European Semester 2024 mainstreaming disability equality

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European Semester 2024 mainstreaming disability equality

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

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

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1 Introduction to the 2024 Semester

The European Semester was established in 2010 as the EU's strategic economic policy co-ordination mechanism. It addresses the public finances of the Member States and includes a strong focus on employment and social policies. The process of open co-ordination was adapted and streamlined in response to EU strategic priorities. Following conclusion of the Lisbon Strategy, the primary driver was the 'Europe 2020' strategy, with a focus on long-term recovery from the financial crisis of 2008. Current policy proceeds in the context of the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024[1] and implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR). Following the COVID-19 crisis, the Semester was adapted to coordinate with the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).

In April 2023, the European Commission proposed the most comprehensive reform of the EU's economic governance rules since the aftermath of the economic and financial crisis. As part of the new economic governance framework, as of 30 April 2024, the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) will be replaced by the medium-term fiscal structural plans.[2] The first plans were to be submitted to the European Commission in autumn 2024, which means that the 2024 Semester was a transition year and some Member States still published their NRPs, while others did not. Commission country reports and country-specific recommendations were published as part of the Spring Package as usual in 2024.

The European Pillar of Social Rights has been embedded in the European Semester since 2017. Stakeholders, social partners and civil society adopted the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and committed to 2030 social targets in Porto in May 2021.[3] The Action Plan was also welcomed in the Porto Social Summit by the EU Heads of State and Government. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan set three new measurable social targets for 2030. The revised Social Scoreboard notably includes the disability employment gap as one of its indicators.[4] At the June 2021 Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) meeting, the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs committed to the implementation of the Pillar Action Plan and to setting national targets that will contribute to the common targets.

In March 2021, the European Commission adopted the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 with the aim of promoting equal opportunities and full inclusion for persons with disabilities in Europe and around the world.[5] The Strategy is the policy framework for the European Commission to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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1 European Council, *A new strategic agenda 2019-2024*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39914/a-new-strategic-agenda-2019-2024.pdf.

2 See: 'New economic governance framework', https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/evolution-eu-economic-governance/new-economic-governance-framework_en.

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

4 Eurostat, *Social Scoreboard of Indicators*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/dashboard/social-scoreboard/.

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

(UN CRPD) which is ratified by the EU and all its 27 Member States. By the end of 2024, almost all the flagship initiatives of the Strategy had been implemented, along with the other policy actions the European Commission committed to in the Strategy.[6] Despite significant efforts to implement the UN CRPD across the EU, persistent gaps remain between persons with and without disabilities, for example when it comes to poverty, access to jobs, inclusive education, housing and healthcare services. The European Commission is expected to propose new initiatives for the remaining time of the Strategy until 2030. This synthesis report highlights the most recent trends, building on EU data, which may help the Commission to identify key actions for the years to come to support the full participation of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

From a disability perspective, the Semester process should give due regard to mainstreaming disability equality in all its aspects. Disability equality gaps and data should be visible at each stage of the policy cycle and their coverage should align, wherever possible, with the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, with national disability strategies and actions plans, and with the implementation of the CRPD in Europe. These are the key challenges addressed in this synthesis report. There have been improvements in the extent to which Member States and the EU have mainstreamed disability equality in the Semester process over the past decade.[7] Annual reporting by the European Disability Expertise[8] (formerly known as Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED)) helped the Commission to raise the profile of disability data in its Country Reports, which supported EU implementation of the CRPD and helped to increase Member States' attention to disability policies.[9] An increasing level of disability mainstreaming was evident in the Semester documents (e.g. in the Joint Employment Report 2024), partly thanks to the inclusion of the indicator on the disability employment gap.

Nevertheless, despite facing disproportionately higher rates of unemployment and poverty than persons without disabilities, persons with disabilities were not targeted or were only marginally affected by recent EU initiatives to tackle the impact of the multiple ongoing crises (cost-of-living and energy crises).[10] For example, in initiatives that respond to the challenges posed by the recent crises, persons with disabilities are often considered under the larger category of vulnerable groups/households (such as in the case of energy poverty) and thus remain invisible in policy efforts.[11] As a result, policies in the area of energy efficiency may unintentionally further marginalise persons with disabilities who have extra costs due to their disability, have higher energy needs

6 Birtha, M. (2024) *The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 - Achievements and perspectives,* Briefing. Brussels: European Parliament, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 767.095.

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

8 See: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1532&langId=en

9 European Commission, written by Priestley, M. (2023) *European Semester 2022: mainstreaming disability equality*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4d7174dc-8438-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

10 Birtha, M. (2024). *The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 - Achievements and perspectives.* European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 767.095.

11 Birtha, M., Zólyomi, E., Wohlgemuth, F. and Gjylsheni, S. (2023). *Targeted measures for persons with disabilities to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.* European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 754.127.

and tend to have fewer financial resources or capital to invest in renovations as part of the energy transition.

The current long-term budget (Multiannual Financial Framework, MFF) adopted in December 2020 for the period 2021-2027, together with the NextGenerationEU recovery instrument, amounted to more than EUR 2 trillion.[12] The largest spending area of these combined resources supports 'Cohesion, Resilience and Values' among EU Member States. This includes the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) to support actions aimed at fighting poverty and exclusion, combating discrimination and helping the most disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities, to gain access to the labour market, as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and REACT-EU, the two main programmes under NextGenerationEU.[13] Ongoing investments include major systemic and infrastructure investments of relevance to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. In recent years, EU Member States have been dealing with several interlinking crises (COVID-19 pandemic, energy crisis, inflation crisis, etc.) while trying to respond to global megatrends (ageing, climate change, digital transition, migration, etc.). When addressing these issues through EU-funded investments, priorities should not fail to address accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities who are disproportionately affected by these crises. Disability mainstreaming is an important way to uphold the rights outlined in the UN CRPD across policies and programmes. EDE Country reports include some examples of planned or ongoing investments that support persons with disabilities, however, it has proved challenging to find detailed information on the extent to which investments under Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs) and cohesion policy funds benefitted persons with disabilities.

This synthesis report sets the scene for the 2025-2026 Semester cycle, drawing on national reviews carried out by EDE country experts in 2024, updates to Member States' disability policies, document packages in the Autumn and Spring Packages of the 2024 Semester cycle, and data newly available from Eurostat in 2024.[14] It considers past trends and identifies future challenges as a basis for the preparation of new EDE country fiches and Commission input to the 2025 policy cycle.

1.1 EPSR 2023 headline targets and other relevant EU strategies

In June 2022 the employment and social affairs ministers of the EU Member States presented their national targets for 2030 to achieve the EU 2030 headline targets.[15] The three headline targets mirror the social concerns of the Semester and the thematic priorities of the disability country fiches prepared by EDE (with employment, skills, and poverty or social exclusion):

- at least 78 % of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment;
- at least 60 % of all adults should participate in training every year; and

[12] European Union, *NextGenerationEU: Make it Real*, https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en.
[13] European Commission (2021), 'Headings: expenditure categories', https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget/2021-2027/spending/headings_en.
[14] Unless specified, the summary statistics presented in this report are drawn from EU-SILC microdata (EU-SILC 2022) and from corresponding statistics published in the Eurostat disability database (2022 & 2023).
[15] *State of play on the national targets for 2030*, release 16 June 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=25728&langId=en.

- the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million, including at least 5 million children, compared to 2019.

It is an important achievement for disability equality mainstreaming that since 2021 the Revised Social Scoreboard contains a specific indicator for the disability employment gap, with supporting data that can increasingly be broken down by disability status where relevant for complementary analysis.[16] The EDE country fiches contain statistical annexes consistent with the methodology of the former EU 2020 headline indicators, based on the EDE statistical reports. A situational analysis is provided later in this synthesis report in relation to selected questions and challenges arising from the employment, poverty and education data.

