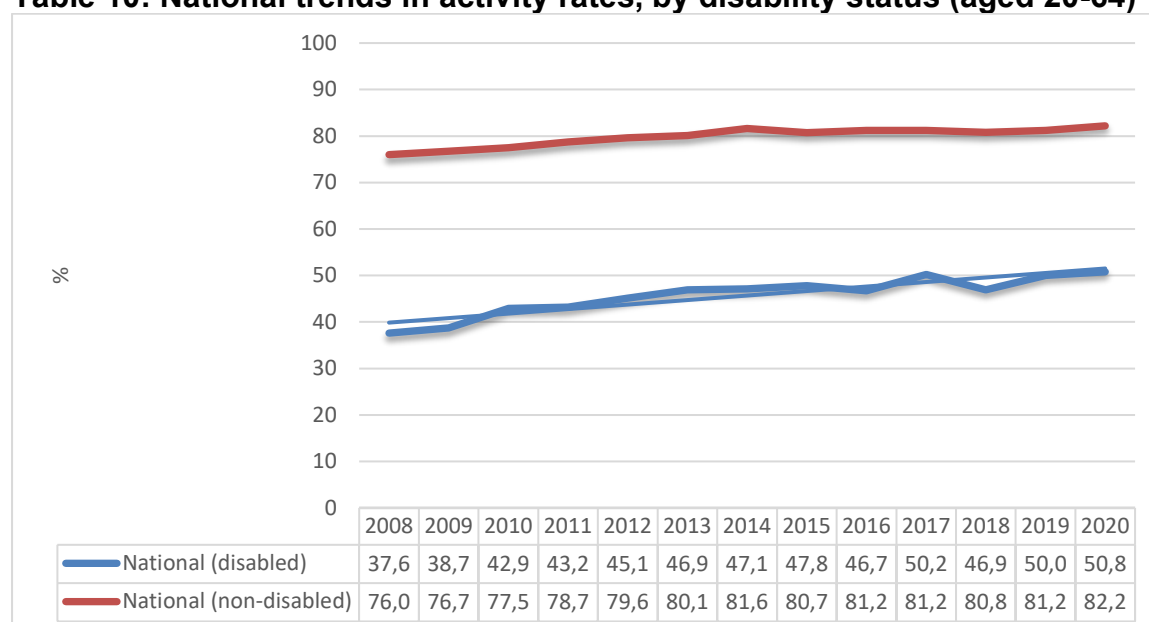
Table 8: Activity rates in Poland, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2020)


Table 9: Activity rates in Poland, by age group (2020)**Table 10: National trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)**

Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Poland

Disability data is not yet available from the core European Labour Force Survey but labour market indicators for Poland were disaggregated from ad modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.⁷⁴

The Labour Force Survey (LFS), known as BAEL⁷⁵ in Poland (*Badanie Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności*) has been carried out since May 1992 on a quarterly basis. It has been improved in accordance with Eurostat recommendations. The survey covers

⁷⁴ Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁷⁵ See: <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/>. The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People on BAEL, <http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

the economic activity of the population, including persons with disabilities and it covers members of the households in the sampled dwellings. The information on the number of employed, unemployed and inactive persons with disabilities (with legal certificates), as well as information on the size of the labour force participation rate, employment rate or unemployment rate, are provided. The data for 'voivodships' is also available.

It is crucial to note the change of definition in the BAEL from Q1 2021 – the questions on activity in the survey apply to people aged 15-89. The definition of a working person has changed, which ultimately affects the number of employed, unemployed and economically inactive people and the indicators. The Central Statistical Office (in Polish GUS) highlights that data from Q1 2021 are not comparable with earlier period series.⁷⁶ The changes introduced in the BAEL starting in 2021 focus on definitions and the way in which the different populations of people in the Labour market are distinguished, as well as on variables dedicated to additional characteristics. The modifications to the definitions are the result of the implementation of the provisions of the 'Resolution on Labour, Employment and Underutilisation Statistics' at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in Geneva (ICLS) in 2013 and recommended for use by the International Labour Organization (ILO/ILO).⁷⁷

Additionally, the report 'Employment of persons with disabilities in 2011'⁷⁸ (from the ad hoc module on disability) contains basic information on the type of health condition, the impact of disability on the type of performed work, the number of hours worked during a week, the need to use special equipment or assistance of other people in order to perform work by persons with disabilities. It is important to highlight that the survey does not include the population living in institutional households, such as social welfare homes, therefore a large number of persons with disabilities living in institutions is not included.

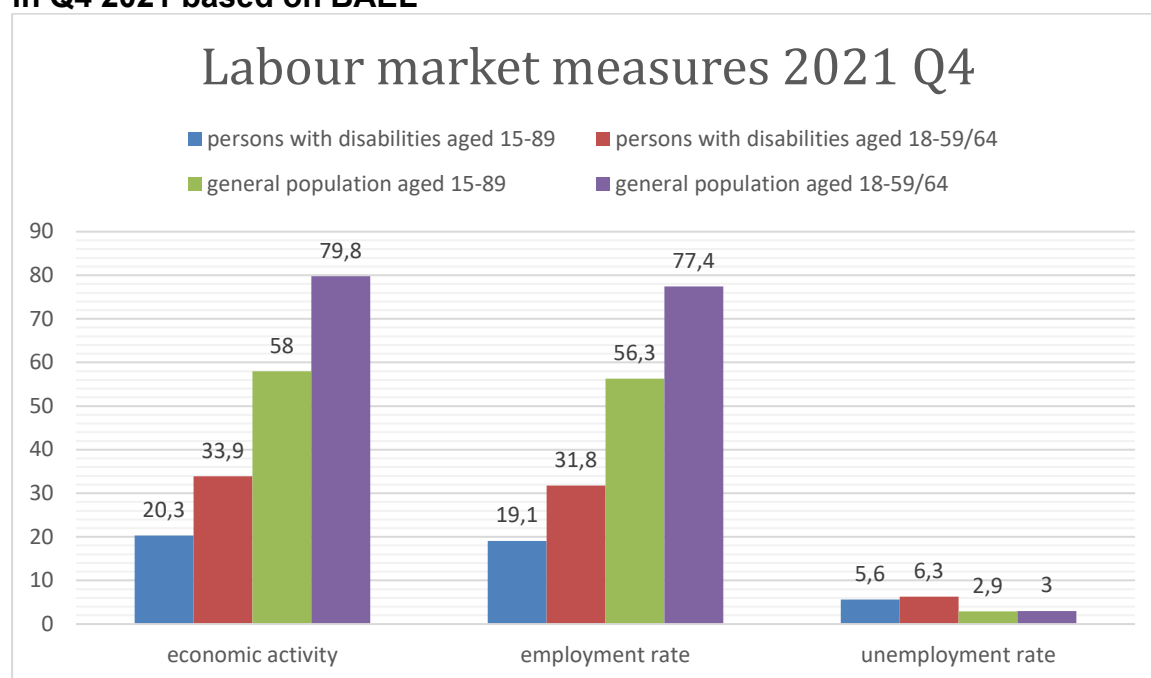
Other sources include recent project Pathways – Participation to Healthy Workplaces and Inclusive Strategies in the Work Sector offers data and analysis on professional integration and reintegration of persons with chronic diseases and recommendations to improve their employability.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Information from the Central Statistical Office on changes to the LFS starting in 2021, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rynek-pracy/pracujacy-bezrobotni-bierni-zawodowo-wg-bael/informacja-glownego-urzedu-statystycznego-na-temat-zmian-wprowadzanych-od-2021-r-w-bael.35.1.html>.