1.2 Challenges identified in the 2024 EDE country reports

In 2024 the following issues were among those highlighted by EDE country experts:

Table 1: Challenges identified in 2024 EDE country reports

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
AT	• Persistent inequalities on key disability employment indicators (employment gap, unemployment), especially for young persons with disabilities. • No comprehensive actions to support the participation of persons with disabilities in the open labour market. • Extensive network of sheltered workplaces still exist that don't provide adequate salary, pension contributions, nor full social insurance.	• Limited policy progress to address poverty and social exclusion faced by persons with disabilities. • Need for deinstitutionalisation, but no targeted policy actions. • Recent reforms to improve working conditions in long-term care do not apply to social sector staff, which makes it difficult to recruit personal assistants across Austria.	• Over one-third of children with disabilities ('special educational needs') continue to be taught in special schools. • Young persons with disabilities have higher early school leaving rates and lower educational attainment, yet no recent policy measures to improve inclusive education.
BE	• Disability employment gap is significantly above EU average. • Quota obligations for persons with disabilities exist only in the public sector and are hardly ever met. • Need to invest more in prevention to avoid people becoming inactive.	• Still no commitment to deinstitutionalisation and shift towards community-based services in Brussels and Wallonia. • Lack of sufficient funding for personal assistance led to long waiting lists in Flanders and Wallonia.	• Rise in numbers of children in special schools, especially children with intellectual disabilities. • No comprehensive plan with clear objectives and methodologies for the realisation of quality inclusive education.
BG	• Disability employment gap is significantly above the EU average. • National policies (e.g. the quota system) don't	• Training for personal assistants under the new scheme is lacking, along with quality assessment of the service provision.	• Lack of data about the number of children enrolled in mainstream schools (primary and high schools)

[16] See the Revised Social Scoreboard: https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/#annex2.

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	effectively support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the open labour market. • Significant public spending on outdated sheltered employment, instead of improving digital skills and vocational training for persons with disabilities to better match their skills with the open labour market.	• Children with disabilities are often re-institutionalised in new family-type accommodation centres. • The number and qualifications of workers in newly established community-based services for children and adults with disabilities is insufficient.	• Insufficient human and financial resources to provide inclusive education support to children with disabilities.
CY	• The revised Cyprus Disability Strategy and Action Plan should include concrete actions with measurable outcomes on improving the labour market participation of persons with disabilities.	• Insufficient allowances, accessibility issues and lack of specialised care and support services for persons with disabilities, including persons on the autism spectrum.	• Data shows poor educational attainment for students with disabilities, increased bullying and human rights violations in schools.
CZ	• Despite active labour market policy measures, the participation of persons with disabilities in the open labour market remains unsatisfactory. • More research evidence needed to understand better the barriers to employment in the open labour market.	• National strategies don't put sufficient pressure on service providers of residential facilities to deinstitutionalise and make the transition towards community-based services. • Digital inaccessibility hinders access to information about and application to disability support services. • A financial assistance programme is established for Ukrainian refugee children with disabilities and their families.	• Inequalities in education remain a significant challenge for disability inclusion (early school leaving, completion of tertiary education etc.). • Shortage of specialised teachers and school psychologists.
DE	• Increasing employment segregation in sheltered workshops presents a challenge with low transition rates to the open market. • A general right to reasonable workplace accommodation (covering both public and private sectors) and effective workplace accessibility regulations are still lacking.	• The division between the public and private health insurance systems presents a problem for persons with disabilities. • Disability benefits for people with reduced earning capacity are often insufficient to guarantee a minimum living standard. • There is a lack of adequate barrier-free housing.	• Insufficient physical, material and personnel resources for inclusive education. • Lack of educational professionals with special qualifications in inclusion, accessibility barriers. • Little information available on the number of special assistance and support needs in the different areas of education.
DK	• Persons with more severe disabilities are still far from the open labour market.	• General increase in unmet medical needs over the last few years. • Reported problems with quality in some disability support services.	• The 2012 reform to integrate more students with disabilities into mainstream education has not reached its goal yet.

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
			• Some teachers lack the skills to educate students with learning difficulties.
EE	• Labour market participation of persons with disabilities slowed down. • Fragmentation of different mechanisms to support the employment of persons with disabilities • Need to collect data on persons with disabilities in the workplace.	• Persistently high poverty rates for persons with disabilities. • Unmet needs for medical examination are well above the EU average. • Social benefits indexation has not taken place despite rising inflation.	• Early school leaving remains higher for persons with disabilities at all education levels. • Ageing of and decreasing number of people in the education workforce, skills mismatch.
EL	• The disability employment gap appears to be widening. • Nearly half of persons with disabilities are economically inactive. • Inaccessible environments and limited uptake of incentive schemes by employers presents a key challenge.	• High poverty levels persist, especially for the working age population with disabilities. • Significant disability equality gap in relation to self-reported unmet needs for medical care. • Limited capacity of local social services and mental health centres to support households with members with disabilities.	• High early school leaving rates for children with disabilities. • Funding for education is fragmented and leads to limited available support measures.
ES	• High unemployment rate for all groups remains. • Complex system of existing incentives makes it difficult for employers to access information. • Need to better promote self-employment of persons with disabilities.	• Higher risk of poverty for persons with disabilities. • Widespread increase in unmet needs for medical examinations. • Lack of adequate housing support measures for older people with disabilities.	• Higher percentage of early school leavers with disabilities, particularly among the 18-29 age group • Need to reduce post-secondary early school leavers with disabilities through enhanced inclusion policies.
FI	• Employment situation of persons with disabilities still needs improvement, amid current austerity measures. • Persons with disabilities encounter prejudice and negative attitudes from society. • Worsening quality of disability services may weaken the employment situation of young people with disabilities.	• The recent social and healthcare (SOTE) reform has most likely negatively impacted many persons with disabilities as the quality and quantity of disability services worsened. • Under the new Disability Service Act (entering into force in 2025), the right of persons with disabilities to free-of-charge specialised disability services is at risk.	• Some pupils with disabilities still have limited educational opportunities. • Inclusion continues to be misunderstood as physical integration without the provision of adequate support.
FR	• Human, technical and financial resources are needed to provide efficient, high-quality support for jobseekers with disabilities.	• Risk of poverty remains significant for persons with disabilities • Independent living is only partly achieved, due to limited resources.	• Only limited progress in providing access to education for children and young people with multiple disabilities. • Special school settings are still dominant.

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	• Existing labour market inclusion policies should be supported by reasonable accommodation, awareness-raising and adequate training for all relevant actors.	• Available support doesn't always promote the autonomy and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.	• Resources need to be allocated to enhance inclusive education through more adapted environments, trained teachers and stable teams of professional school assistants.
HR	• The disability employment gap is a persistent challenge. • Despite various policy efforts (large increase in paid incentives, new integrative workshops etc.), the employment situation of persons with disabilities did not improve.	• Sharp increase in requests for personal assistants is hindering the implementation of the new Law on Personal Assistance.	• Some parts of the new special curricula for students with disabilities are not appropriate to address the needs of children with more complex disabilities. • Working conditions of teaching assistants need to be improved.
HU	• The disability employment gap is constantly very high. • Need to allocate sufficient resources for tailored active labour market measures to increase participation in the open labour market in close cooperation with the business sector. • The general labour shortage should be used as an opportunity to increase the recruitment of workers with disabilities.	• The Implementation Plan for the National Disability Programme up to 2022 has been postponed several times. • The amount of most social benefits did not increase despite significant inflation, need to improve their poverty alleviation effect. • Provide better access to the healthcare system for persons with disabilities.	• The number of students with special educational needs has increased from 64 000 to 99 600 over the past 20 years. • Shortage of teachers and other systemic problems hinder inclusion. • Plan to finance from RRF support measures to reduce school segregation.
IE	• The disability employment gap worsened, despite several programmes being in place (e.g. Wage Subsidy Scheme). • The impact of recent reforms (e.g. Reasonable Accommodation Fund) is yet to be evaluated. • Barriers to employment include loss of benefits, issues with transport and workplace discrimination.	• The housing crisis impacted persons with disabilities (1 in 4 homeless people has a disability and 5 000 are on housing waiting lists). • The planned reform of social protection (disability payments, healthcare services and transport) should follow a holistic approach, in consultation with organisations of persons with disabilities.	• 126 children with special education needs were without a school placement in September 2024. • Students' needs are not met throughout the education system.
IT	• Lack of data on incentives for the employment of persons with disabilities in the different regions. • Better coordination needed between the	• Very high rate of risk of poverty or social exclusion of persons with disabilities. • New disability assessment system will be tested from early 2025.	• Accessibility of school buildings should be improved • Shortage of sufficient number of trained support teachers

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	state and regions to provide adequate employment support services.	• RRP-funded deinstitutionalisation projects should strengthen community-based services in all regions.	• Green and digital skills of persons with disabilities should be improved.
LT	• Low employment rate of persons with disabilities • Development of new forms of supported employment measures are needed. • The accessibility of social assistance should be improved, through clear and easy-to-understand information for the public.	• In 2023, there were still more than 5 000 people with disabilities living in large social care institutions. • High poverty rate and income inequalities among persons with disabilities. • Primary healthcare services are only partially accessible for persons with disabilities.	• Strategic documents related to inclusive education lack clear timelines, targets and indicators. • Negative societal attitudes towards inclusive education.
LU	• Persons with disabilities have lower labour market participation. • Fewer opportunities to get a job in the private sector. • No body established to monitor or sanction non-compliance of labour quotas in both the private and public sectors.	• Deinstitutionalisation is progressing slowly and many people are still living in institutions.	• Persons with disabilities still have lower level of education.
LV	• The employment rate of persons with hearing impairments and intellectual disabilities is particularly low. • Need to improve the data collected on persons with disabilities for better comparability between Eurostat and national data.	• Access to healthcare services is a problem, due to long waiting lists and high prices. • Investment in community-based services should be a priority.	• The policy objective to improve the quality of special education institutes (instead of investment in inclusive education) is contrary to the UN CRPD. • More data are needed on pupils with disabilities.
MT	• Many persons with disabilities continue to be excluded from the open labour market. • Integration of persons with psychosocial disabilities and persons on the autism spectrum in the labour market is still a challenge. • Bullying in the workplace.	• High risk of poverty, especially for older people with disabilities. • Insufficient community-based independent living support and lack of affordable housing. • Initiatives like the Myhealth portal should increase the accessibility of medical treatment and information.	• Much higher early school leaving for persons with disabilities. • No measures are foreseen in the RRP to include students with disabilities in mainstream primary and secondary schools. • Stronger commitment to inclusive education needed.
NL	• The jobs that persons with disabilities access via the job agreement and quota scheme do not provide income security as they have to be supplemented with benefits.	• Poverty among persons with disabilities increased during the last decade. • There are additional disability-related costs that put a burden on persons	• Increasing number of early school leavers from secondary and vocational education up to 2023. • At primary and secondary education level, many schools are not able to

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
	• Many employers in the open labour market are still not willing to employ persons with disabilities, or only on a temporary basis.	with disabilities and their families.	provide reasonable accommodation for children with disabilities. • Increasing number of referrals to special schools makes the education system more segregated.
PL	• Despite significant policy efforts, no improvement in the disability employment gap. • Targeted interventions needed, including better support for persons with severe disabilities (economic activity rate is only 4.9 %) and for those in need in rural areas (urban-rural divide reveals a gap of 7.2 pp).	• A new system of assessment of the level of support needs has been introduced and the ban on informal caregivers' taking up employment now lifted. • The implementation of the Personal Assistance law postponed to 2025. • Severe shortage of medical personnel and high unmet medical needs among persons with disabilities.	• Despite investments in higher education for persons with disabilities, their participation in tertiary education continues to be very low (1.8 %). • Specific groups of students with disabilities require immediate attention (e.g. students with disabilities who fled from Ukraine, children and adolescents with psychosocial disabilities and deaf children).
PT	• The high share of lower qualifications among active working-age adults is a concern and persons with disabilities are most likely overrepresented among them. • The new employment quota system for large companies (since 2023), had a greater impact on the retention of employees with disabilities in the private sector than on increasing the number of new hires.	• High poverty rate among persons with disabilities. • Despite high demands, there are no open calls under the new Independent Living Support Scheme. • While the new Mental Health Law emphasises deinstitutionalisation and community-based care, coercive treatment is still possible under the new law.	• There is a lack of systematically collected outcome indicators to measure the quality and level of satisfaction of all stakeholders involved in inclusive education.
RO	• Employment rate for persons with disabilities still low. • Despite tax incentives, financial support to make the workplace accessible, and potentially imposed penalties, employers still have limited interest in hiring persons with disabilities.	• Inadequacy of disability benefit and other social protection measures. • Deinstitutionalisation efforts are moving at a slow pace, with thousands of persons with disabilities still living in institutional care homes (public and private). • Ukrainian refugees with disabilities are in a particularly vulnerable situation.	• Early school leaving rate is among the highest in the EU and disproportionately affects persons with disabilities. • Most children with disabilities attend special schools. • Discrimination against children with disabilities in education continues to be a problem. • The number of support staff in mainstream education remains very low.

MS	Labour market	Social policies	Education and skills
SE	• Widening disability employment gap. • In recent years, decrease in participants in all programmes aimed at unemployed persons with disabilities (allocated funds remained unused). • Gender differences in employment.	• Worse financial situation and increased poverty risk for persons with disabilities. • The number of people who are entitled to personal assistance allowances has decreased. • Persons with disabilities have poorer health and face unequal access to healthcare.	• The disability gap in education is still wide and there are still many barriers to equal education (e.g. lack of support or reasonable accommodation). • Lack of data on students with disabilities and their needs and achievements.
SI	• Older workers with disabilities are disadvantaged, persons with disabilities lack specific skills and education and employers are not keen to employ them. • Lack of disaggregated data to understand trends in the labour market for persons with disabilities. • Lack of adjusted workplaces in the open labour market.	• Funding, organisation and implementation of long-term care and access to the healthcare system remain a problem for persons with disabilities.	• Lack of accessibility for deaf students in mainstream education. • There are no data about changes in teachers' attitudes towards children with special needs, nor how many children have moved from segregated to mainstream education.
SK	• The provision of individualised job-counselling for persons with disabilities needs to be strengthened.	• Residential care for older people with long-term care needs and persons with disabilities is still very common. • The reform of disability assessment as well as the reform of financing for social services have been postponed.	• A reform for a new system of support measures for children with disabilities in education is being implemented, but there are some weaknesses in financing, administration and available guidelines.

2 Analysis of the 2024 Semester documents

2.1 The Autumn Package (2023)

2.1.1 Annual Growth Strategy

The Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2024 (ASGS) was published in November 2023.[17] This framed the Semester in the context of Europe's economy recovering after tackling the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Similarly to previous years, the four strategic principles are:

- Macroeconomic stability;
- Environmental sustainability (green transition);
- Productivity (digital transition); and
- Fairness.

There was only one mention of persons with disabilities in the ASGS 2024:

> 'The talents of women, young and older people, the low-skilled, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged and underrepresented groups are much needed on the labour market' (p. 7)

An important element in the 2024 Semester cycle was to take stock of the ongoing implementation of Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs) and the cohesion policy programmes, exploring how they complement each other in terms of funding and policy outcomes. The aim is to look at complementarities between the RRF and cohesion policy funds, showing how reforms are acting as key enablers for investments at different levels. As was noted in the previous EDE synthesis report, the rapid deployment of substantial financial investment under RRPs poses both opportunities and risks for persons with disabilities; funding must be well targeted to stimulate recovery, yet it must be fair and inclusive in its impact.[18]

This is particularly relevant as the negotiations for the next MFF are already underway. Investments under cohesion policy benefitted persons with disabilities under broader strategic objectives to improve social inclusion in less developed regions. Disparities and inequalities still prevail; therefore, it is important to ensure that implemented projects target persons with disabilities and that they are disability inclusive and compliant with the provisions of the UN CRPD (i.e. the role of the horizontal enabling conditions linked to the EU Charter and the UN CRPD). EDE country experts were asked to provide examples, wherever possible, of how persons with disabilities benefitted from the RRPs and how actions under the RRPs interact with cohesion policy reforms. While access to data proved to be difficult, some examples are provided in the relevant chapter of this synthesis report (see Chapter 2.3).

[17] European Commission (2023) *Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2023*, COM(2023) 901 final, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0901.

[18] European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and Priestley, M., *European Semester 2022 mainstreaming disability equality*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/480741.