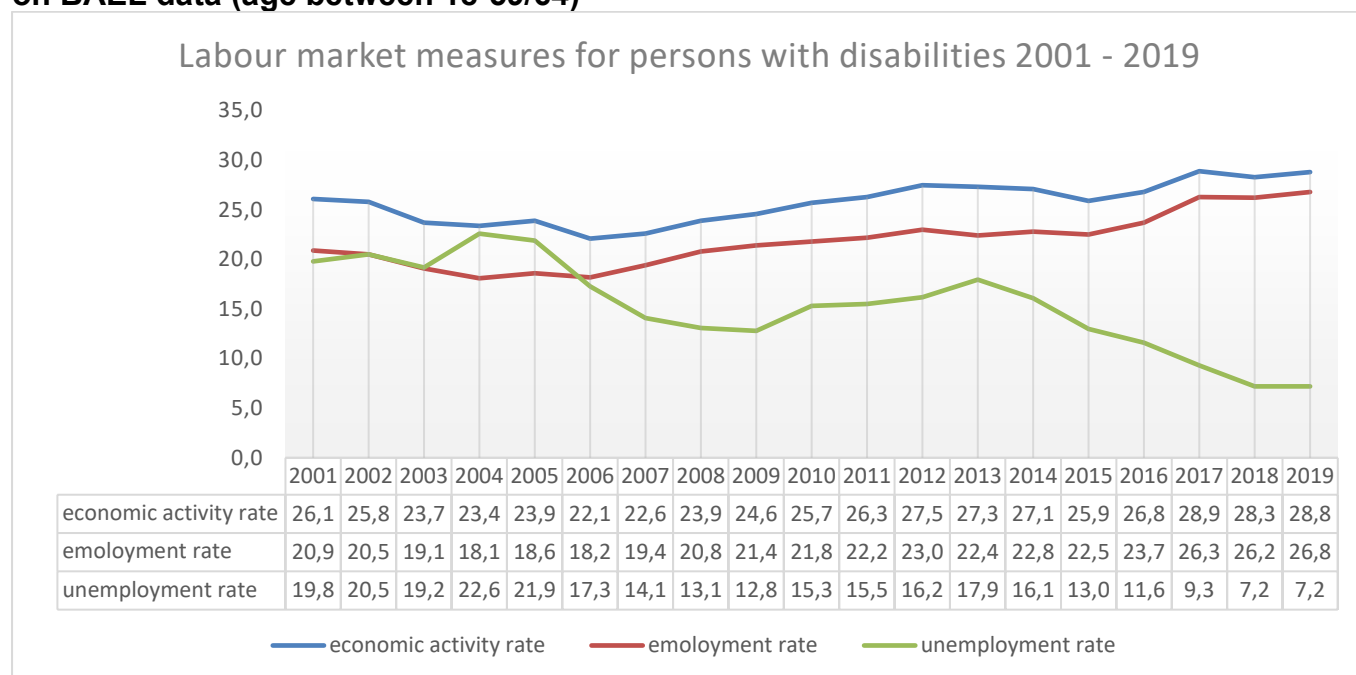
⁷⁷ International Conference of Labour Statisticians in Geneva, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/about/standards/icls/>.

⁷⁸ Employment of persons with disabilities in 2011, <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/working-unemployed-economically-inactive-by-lfs/employment-of-disabled-people-in-2011.15.1.html>.

⁷⁹ Special Issue 'Healthy Workplaces, Employment and Chronic Conditions in Europe: Answering the Hidden Emergency with Innovative Strategies', https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/special_issues/PathWays.

Table I Labour market measures for disabled population and general population in Q4 2021 based on BAEL

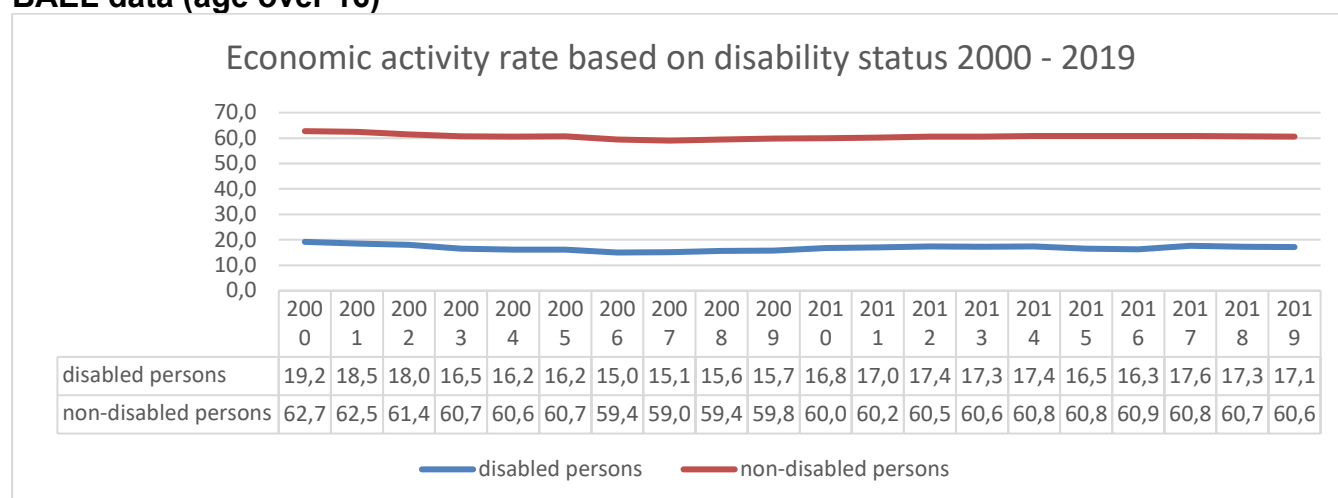
Source: BAEL 2021 Q4⁸⁰

Table II Labour market measures for persons with disabilities 2001-2019 based on BAEL data (age between 18-59/64)

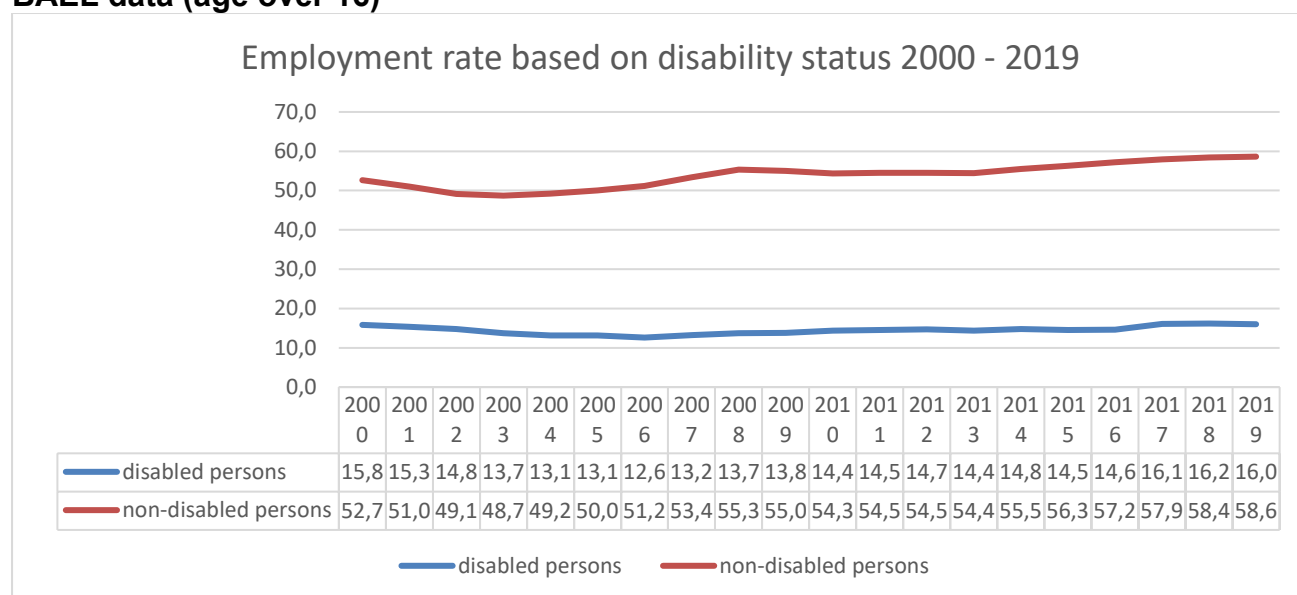
Source: BAEL 1993-Q4 2020⁸¹

⁸⁰ Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons' Affairs, <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

⁸¹ Quarterly and annual data from CSO LFS 1993-Q4 2020, updated 14 April 2021, <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

Table III Economic activity rate based on disability status 2000-2019 based on BAEL data (age over 16)

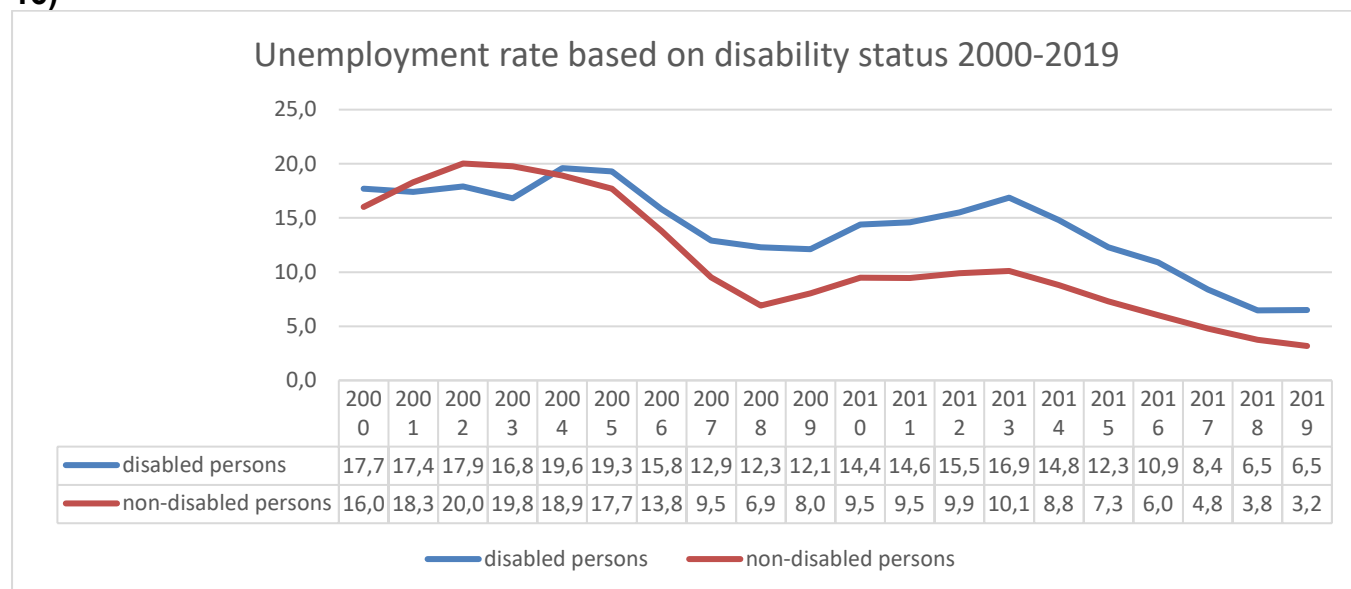
Source: BAEL 1993-Q4 2020⁸²

Table IV Employment rate according to disability status for 2000-2019 based on BAEL data (age over 16)

Source: BAEL 1993-Q4 2020⁸³

⁸² Quarterly and annual data from CSO LFS 1993-Q4 2020, updated 14 April 2021, <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

⁸³ Quarterly and annual data from CSO LFS 1993-Q4 2020, <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