2.1.2 The Joint Employment Report

Within the Autumn Package, which marks the launch of a new cycle of the European Semester, the proposal for a Joint Employment Report (JER) is a key document. It provides important evidence of the EU's progress in disability equality mainstreaming. As a marker of progress, the number of references in the JER to the situation of persons with disabilities, or to disability policies, has increased during the past decade. The JER for the 2024 Semester (published in November 2023) contained 161 references, a further increase from 100 references in 2022 (57 references in 2019).[19] This impressive increase is largely due to the inclusion of the disability employment gap indicator in the Social Scoreboard, which has been a significant achievement for disability equality mainstreaming.[20] The JER 2024 recognises that persons with disabilities still face significant barriers in the labour market and highlights that:

> '…further policy efforts and targeted measures, as described in the Disability Employment Package,[21] are needed to improve the labour market situation of persons with disabilities. Therefore, it is key to reinforce the capacities of employment and integration services, promote hiring and combat stereotypes, while ensuring reasonable accommodation at work, depending on their needs.' (p. 13)

In relation to the need to improve access to affordable housing and housing assistance to those in need in the EU, the JER noted that:

> 'Compliance with material condition standards, physical accessibility for persons with disabilities and the creation of inclusive neighbourhoods are prerequisites for housing quality.' (p. 252)

The JER highlights the continued implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights as a policy priority to promote upward social convergence in the EU. To provide a more systematic analysis of employment and social developments in the Member States, the Commission proposal for the JER 2024 includes a stronger country focus in the form of a country-by-country analysis, based on the principles of a Social Convergence Framework. The first stage provides an analysis of Member States' labour market, skills and social challenges in order to identify potential risks to upward social convergence that require deeper analysis at a second stage.[22] Persons with disabilities are mentioned in the first-stage analysis of 22 out of the 27 Member States, namely: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the

[19] European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, *Joint Employment Report 2024 – Commission proposal*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/17157.

[20] The disability employment gap indicator initially adapted the EDE methodology, based on EU-SILC data, but then moved to the use of EU-LFS data as it became available in 2022. See: European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and Priestley, M., *European Semester 2022 mainstreaming disability equality*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/480741.

[21] Disability Employment Package to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities, see: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/persons-disabilities/union-equality-strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030/disability-employment-package-improve-labour-market-outcomes-persons-disabilities_en.

[22] A more detailed second-stage analysis was published by the Commission services in May 2024 for seven Member States (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Romania and Spain,).

Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. In the case of 17 Member States, the disability employment gap was mentioned because it had worsened/remained critical, stagnated or improved. The particularly high rate of poverty is explicitly mentioned in the cases of Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland and the Netherlands. In the Irish first-stage analysis, early school leaving by persons with disabilities was also noted.

The Council's 2023 Decision on the Employment Guidelines[23] emphasised that

> 'the potential of persons with disabilities to contribute to economic growth and social development should be further realised in line with the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which invited Member States to set up employment and adult learning targets for persons with disabilities.' (p. 5)

It will be important to monitor the adult learning targets for persons with disabilities in the upcoming Semester cycle and beyond.

Furthermore, the Guidelines highlighted that

> 'Discrimination in all its forms should be tackled, gender equality ensured and employment of young people supported. Equal access and opportunities for all should be ensured and poverty and social exclusion, in particular that of children, persons with disabilities and the Roma people, should be reduced, in particular by ensuring an effective functioning of labour markets and adequate and inclusive social protection systems, as set out in the Council Recommendation of 8 November 2019 and the Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion, and by removing barriers to inclusive and future-oriented education, training, lifelong learning and labour-market participation, including through investments in early childhood education and care, in line with the European Child Guarantee and the Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care (the 'Barcelona targets for 2030'), and investments in digital and green skills, in line with the Digital Education Action Plan, the Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development and the Council Recommendation on Pathways for School Success' (p. 5)

The JER references Eurostat data showing that 'despite a small decrease in 2022, the AROPE [at risk of poverty or social exclusion] rate remained very high for persons with disabilities (28.8 %)' (p. 23). The JER further notes a continued decrease in social protection benefit expenditure (as a share of GDP) and a declining impact of social transfers on poverty reduction – both are relevant for persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, referring to EDE data, the JER mentions the tertiary education gap between persons with and without disabilities (aged 30-34) with only about a third of persons with disabilities having completed tertiary or equivalent education.[24]

[23] Council Decision (EU) 2023/2528 of 9 October 2023 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/En/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302528.

[24] EDE, European comparative data on persons with disabilities, data 2021.

2.2 The Spring Package (2024)

In June 2024, the European Commission published the Country Reports (prepared by the Commission), the Country Specific Recommendations and some Member States still published their National Reform Programmes (NRPs). Each year, the EDE country fiches provide an assessment of disability issues arising from the Spring plans submitted by the Member States, and from the Commission's responses to them. These reports are prepared by national experts in the EDE network, based on their analyses of the information currently available.[25]

As was documented in previous Semester synthesis reports prepared by ANED/EDE, there has been increasing recognition of the situation of persons with disabilities in the Semester document packages. In 2024, all 27 of the Commission's Semester Country Reports included the disability employment gap as part of the Social Scoreboard. In total, 26 out of 27 Member States included further explicit references to disability issues (for reference, in 2019 all CRs raised disability issues).[26] The number of Country Specific Recommendations referring explicitly to disability in 2024 rose to nine, which again demonstrates increased attention compared to 2022 when there were only five or six passing references (for reference, in 2019 there were 18).[27] This shows that current policy priorities linked to the ongoing interlinking crises still overshadow the visibility of disability inequality in the Semester process in 2024. Considering the persistent inequality gaps persons with disabilities face, the next cycle should re-shift the focus to disability equality mainstreaming, including in the CSRs.

The Commission Communication on the 2024 Spring Package included only two references to disability. It underlined the importance of increasing the labour market participation of persons with disabilities (along with other marginalised groups) and acknowledged the disproportionate impact of the cost-of-living crisis (higher costs of food, energy and transport) and rising inflation on persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups.[28] The Communication calls for continued efforts to reduce poverty, including energy poverty, and suggests addressing the labour shortages by improving the labour market participation of underrepresented groups.

2.2.1 The 2024 (2023) National Reform Programmes (NRPs)

As mentioned above, in April 2023 the European Commission proposed a comprehensive reform of the EU's economic governance rules and as part of the new economic governance framework NRPs will be replaced by the medium-term fiscal structural plans. The 2024 Semester cycle was therefore a transition year as some Member States still published NRPs for 2024, while others did not. A total of 13 Member States published new NRPs in 2024: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia. In the analysis of the EDE country reports, the latest NRPs are considered. These

[25] For countries that did not publish NRPs for 2024, the 2023 NRP was used in the analysis.
[26] The Country Report for SK did not include an explicit reference to disability issues.
[27] The nine Member States that received CSRs with reference to disability are: BE, BG, EE, EL, HU, MT, PL, RO and SE.
[28] European Commission (2024), '2024 European Semester – Spring Package', COM(2024) 600 final, https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2024-european-semester-spring-package-communication_en.

documents provide a key reference point for the Semester analysis by EDE country experts in 2024.

The measures identified in direct reference to disability search terms in the text of the 2024 NRPs and annexes are summarised in Table 22 below, which provides a basis for analysis in the EDE country reports.

Table 2: Text references to disability policies in the 2023/2024 NRPs

MS	National Reform Programme	Key points of relevance to disability
AT	2023	'Sustainability of the long-term care system' discusses several measures in the Care Reform 2022 that are relevant: a hardship supplement for persons with serious mental and/or psychological impairments, expansion of therapy sessions for relatives and ending the crediting of the increased family allowance to the car allowance. 'Employment market outcomes of disadvantaged groups': €30 million will be provided in 2023 and 2024 to support the employment of persons with disabilities. The NRP 2023 discusses the need to expand early childhood education and care (ECEC) and make it more inclusive.
BE	2023	'The National Reform Programme 2023 mentions that an evaluation of all employment aids (including those specifically aimed at jobseekers and workers with disabilities) is currently being finalised and could lead to the revision of certain regulations in order to adapt them to the current realities of the labour market, for the benefit of jobseekers who are far removed from the market.' 'On 1 July 2023, Flanders introduced individually adapted work to increase employment for people with work-limiting disabilities, illnesses or disorders. This reform aims to strengthen the connection between the social and mainstream economies, encouraging businesses to hire individuals with health conditions or occupational disabilities.' 'In the Brussels-Capital Region, a reform of paid educational leave is planned in 2023 to make it more efficient and transform it into a career-wide training tool that is also more inclusive (in terms of gender, disability, online training, etc.)' 'Non-uptake of social assistance: Initiatives are being taken for disability benefits. The disability assessment procedure will be reformed to introduce a multidisciplinary assessment and potential beneficiaries will be better guided to avoid non-uptake.' 'Regarding education, the NRP mentions that the Flemish government is replacing the M Decree with a new decree (*Leersteun*) to better support pupils with special educational needs in mainstream education, effective from September 2023.'
BG	2024	'The updated level of the poverty line for the country will contribute to an increase in financial support for persons with disabilities and social benefits under the Social Assistance Act.' '665 742 persons received monthly financial support according to their degree of disability (monthly average) in 2023.' 'Providing access beyond the scope of health insurance to medical consultations and activities related to the organisation of complex medical monitoring of children with disabilities and chronic diseases, pregnant women with increased medical risk, with pregnancy-related health conditions or the presence of chronic diseases and disabilities. Introducing new screenings for newborn babies.'