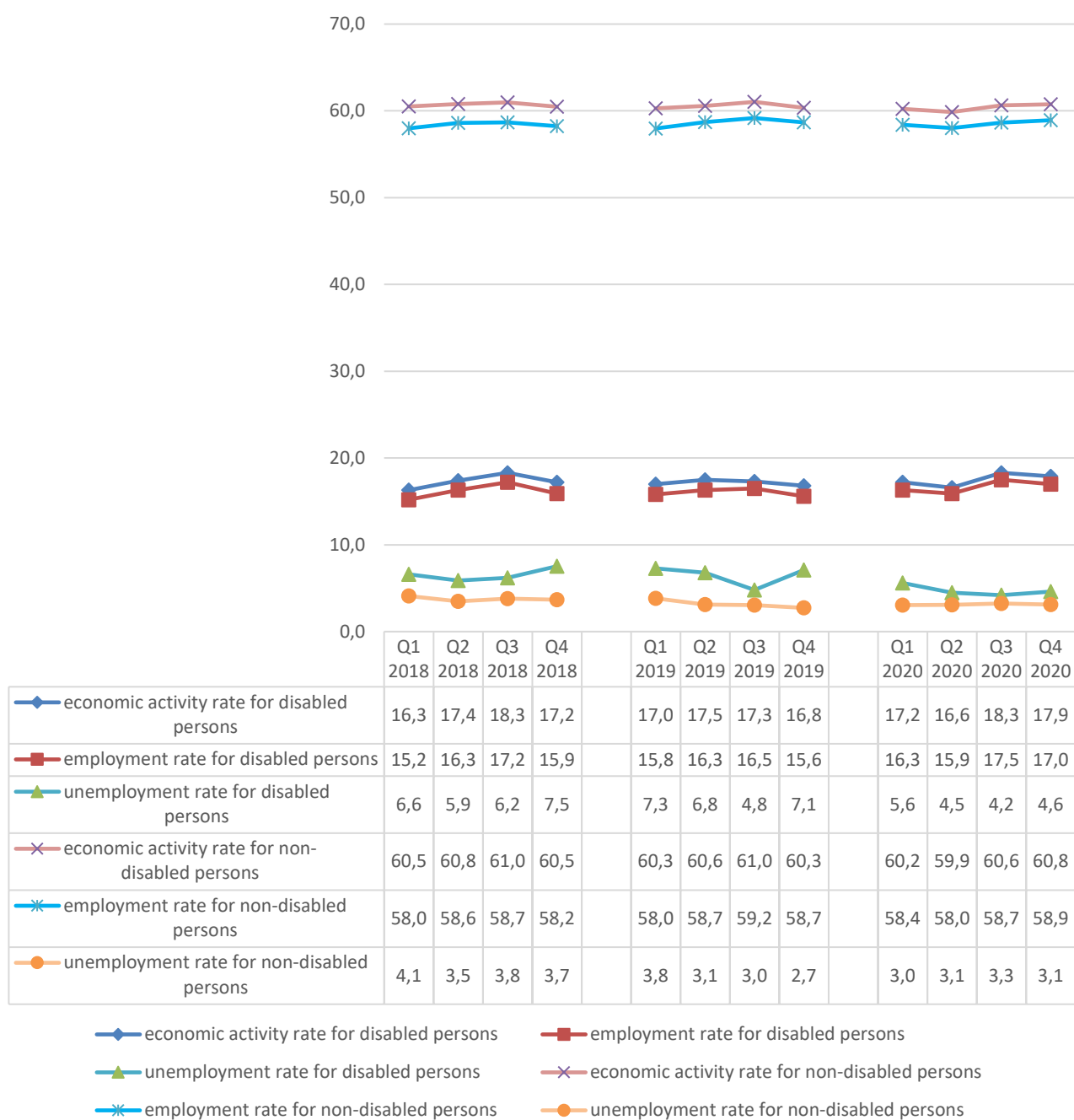
Table V Unemployment rate based on disability status for 2000-2019 (age over 16)

Source: BAEL 1993-Q4 2020⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Quarterly and annual data from CSO LFS 1993-Q4 2020, <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

Table VI Labour market measures Q1 2018 – Q4 2020 by disability status

LABOUR MARKET MEASURES ACCORDING TO DISABILITY STATUS Q1 2018 - Q4 2020 (AGE OVER 16)



Source: BAEL 1993-Q4 2020⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Quarterly and annual data from CSO LFS 1993-Q4 2020: <https://niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,81,bael>.

Table VII Economic activity of persons with disabilities aged 16 and more by degree of disability, 1st Quarter 2022; based on BAEL

Activity rate	Employment rate	Unemployment rate	SPECIFICATION in %
20,4	19,0	6,7	TOTAL
4,7	4,3	.	Persons with a certificate: of severe degree of disability or equivalent
24,0	22,6	5,5	of moderate degree of disability or equivalent
30,6	28,1	8,1	of minor degree of disability or equivalent
21,9	20,4	6,8	Men
5,5	5	.	Persons with a certificate: of severe degree of disability or equivalent
25,0	23,6	.	of moderate degree of disability or equivalent
33,3	30,5	8,5	of minor degree of disability or equivalent
18,9	17,7	6,6	Women
4,0	3,7	.	Persons with a certificate: of severe degree of disability or equivalent
22,8	21,5	.	of moderate degree of disability or equivalent
28,0	25,9	.	of minor degree of disability or equivalent
21,4	20,2	5,5	URBAN AREAS
5,7	5,4	.	Persons with a certificate: of severe degree of disability or equivalent
25,2	23,9	5,1	of moderate degree of disability or equivalent
29,8	28,1	.	of minor degree of disability or equivalent
18,7	17,0	8,9	RURAL AREAS
3,4	2,8	.	Persons with a certificate: of severe degree of disability or equivalent
21,7	20,3	.	of moderate degree of disability or equivalent
32,3	28,7	12,2	of minor degree of disability or equivalent

Source: BAEL GUS Q1 2022⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Economic activity of the Polish population – Q1 2022, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rynek-pracy/pracujacy-bezrobotni-bierni-zawodowo-wg-bael/aktywnosc-ekonomiczna-ludnosci-polski-i-kwartal-2022-roku,4,46.html>.

7.2 EU data relevant to disability, social policies and healthcare (2020)

Table 11: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and risk (aged 16-64)

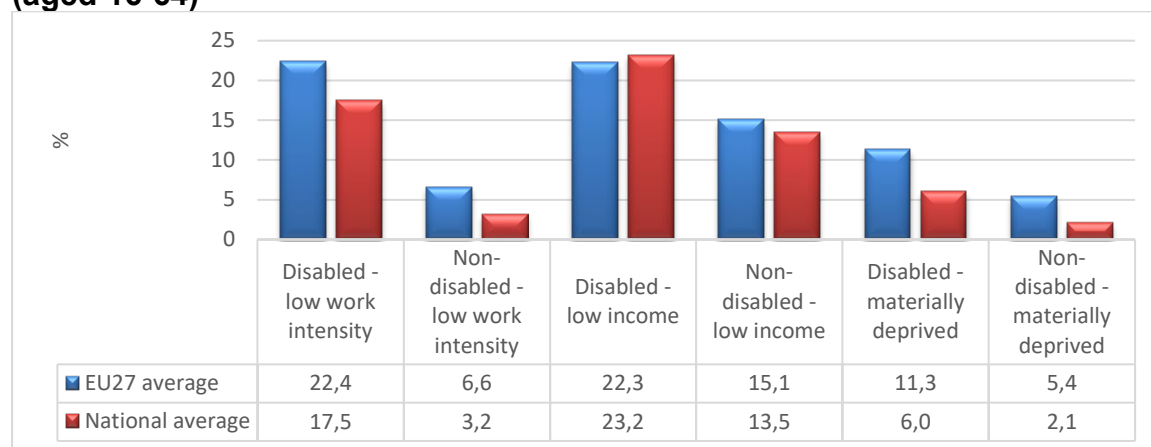


Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)