MS	National Reform Programme	Key points of relevance to disability
CY	2024	Education: disability is mentioned in reforms and measures for ECEC: the Ministry of Education will 'respond to specific needs of children with special educational needs and of children with disabilities'. Strengthening social services: disability is mentioned in relation to investments into 26 facilities catering for the needs of various groups of people, including people with disabilities. In addition, to support independent living in the community, 10 homes were already established between 2021 and 2023 (for 54 young adults with disabilities), while in the programming period until 2027 an expansion up to a total of 16 homes and 15 individual programmes is targeted for up to 85 persons. In the transition to renewable sources of energy (RSE), the main reforms and investments aim to subsidise the implementation of small-scale energy renovations for households with people with disabilities. Employment incentive schemes, the disability assessment system, the operation of the newly established Autism Centre and the care services for persons with disabilities are included in the Programming Period 2021-2027, under Policy Objective 4, as continuing measures for social inclusion and to tackle poverty. Digitalisation of the public sector, online accessibility is aimed to reach 100 % by 2030. Improving digital education refers to accessible equipment for all students, although the digital education strategy and the digital transformation of school units are not linked to assistive technology or accessibility and the digital inclusion of learners with disabilities. This is despite the fact that assistive technology is provided by the Ministry of Education.
CZ	2024	The sheltered employment market is being reformed to streamline the provision of the subsidy for employing persons with disabilities in sheltered employment and to prevent the most significant abuses in the provision of this socially necessary support. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) will continue to implement the Support for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities project, which both provides support to persons with disabilities themselves and works with potential employers of these persons to eliminate stereotypes and other barriers to employing them in the open labour market.
DE	2024	The NRP 2024 is somewhat lacking in references to the situation of persons with disabilities. However, the accessibility of electronic administrative services is relevant in the NRP and will be implemented by law.
DK	2023	The NRP 2023 mentions that the government will implement a special policy to get more people with disabilities into employment. Furthermore, it mentions that it must continue with specialisation planning also in order to provide appropriate services for people with very specific issues.

MS	National Reform Programme	Key points of relevance to disability
EE	2023	The following essential target was set: 'Falling ill or becoming disabled: ≤ 60.7 %'. Increasing social cohesion: 'Creating opportunities for people with special needs (including increasing the accessibility of the education system and supporting labour market participation)'. 'Developing integrated services and interventions to improve the wellbeing of children (including children with special needs, behavioural problems and trauma experiences) and replacing institutional care with family-based care.' 'Supporting the social engagement of people with special needs (incl. empowering advocacy organisations of people with special needs).' 'Increasing the accessibility of Estonian culture in physical and e-environments for different target groups (incl. compatriots, people with a non-Estonian linguistic and cultural background, people with special needs) and establishing common repositories for museums.'
EL	2024	In 2024 the NRP will be replaced with the medium-term fiscal structural plan.
ES	2023	Important policy development: Spain's Strategy on Disability 2022-2030 and the updated procedure from 2022 for the assessment of disability. Policies and initiatives in the area of education: CODI and the School Code 4.0 programmes to increase digital competences in schools, the PROA+ programme to reduce early school leavers, the Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Vocational Training, the Acreditas programme to obtain official recognition of professional competences, the new law on university education (LOSU) and the Microcreds plan aimed at enabling people to gain certified skills by completing short courses at universities. Initiatives on employment: Law on Employment, Article 54 on persons with disabilities seeking employment services considered them a priority recipient of these services, as well as seeking to promote their employability and the implementation of supported employment services. There is a national strategy to promote self-employment that considers self-employed workers with disabilities as one of the target groups.
FI	2024	The latest NRP from 2024 still mentions social enterprise to boost the employment of persons with disabilities and still contains the scheme and the targets (the tables are updated twice a year and the data used here are from November 2023, no update by 11 June 2024).
FR	2023	The NRP 2023 deals with disability in the scope of a general overview of the reforms implemented in France and more specifically in the way France is addressing the challenge of modernising the welfare state for a fairer society. This includes employment preservation as a lever for inclusion, in relation to which persons with disabilities are considered as 'far from employment', The NRP also addresses disability as a factor of general exclusion.
HR	2024	In 2024 NRP will be replaced with the medium-term fiscal structural plan.
HU	2024	In 2024 NRP will be replaced with the medium-term fiscal structural plan.

MS	National Reform Programme	Key points of relevance to disability
IE	2024	The Pathways to Work Strategy aims to support people back to work following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to help those who faced obstacles in accessing the labour market before the onset of the pandemic, for example, people with disabilities. The JobPlus financial package for employers has been extended to incentivise the recruitment of young persons with disabilities, among other groups. The Work Placement Experience Programme includes recipients of the Disability Allowance (DA). The Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024 (CES) coordinates policy and action in relation to the employment of people with disabilities in Ireland. Under CES, the Government committed to doubling the target for employment of people with disabilities in the public service from 3 % to 6 %.
IT	2023	Policies in favour of persons with disabilities: the implementation, by March 2024, of the Disability Enabling Law (delegation law for disability 22 December 2021, no. 227); the establishment of a Guarantor of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the strengthening of public services for inclusion and accessibility; the disability assessment and the review of the basic evaluation process and multidimensional assessment of disability with the implementation of an individual, personalised and participatory life plan.
LT	2023	The NRP 2023 highlights the 'Client-oriented employment support' reform. The planned disability assessment reform introduced a new model of disability assessment that focuses on the assessment of environmental barriers, participation and response to the individual's needs. The reform is expected to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities to integrate them into the open labour market and to provide them with better access to social services. The goal of the single person benefit is to reduce poverty and social exclusion. It is of significance considering the high poverty risk for persons with disabilities in general.
LU	2024	A Tax Credit Equivalent is paid to each adult beneficiary of the social inclusion revenue (REVIS) or the income for persons with severe disabilities (RPGH). REVIS and RPGH will continue to be regularly adjusted in line with changes in the average level of salaries. Revision of the legislative provisions to ensure that the heirs of the beneficiary of the RPGH no longer need to reimburse the funds paid by the National Solidarity Fund. Assistance for inclusion in employment. The aim of this assistance is to reduce the unemployment rate of people with the status of workers with disabilities. The creation of a personal assistance budget is planned to enable all persons with disabilities to finance the aids they need independently and according to their own choices.
LV	2024	Persons with disabilities are referred to in section 2.1.5 of the report 'Social Protection' concerning changes made or planned, mainly in the area of social benefits and pensions. For example, the amount of the lump-sum allowance to enable young people with disabilities to start an independent life is set at 60 % of the median minimum income, the granting of a gradual supplement to the disability pension for the length of insurance accumulated up to 31 December 1995, a supplement to the state family allowance for children with disabilities, and an increase in the assistant's remuneration.

MS	National Reform Programme	Key points of relevance to disability
MT	2024	Increased carer grant for parents who provide care for their children with severe disabilities over 16 years of age. Full cost of living adjustments (COLA) to the Increased Carers' Allowance and the Carers' Allowance, respectively. COLA and increase to the three types of Disability Allowances. New Hope Guarantee Scheme whereby the Government acts as a guarantor for a life insurance policy, required for home loans, to help individuals with medical conditions or disabilities become homeowners. Eligible adults born with hearing disabilities now have access to bilateral hearing aids. Promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce through legislative measures, Jobsplus and the Lino Spiteri Foundation. The establishment of the Malta Business Disability Forum (MBDF) by the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability which brings together employer organisations, academics, the Malta Federation of Organisations Persons with Disability (MFOPD), and the Commissioner for Mental Health. Implementation of Freedom to Live, the Malta 2021-2030 National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons. Agenzija Sapport's 'Way to Work' service which has supported 76 persons with disabilities seeking employment, with 34 actively participating.
NL	2023	Regional mobility teams (which offer more personal support to workers who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic) are required to target all vulnerable workers; people with disabilities who are eligible for the job agreement and quota scheme are specifically mentioned as a target group.
PL	2023	The NRP foresees improved efficiency of labour market institutions in providing vocational support to persons with disabilities and through reforms to the Labour Code which introduced a broader range of flexible working arrangements (mainly remote work and flexible working time) in accordance with Directive 2019/1158. In the case of parents of children with disabilities who request flexible working arrangements because of their care obligations, employers must agree to the request.
PT	2023	The government has established the goal of promoting the autonomy and inclusion of persons with disabilities and outlined the approval of the regulation of a new scheme lowering the age threshold for the old-age pension on grounds of disability in 2022. The NRP 2023 and the RRP 2023 mention other measures included in the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025. One of them is the introduction of a definitive Independent Living Support Scheme, which was scheduled for 2023. Other measures included the announcement of: 1) the launch of a programme to support the recruitment and employability of persons with disabilities and 2) other regional initiatives such as the pilot project 'Ageing in Place', as part of the Regional Strategy to Fight Poverty and Social Exclusion in Azores. The latter specifically seeks to provide non-institutionalised care for older people and persons with disabilities.

MS	National Reform Programme	Key points of relevance to disability
RO	2023	The NRP 2023 reports on measures aiming to facilitate the labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities, including through the issuing of vouchers for purchasing assistive technologies, provision of professional guidance and counselling services, employment mediation and vocational training. The NRP highlights the impact that updating the reference social index (in 2022 and 2023) has had upon social benefits, including those received by persons with disabilities and / or their carers. Other social benefits that have been updated include child allowance and the fostering allowance, both of which have a differentiated amount for children with disabilities.
SE	2023	Legislative amendments to strengthen the right to personal assistance are expected to lead to 2 000 new recipients of the assistance allowance and to more people being entitled to municipal personal assistance. Strategy for systematic follow-up of disability policy, for the years 2021-2031. Implementation of the Accessibility Directive. A greater supply of accessible products and services is expected to lead to better opportunities for people with disabilities to have full access to society on equal terms with others.
SI	2023	The NRP 2023 mentions that a public consultation will take place regarding the conceptual orientations for changing the pension and disability insurance system to ensure greater fairness and resilience. Among the key partners, the document also mentions disabled people's organisations (DPOs). There is also a plan to 'modernise the disability insurance system', to 'increase the inclusion of individuals with reduced work capacity in the labour market (by establishing a model for more effective occupational rehabilitation) and to improve their social situation'. To simplify procedures and increase the social security of particularly vulnerable target groups, in which older people and people with disabilities, pensioners who retired on grounds of disability and single pensioners predominate, changing the supplementary allowance regulation is considered with the aim of reaching all potential beneficiaries and contributing more to the elimination of poverty among pensioners and individuals who are unable to work.
SK	2024	Slovakia is regularly among the best performing countries in the EU on income inequality and on the risk of poverty and social exclusion. At the same time, however, some groups, such as children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, single parents with children and people with disabilities, face a significantly higher risk of poverty or social exclusion than the rest of the population and may not be sufficiently captured in statistical surveys.

2.2.2 The Commission Country Reports

The analytical phase of the Semester includes Country Reports prepared by Commission staff. These were published most recently in June 2024.[29] These reports highlight key challenges, gaps and promising practices that feed into the consideration of recommendations to the Member States. Increasing the attention given to disability

[29] European Commission (2024), '2024 European Semester: Country Reports', https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2024-european-semester-country-reports_en.

equality in these analytical reports in recent years and enhancing the quality of analysis are important for mainstreaming disability in the Semester process.

Since 2022, all the Country Reports refer to the disability employment gap indicator in the Social Scoreboard supporting the European Pillar of Social Rights, which classifies Member States' performance on a seven-point scale (from 'critical situation' to 'best performers'). This has been an important step forward in disability equality mainstreaming for the Semester. The number of direct text references varies considerably, from none in the Slovakia report (apart from the Scoreboard indicator) to six or more in the reports for Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands and Romania. Table 3 shows the ways in which disability was explicitly referred to in each of the 2024 Country Reports.

Most of the references to persons with disabilities in the Country Reports relate to the disability employment gap and the difficulties they face to enter the labour market. The importance of investing in skills development (upskilling and re-skilling) for persons with disabilities was mentioned in the Country Reports for Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Malta and Romania. It is now quite clearly articulated as a policy objective to fill existing labour shortages through the activation of persons with disabilities, along with other underrepresented, long-term unemployed groups (e.g. Roma people, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and women).

Amid the cost-of-living crisis, the high rates of poverty and social exclusion among persons with disabilities was another recurring topic in the 2024 Country Reports, often linked to the economic inactivity of persons with disabilities and the inadequacy of social benefits. Planned ESF+ funded active inclusion programmes, anti-poverty and social inclusion measures directly supporting persons with disabilities (such as access to health and social care services and deinstitutionalisation) were highlighted for Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Malta, Spain and Sweden. As part of the RRP reforms, Romania adopted guides for the deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities and the prevention of institutionalisation.

Table 3: Disability references in the 2024 Country Reports

MS	Disability employment gap (2022)	Sample extracts from the Country Report
AT	On average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Funding of EUR 114 million from the European Social Fund Plus will help support active labour market integration and promote active inclusion, including of persons with disabilities.' There are also several indirect references to the unequal labour market participation and skills levels of various groups (pp. 67-68). • Differential risk of poverty and social exclusion between different groups. • Addressing staff shortages, equal opportunities and improving basic skills in education. • Low participation rate in ECEC. • (De)institutionalisation and the need for greater availability of personal assistance to support independent living, which were discussed in the 2022 Country Report.

BE	Critical situation	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'A set of new measures aim to ease access to the Belgian federal public administration. The recruitment process has been also adapted, aiming to facilitate access to the civil service by applicants with disabilities.' • 'The AROPE gap between persons with and without disabilities increased and was one of the biggest in the EU in 2022 (at 20.3 pps vs the EU average of 10.5 pps).'
BG	To watch	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'The inactive population varies significantly across regions and is particularly high among Roma, persons with disabilities and for those with lower educational attainment.' • 'Vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, those in rural areas, and the Roma population face a heightened risk of poverty.' • 'Bulgaria grapples with significant poverty and inequality challenges, notably affecting vulnerable groups such as children, older people, persons with disabilities, and Roma communities. Policy measures have aimed to improve support for vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities, contributing to a broader social protection system in a country with traditionally low social transfers.' • 'Introducing effective activation policies; reducing the employment gap for persons with disabilities as well as further improving access to healthcare and social services, especially for disadvantaged groups such as Roma.' • 'Bulgaria's labour market continued its strong performance in 2023, but challenges remain for people in vulnerable situations such as young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), persons with disabilities, and the Roma population.' • Poverty: '…Other particularly affected groups are persons with disabilities (49.9 % AROPE vs 28.8 % in the EU in 2022, down to 42.4 % in 2023)…'
CY	On average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'The employment gap between people with and without disabilities has been above the EU average since 2021.'
CZ	On average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Access to quality community-based services remains limited for some people in need, notably women, older people and persons with disabilities. The Czech government approved the national deinstitutionalisation action plan which aims to provide more opportunities for independent living and community-based services.' There is one indirect reference with regard to efforts to make education more inclusive.
DE	Better than average	**Direct references to disability in the Country report** • 'There is scope to reduce the gap in the employment rate of persons with disabilities.' There were indirect references to disability issues with regard to ESF+ support for measures which are focused on improving equal access to education and training as well as improving the quality, inclusiveness and labour market relevance of education and training.
DK	Best performers	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • '…the disability employment gap is 9.9 pp.'
EE	To watch	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Estonia has the highest proportion of persons with disabilities not able to have their care needs met.' • 'The AROPE rate of people with a disability increased in 2022 and it is one of the highest in the EU.' • 'To support upward social convergence, strengthening social protection and tackling inequalities, by addressing old-age poverty, increasing support for people with disabilities, and extending the