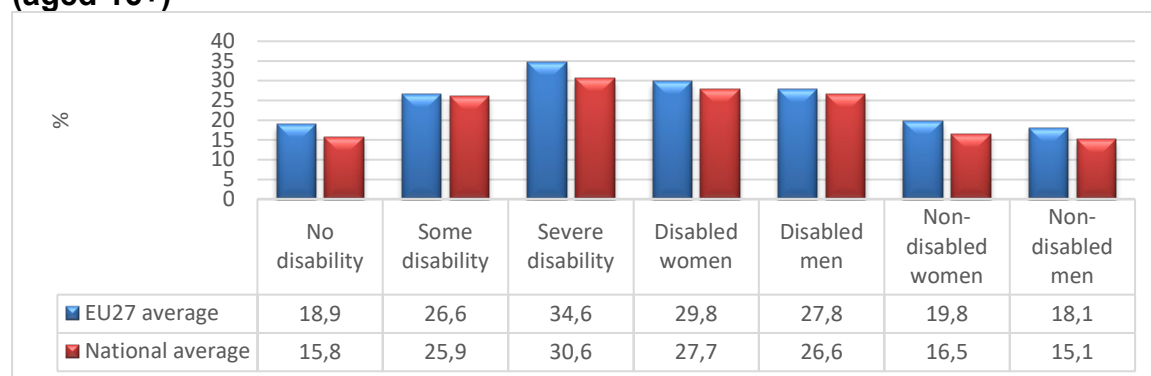
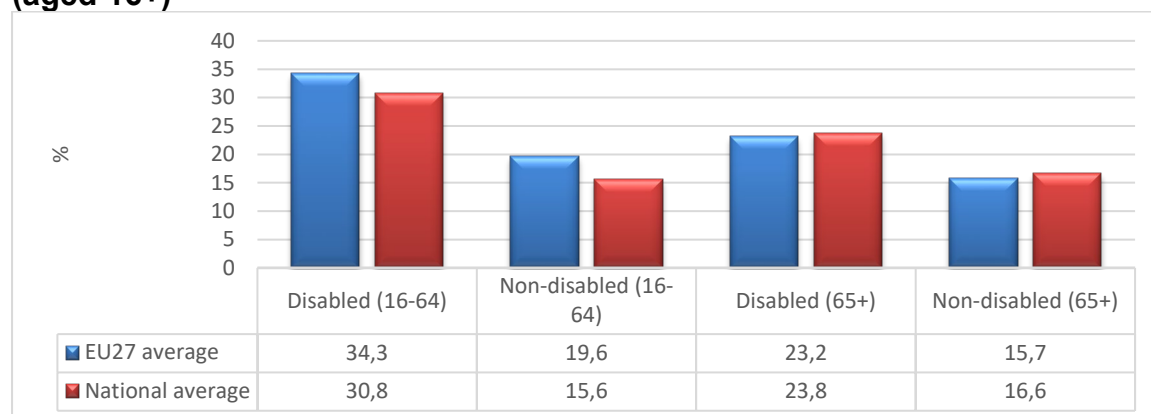
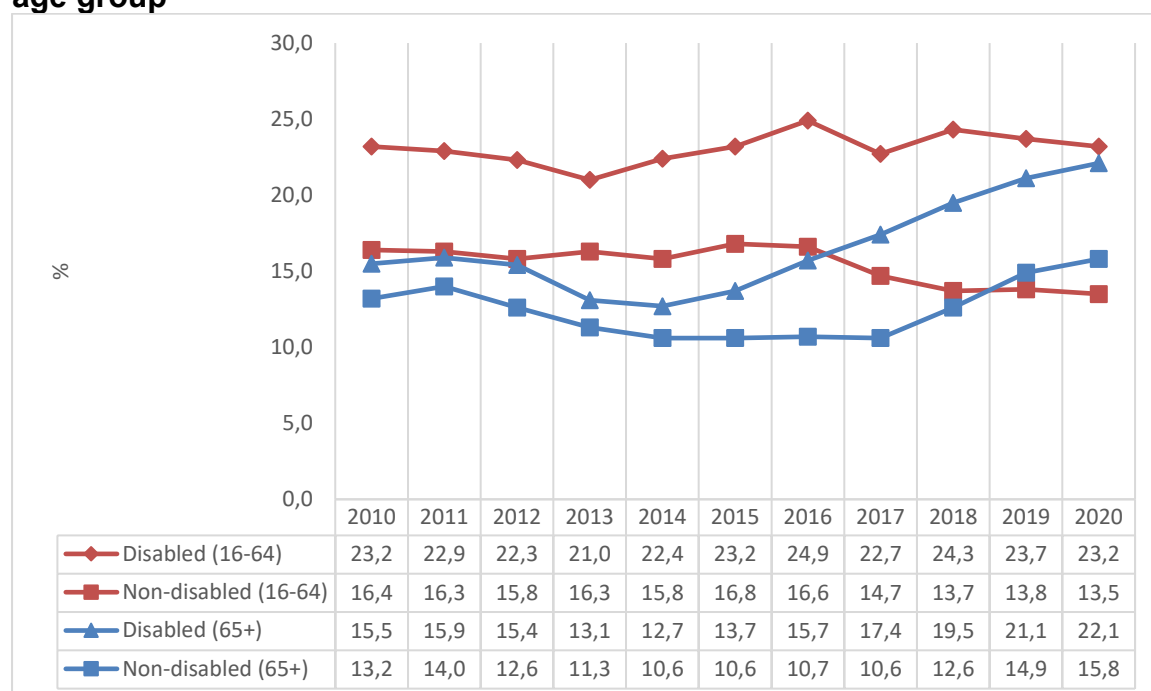


Table 13: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)

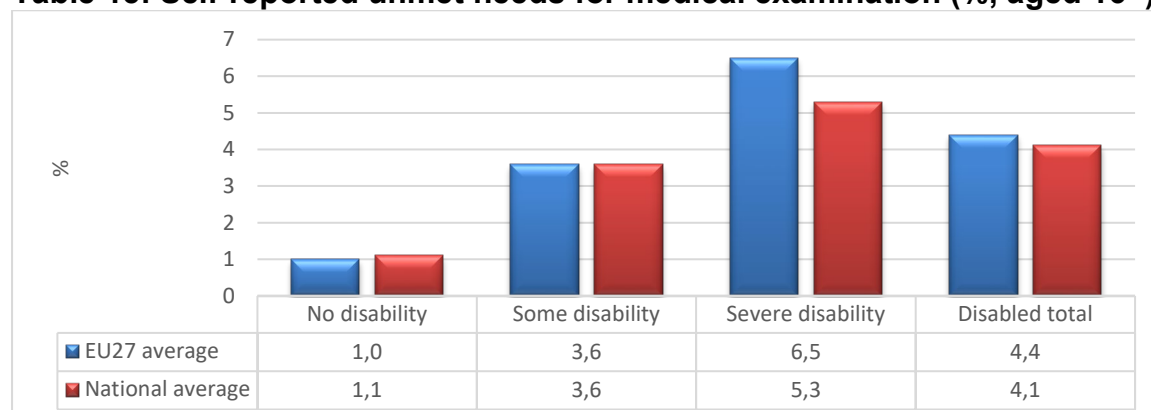


Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and previous UDB)

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 (% , aged 16+)

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

Note: 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 2020 are consistent with the 3-year mean values.