		coverage of unemployment benefits, in particular to those with short work spells and in non-standard forms of work.' • 'Ongoing challenges include ensuring the accessibility of health data to everyone (including people with disabilities) and making all relevant portals accessible on mobile devices' • 'In 2022, the disability employment gap rose significantly, by 7.5 percentage points (pps), interrupting a steady decline since 2016 and exceeding the EU average for the first time in 2022 (26.2 % vs 21.4 % in the EU) (96). The latest data points to a significantly lower disability employment gap in Estonia for 2023 (at 20.2 pps).' (p. 64)
EL	On average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Despite recent increases in the employment rate, getting into work or training is still particularly challenging for long-term unemployed people, people with a disability, young people and women.' • 'Although the long-term unemployment component is also decreasing, it is among the highest in the EU (6.2 % in 2023 vs 2.1 % in the EU). This particularly affects women and persons with disabilities (respectively 63.3 % and 64.6 % of the long-term unemployed in 2022).' • 'Action under EU instruments help support access to social and health services' makes reference to key initiatives targeting persons with disabilities under RRP, such as personal assistance, early childhood intervention and expansion of mental health services.
ES	Best performers	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • '…despite decreasing since 2021, the share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) ranked among the highest in the EU (ES: 26 % vs. EU: 21.6 % in 2022)' and they are even higher for persons with disabilities (30 %). EU cohesion policy funds, such as the European Social Funds (ESF) are driving anti-poverty and anti-discrimination measures targeted at groups in a vulnerable situation, such as persons with disabilities.
FI	Better than average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • Persons with disabilities are specifically mentioned only in relation to the labour market measures which in Finland build on European Social Fund (ESF). According to the CR, Finland aims to activate people to find employment by allowing more flexibility for people with partial work ability and by making changes so that it is possible to better combine different benefits, services and work income.
FR	On average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Strengthening mentoring programmes for new teachers and providing robust initial and continuous training that aligns with the changing needs of students, including those with a disability'.
HR	Critical situation	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • The key challenges are barriers to accessing the labour market and increasing the disability employment gap. 'The disability employment gap in 2023 was 39.2 percentage points (pps), (increasing from 36 pps in 2022, which was already above the EU average of 21.4 pps) and has increased by 10.5 pps since 2021.' • Among the groups with a high risk of poverty, persons with disabilities are explicitly mentioned: 'The AROPE rate for persons with disabilities increased in 2023 to 37.5 % (from 35.3 % in 2022) and it remains significantly higher than for persons without disabilities (a 22.6 pps gap in 2023, up from 21.5 pps in 2022).'
HU	Critical situation	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Persons with a disability, Roma and the low-educated face challenges to participate in training and find work.' • 'Labour market performance continues to be generally favourable. However, the disability employment gap remains substantial…' • 'The disability employment gap is well above the EU average.'

		• 'The disability employment gap was among the highest in the EU in 2022, at 32.4 percentage points (pps) and remains high, at 29.6 pp in 2023.' • 'The early school leaving rate is above the EU average, and it is significantly higher in rural areas and among disadvantaged groups, especially among Roma and persons with a disability.' • 'Labour market challenges mainly concern a few well-defined vulnerable groups, such as low-skilled people, NEETs, Roma, persons with disabilities, women, especially young people and those with care responsibilities, concentrating mostly in the least developed regions. Mapping these groups, assessing their needs and addressing them with more targeted action could contribute to easing labour shortages.'
IE	Critical situation	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • The CR 2024 evidences the disability employment gap in Ireland as the largest in the EU in 2022 at 37 pp. • Discrimination in the workplace, available jobs that are inadequate to lift people with disabilities out of poverty and potential loss of benefits are contributing factors to the employment gap. • The at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate for persons with disabilities increased from 33.9 % in 2020 to 39.5 % in 2022. • Early school leaving remains high among people with disabilities, while non-vulnerable groups in Ireland have among the lowest rates in the EU.
IT	Best performers	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Boosting economic and social resilience by carrying out reforms and investments to strengthen basic skills, expand tertiary education and reduce skills mismatches with specific training programmes, as well as measures to reduce poverty and give greater autonomy to older people and persons with disabilities.' • 'By providing professional training (*formazione professionalizzante*) to students, the measure aims to boost economic development and the competitiveness of the local economy.' Challenges remain as regards access to vocational education for persons with disabilities. • 'Italy is taking measures to reduce poverty and give greater autonomy to older people and persons with disabilities. Under the RRP, Italy has started delivering on measures to boost economic and social resilience, including a reform of services for non-self-sufficient older people, a reform of the framework law on disability, and full implementation of the measures under the reform to tackle undeclared work.' • 'Using cohesion policy funds, the national programmes *Inclusion and Poverty Reduction* and *Youth, Women and Jobs* support vulnerable groups such as migrants, people in undeclared work and persons with disabilities by providing pathways to job market inclusion.'
LT	Critical situation	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Significant efforts are needed to tackle high poverty risks among the unemployed and older people as well as people with a disability.' • 'People with a disability face high poverty risks, driven by their relatively weaker labour market situation and low adequacy of social benefits.' • 'Recent reforms in the assessment of disability (as of 2024) and in the participation of persons with disabilities in an open labour market (as of 2023), along with efforts to improve the adequacy of the minimum income could help address the high levels of poverty for persons with disabilities.'
LU	Best performers	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • The only reference to disability in the CR 2024 is that there was a disability employment gap of 8.5 percentage points in the population aged 20-64 in 2022.

LV	On average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Inequality and poverty remain high.' 'Pensions are among the lowest in the EU compared with wages… Single-adult households with dependent children and people with disabilities are also particularly vulnerable to poverty.'
MT	To watch	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • Although the Maltese labour market is performing well, some groups such as persons with disabilities are not performing as well as the rest of the population. 'Persons with disabilities endure an employment gap that is 8.7 pps above the EU average at 30.1 pps.' 'The gender and disability employment gaps in Malta remain among the widest in the EU. Only half of the people of working age with disabilities are active in the labour market.' • Malta has made use of funds to install a number of multi-sensory learning rooms for students with severe disabilities with the aim of supporting the integration of students with disabilities in mainstream education. Funds were also used to implement support for persons with disabilities once they leave school. • In 2022, the at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion rate for the total population stood at 20.1 %, which is slightly below the EU average. However, this rate remained high for persons with disabilities at 36 %. • Over the 2014-2020 period, nearly 11 000 people 'received support from active inclusion and anti-poverty measures, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) in Malta.' Seventeen per cent of those who received support were persons with disabilities. • The labour market performs well but the low participation of women and persons with disabilities affects labour shortages and social cohesion. The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) helps in the promotion of employment and activation measures amongst different groups, including persons with disabilities. 'The RRP also aims to improve basic skills and literacy, track early school leavers, enhance online training, and adapt educational infrastructure for students with disabilities.' • At 30.1 percentage points in 2022, the disability employment gap is above the EU average.
NL	On average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Ensuring a level playing field between employees and the self-employed by introducing mandatory disability insurance for the self-employed and by taking measures to tackle bogus self-employment.' 'To improve social protection for the self-employed, the Netherlands included a reform in its recovery and resilience plan (RRP) to introduce mandatory disability insurance for this group.' • 'Although the disability employment gap closed slightly in 2022, it remains above the EU average (25.2 percentage points (pps) vs 21.4 pps).'
PL	To watch	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • The CR addresses disability explicitly in relation to the labour market, namely continuous limited participation in the labour market of persons with disabilities. • The CR recommends targeted measures addressed at groups with low labour market participation. • The CR mentions the disability gap in education.
PT	Best performers	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** The only mention concerning persons with disabilities highlights that the country performs better than the EU average in terms of the disability employment gap.
RO	To watch	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • While the EU average disability employment gap (age 20-64) stands at 21.5 points, Romania's is 29.2. • 'The low effectiveness of public employment services holds back reskilling, upskilling and labour-market participation.' In particular, this

		affects women and marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities, who are 'less likely than other jobseekers to find work after participating in active labour market policy measures.' • Persons with disabilities are among the groups most affected by economic precarity and exclusion. • 'Under RRP reforms, Romania adopted guides for the deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities and the prevention of institutionalisation. The government has also agreed on a national long-term care strategy.' • '16.4 % of persons with disabilities (vs 4.1 % in the EU) report unmet needs for medical care, while a lack of community-based social services hinders the deinstitutionalisation process.' • 'The early school leaving rate is among the highest in the EU (16.6 % vs 9.5 % in the EU in 2023)… and disproportionately affects persons with disabilities', alongside other marginalised and/or vulnerable groups.
SE	To watch	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • 'Sweden still faces difficulties in integrating vulnerable people into the labour market. The disability employment gap widened in 2022 and is above the EU average.' • 'The Swedish European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) programme specifically aims to activate those people who are still furthest away from the labour market, including persons with disabilities, newly arrived migrants and long-term unemployed people.'
SI	Better than average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** • Compared to previous reports, the disability employment gap is closing; it was 21.7 pp in 2020 then decreased to 21.1 pp in 2021 and to 18.8 pp in 2022, and 2023 it was 17.3 pp • 'The housing cost overburden rate was at a generally low level in 2023 (3.7 %). However, housing affordability does not only affect vulnerable groups, such as single person households, people with disabilities or migrants, but has also become and remains a concern for others. While decreasing by 1.3 pp from 2022, the housing cost overburden rate of single-parent households remained relatively high at 11.2 % in 2023.'
SK	On average	**Direct references to disability in the Country Report** In the CR 2024 for Slovakia, there are no explicit statements concerning the education, labour market participation or social situation of persons with disabilities.