7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or healthcare data in Poland

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.⁸⁷

National surveys or studies may offer additional information:

European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) was conducted in Poland in 2014 and 2019⁸⁸ on a sample of 12 000 households and provides some data with regard to health and disability.

Household budget survey – an annual report prepared by Central Statistical Office, that provides general information on households with or without persons with disabilities.⁸⁹

Social Diagnosis provides some data on persons with disabilities between 2000-2015. The data includes subjective and objective quality of life, including some health and mental health measures.⁹⁰

Quality of Life in Poland – provides limited data on social capital and disability, mental health and perceived discrimination on the basis of disability.⁹¹

Reports on the activities of the National Health Fund – annual reports provide information on the number of patients (by gender and age) who have received selected medical services, including those addressed directly to persons with disabilities (e.g. therapeutic rehabilitation, long-term care and nursing services, palliative and hospice care). They also contain information about the costs of these benefits.

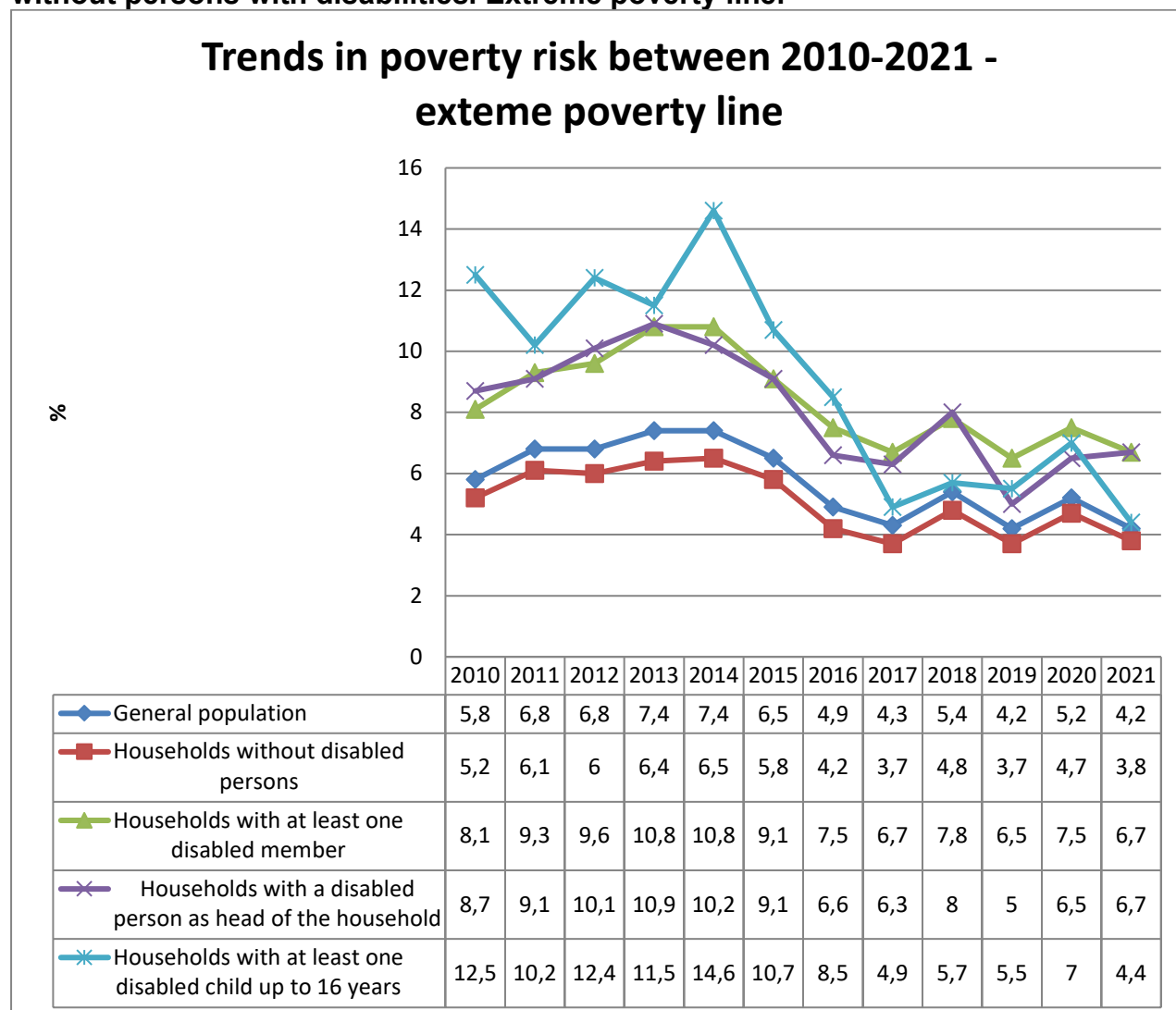
⁸⁷ Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁸⁸ See: <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/health/health/health-status-of-population-in-poland-in-2019,4,2.html>.

⁸⁹ Central Statistical Office webpage, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/warunki-zycia/dochody-wydatki-i-warunki-zycia-ludnosci/budzety-gospodarstw-domowych-w-2020-roku,9,15.html>.

⁹⁰ See: <http://www.diagnoza.com/index-en.html>.

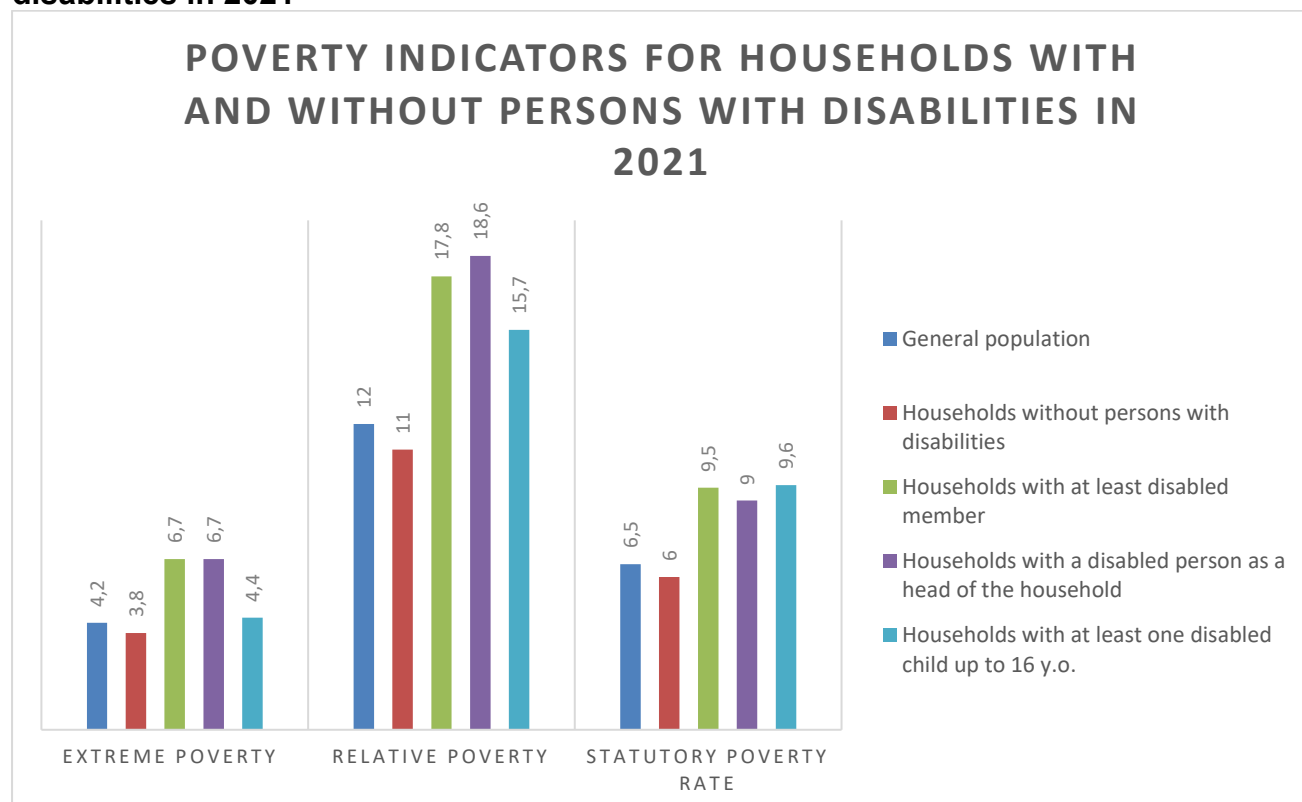
⁹¹ Quality of life in Poland in 2015. Results of the social cohesion survey: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/warunki-zycia/dochody-wydatki-i-warunki-zycia-ludnosci/jakosc-zycia-w-polsce-w-2015-roku-wyniki-badania-spojnosci-spolecznej,4,2.html>.

Table VIII Trends in poverty risk between 2010-2021 in households with and without persons with disabilities. Extreme poverty line.

Source: CSO, *The extent of economic poverty in Poland in 2021*⁹²

⁹² CSO, *The extent of economic poverty in Poland in 2021*, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/warunki-zycia/ubostwo-pomoc-spoeczna/zasieg-ubostwa-ekonomicznego-w-polsce-w-2021-roku,14,9.html>.

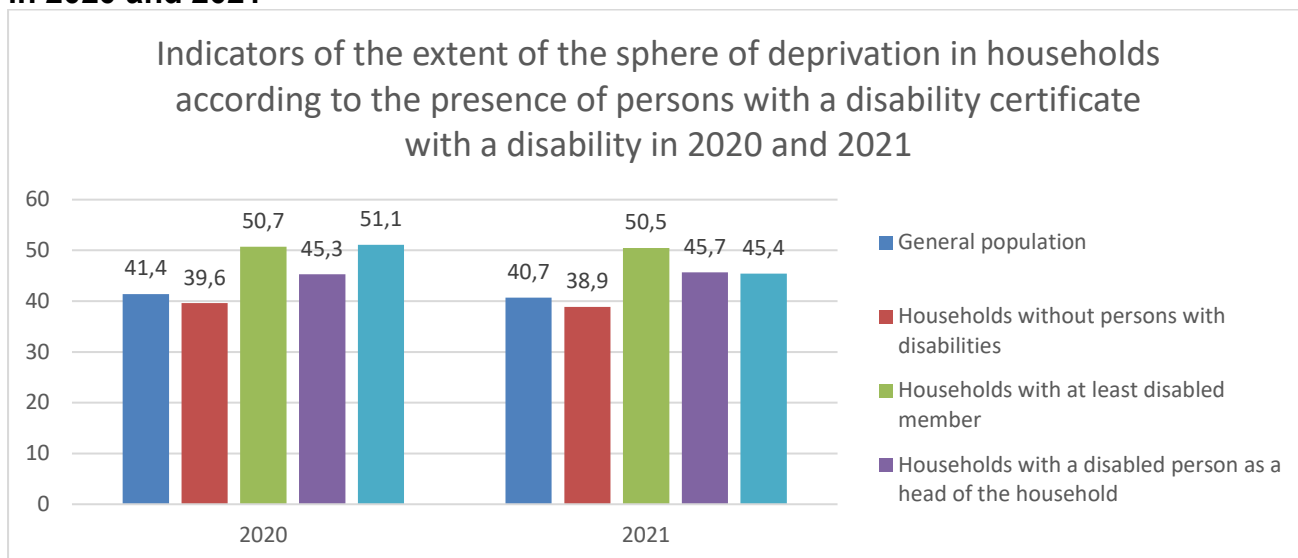
Table IX Poverty Indicators for households with and without persons with disabilities in 2021



Source: CSO, *The extent of economic poverty in Poland in 2021*⁹³

⁹³ CSO, *The extent of economic poverty in Poland in 2021*, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/warunki-zycia/ubostwo-pomoc-spoeczna/zasieg-ubostwa-ekonomicznego-w-polsce-w-2021-roku,14,9.html>.

Table X Indicators of the extent of the sphere of deprivation in households according to the presence of persons with a disability certificate with a disability in 2020 and 2021



Source: CSO, *The extent of economic poverty in Poland in 2021*⁹⁴

⁹⁴ CSO, *The extent of economic poverty in Poland in 2021*, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/warunki-zycia/ubostwo-pomoc-spoieczna/zasieg-ubostwa-ekonomicznego-w-polsce-w-2021-roku,14,9.html>.

7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

Table 24: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)⁹⁵

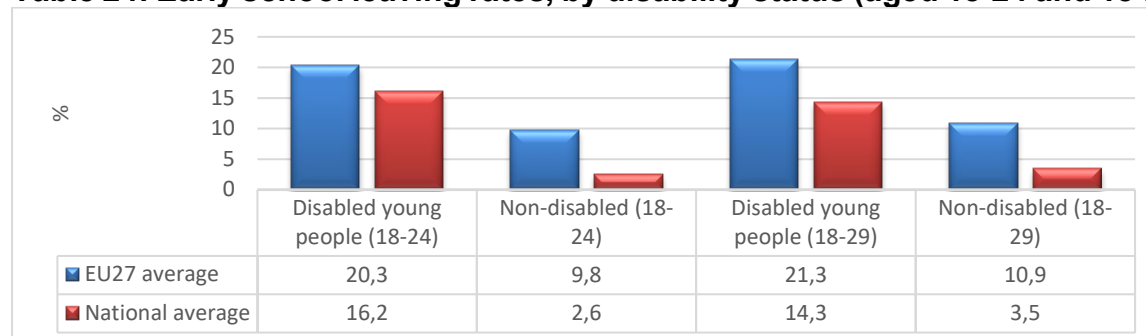
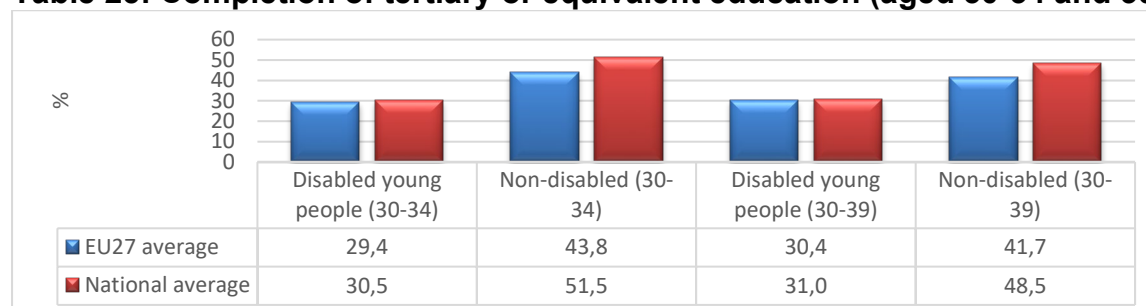


Table 25: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)



Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (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 Poland

Disability data is not included in the core European Labour Force Survey but education and training indicators were disaggregated from ad hoc modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.⁹⁶ Similar caution is needed with this data.

Some administrative data is also provided in the European Agency's Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE), concerning the population of enrolled students identified with special educational needs in Poland.⁹⁷

The Central Statistical Office provides annual reports on Higher Education Institutions and their Finances⁹⁸ where data on the number of students, graduates and doctoral students with disabilities, by types of schools and broad fields of education, as well as data on scholarships are available.

⁹⁵ 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.

⁹⁶ Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁹⁷ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Statistics on Inclusive Education, <https://www.european-agency.org/data/data-tables-background-information>.

⁹⁸ This publication is released annually by the Central Statistical Office in Poland. Data in the table above comes from reports published in years 2005-2020. Available at: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/szkolnictwo-wyzsze-i-jego-finanse-w-2020-roku,2,17.html>.

The Central Statistical Office provides annual reports on Education in the 2018/19 school year where data on SEN at primary, lower and upper secondary levels is available. Also, the Information Centre for Education⁹⁹ gathers data on the numbers of students with a certificate of need for special education based on their disability; numbers of students with disabilities studying in special, integrated and mainstream schools (inclusive education) respectively, at every stage of education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools).

Table XI Graduates with disabilities in academic years (2004/05 to 2020/21)

Academic year	Total	Of which females	Deaf and hearing impaired	Blind and sight impaired	With motor organs impairment		Other types of disability
					Able to walk	Unable to walk	
2019-2020	5196	3415	378	452	1417	193	2756
2018-2019	5744	3697	390	515	1694	166	2979
2017-2018	6326	4125	486	530	1853	151	3306
2016-2017	7013	4632	511	635	2049	202	3616
2015-2016	7043	4612	540	599	2115	162	3627
2014-2015	7545	5068	538	679	2322	136	3970
2013-2014	7995	5314	567	753	2364	172	4139
2012-2013	8199	5566	510	772	2464	151	4302
2011-2012	8617	5737	597	713	2359	122	4826
2010-2011	8136	5447	566	712	2098	148	4612
2009-2010	7011	4656	473	597	1818	105	4018
2008-2009	5837	3924	361	478	1495	125	3378
2007-2008	4438	2862	277	367	1095	64	2635
2006-2007	3451	2183	216	292	847	55	2041
2005-2006	2510	1595	183	203	517	57	1550
2004-2005	1358	804	96	113	270	49	830

Source: Central Statistical Office, *Higher Education Institutions and their Finances*¹⁰⁰

Table XII Nursery schools – total number of children and children with disabilities

School year	Total number of children	Number of children with disabilities	Percentage of children with disabilities
2010/11	816869	8091	0,990489
2015/16	906622	16915	1,865717
2016/17	1024668	20601	2,010505
2017/18	1080862	23515	2,175578
2018/19	1111595	21648	1,947472
2019/20	1127701	.	
2020/21	1154430	27514	2,383341

Source: Central Statistical Office, *Education in school year 2020/21*¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ See: <https://cie.men.gov.pl/>.

¹⁰⁰ This publication is released annually by the Central Statistical Office in Poland. Data in the table above comes from reports published in years 2005-2019. Available at: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/szkolnictwo-wyzsze-i-jego-finanse-w-2020-roku,2,17.html>.

¹⁰¹ Central Statistical Office (2022), Education in school year 2020/21, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/oswiata-i-wychowanie-w-roku-szkolnym-20202021,1,16.html>.

Table XIII Pre-primary sections in primary schools

School year	Total number of children	Number of children with disabilities	Percentage of children with disabilities
2010/11	219733	1489	0,990489
2015/16	200872	3373	1,865717
2016/17	237709	3697	2,010505
2017/18	243886	3699	2,175578
2018/19	247523	3266	1,947472
2019/20	242254	.	
2020/21	241056	3825	2,383341

Source: Central Statistical Office, Education in school year 2020/21¹⁰²

Table XIV Students with special needs in stage I sectoral vocational schools by type of school in the school year 2020/21 by type of disability

SPECIFICATION	Total	Deaf	Hearing impaired	Sight impaired and blind	With impaired motor skills, including aphasia	With intellectual disability		With autism, including Asperger syndrome	With multiple disabilities	Socially maladjusted	At the risk of social maladjustment
						slight	moderate or severe				
STAGE I SECTORAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS	6457	34	344	195	420	4046	11	630	426	34	317
SPECIAL STAGE I SECTORAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS	12143	130	127	100	118	7387	15	439	1931	1099	797

Source: Central Statistical Office, Education in school year 2020/21¹⁰³

¹⁰² Central Statistical Office (2022), Education in school year 2020/21, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/oswiata-i-wychowanie-w-roku-szkolnym-20202021,1,16.html>.

¹⁰³ Central Statistical Office (2022), Education in school year 2020/21, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/oswiata-i-wychowanie-w-roku-szkolnym-20202021,1,16.html>.

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