2.2.3 The Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs)

Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) were published for all Member States in June 2024.[30] Disability is explicitly mentioned in nine CSR fiches, namely Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania and Sweden. This provides quite good visibility for disability issues, amid the pressing challenges faced by the EU, such as the energy crisis and the unstable geopolitical situation.

Most CSR references linked to persons with disabilities refer to their participation in the labour market to address labour shortages. The CSRs for Hungary and Sweden mention the disability employment gap and the importance of accessible upskilling opportunities. The CSRs for Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Romania refer to high unemployment rates while calling for the effectiveness of labour market activation for

[30] European Commission (2024), '2024 European Semester: Country Specific Recommendations / Commission Recommendations', https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2024-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations_en.

persons with disabilities to be improved. In the CSRs for Greece and Sweden, the role of EU cohesion policy funds (ESF+) is highlighted as a tool to accelerate labour market inclusion for persons with disabilities.

The CSR for Belgium mentions disability in relation to the integration challenges of disadvantaged groups, including people who attained a lower level of education, who come from a migrant background or who have disabilities. The CSR for Estonia mentions disability in reference to the weak social protection for older people, persons with disabilities and people in non-standard forms of work. There are other recommendations relevant for persons with disabilities, for example the CSR for Poland highlights the gendered dimension of long-term care within an ageing society which justifies the need to introduce better access to formal home care and community-based home care.

Table 4: Disability references in the 2024 CSRs

MS	Country Specific Recommendation
AT	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Improve labour market outcomes for disadvantaged groups. • Simplify and rationalise fiscal relationships and responsibilities across layers of government.
BE	**The CSR mentions disability in reference to the integration challenges of disadvantaged groups, including people who attained a lower level of education, who come from a migrant background or who have disabilities.**
BG	**The CSR mentions disability in reference to unemployment rates among vulnerable groups.** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Accelerate the implementation of cohesion policy programmes and the recovery and resilience plan. • Improve education and training, including disadvantaged groups. • Address labour shortages and improve workers' skills to boost competitiveness and support the green transition.
CY	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Ensure that the nationally financed current expenditure takes into account support for affected and at-risk households and to people fleeing Ukraine. • Energy support measures should be targeted at protecting at-risk households, preserve incentives for energy savings. • Investments in labour market activation and the social integration of vulnerable groups should continue to be implemented.
CZ	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Strengthen the competitiveness of the economy by addressing skills mismatches, and by increasing the labour market participation of underrepresented groups. • Support for people fleeing Ukraine.
DE	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Quality and inclusiveness of education, training and lifelong learning particularly for disadvantaged groups. • Active inclusion and improving employability is a priority. • The CSR emphasises the importance of implementing the RRP outlined in 2021.
DK	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR.**
EE	**The CSR mentions disability in reference to the weak social protection for older people, persons with disabilities and people in non-standard forms of work and with short work spells.** Key recommendations of relevance include:

MS	Country Specific Recommendation
	• Ensuring adequate mitigation measures, including for pensions. • Increasing the adequacy of the social protection system could reduce poverty and inequalities.
EL	**The CSR mentions disability in reference to the acceleration of the implementation of cohesion policy programmes. The report acknowledges the large share of persons with disabilities in long-term unemployment and persistent obstacles to accessing the labour market and training.** Key recommendations of relevance include: • The need to improve quality of education and to address socio-economic disparities to equip young people with the basic skills needed for employability and life.
ES	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Increase consumption taxes while protecting vulnerable individuals with targeted compensatory measures. • Disability should be included as a mainstream dimension *in relation to employment:* (1) implementing and simplifying effective hiring incentives, (2) implementing effective skills development initiatives, (3) improving effective employment services, (4) reinforcing unemployment protection, in particular for atypical workers. • Disability should be included as a mainstream dimension in relation to education: (1) reducing early school leaving; (2) improving educational outcomes and reducing regional disparities; (3) increasing cooperation between education and business to provide the labour market with relevant skills and qualifications; (4) increasing access to digital learning; (5) improving skills development, especially in the area of the green transition. • Disability should be included as a mainstream dimension in relation to social protection and healthcare: (1) improving coordination and cooperation between administrations; (2) improving coverage and adequacy of minimum income schemes; (3) improving family support; (4) improving sustainable transport; (5) improving electrification of buildings and electromobility.
FI	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Make reforms in the social security system to enhance the effectiveness of social benefits, which would improve work incentives. • Ensure that the reform of social and healthcare services improves access to and delivery of services and tackles inefficiencies.
FR	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Investment in the green and digital transitions. • Implementation of the RRP and cohesion policy programmes, which include actions on the labour market and targeting investments in upskilling and reskilling. • Fostering participation in training, improving the performance and equity of the education system and providing training for the teaching profession. • Raising the level of basic skills (work-based learning options adapting resources and methods to the needs of disadvantaged students).
HR	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** The trend of the employment rate of persons with disabilities is not mentioned.
HU	**The CSR mentions disability with regard to the disability employment gap and the barriers in accessing upskilling opportunities and entering the labour market.** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Improve educational attainment levels as well as access to effective active labour market measures, in particular upskilling and reskilling opportunities for the most disadvantaged groups.
IE	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Address delays to allow for implementation of the RRP, including REPowerEU. • Increase investment in drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. • Continue targeted support for households most vulnerable to energy price hikes.

MS	Country Specific Recommendation
	• Support for people fleeing Ukraine. • Progress on implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. • Facilitate access to social services and develop targeted skills measures for the most disadvantaged groups to address labour shortages, poverty and social exclusion. There were no new recommendations addressing labour market or social policy issues.
IT	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Strengthen administrative capacity to manage EU funds, accelerate investments and maintain momentum in the implementation of reforms and accelerate the implementation of cohesion policy programmes. • Tackle negative demographic trends including by attracting and retaining high-skilled workers and by addressing labour market challenges, with regard to women, young people and in-work poverty, notably of workers with non-standard contracts. • Define an industrial and development strategy to reduce the territorial divide by streamlining current policy measures and by considering key infrastructure projects as well as strategic value chains.
LT	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Improve health outcomes and the resilience of the health system by strengthening primary care and expanding preventive care. • Increase the adequacy of old-age pensions, while maintaining the sustainability of the pension system. • Address regional disparities by promoting cooperation among municipalities in improving access to public services, including public transport.
LU	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Action to improve the performance and equity of the school education system, including by adapting teaching to the needs of disadvantaged students and those from various linguistic backgrounds.
LV	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Strengthening the adequacy of healthcare and social protection.
MT	**The CSR mentions disability with regard to the aim of increasing the skill levels of the population and thus easing labour shortages. Furthermore, the social and labour market integration of vulnerable groups, such as non-EU nationals and people with disabilities, needs to continue to be promoted.** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Take into account continued temporary and targeted support to households and firms most vulnerable to energy price hikes and to people fleeing Ukraine. • Take action to wind down the emergency energy support measures in force, using the related savings to reduce the government deficit, as soon as possible in 2023 and 2024. • Strengthen the quality of education by focusing on basic skills, addressing teacher shortages and prioritising the professional development of teachers to better address the learning needs of students. • Boost the labour market relevance of Malta's education and training systems in close cooperation with the social partners, which is key to reducing the low educational outcomes and the severe shortage and mismatch of skills.
NL	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Address the expected increase in age-related expenditure by making the long-term care system more cost-effective. • Address structural and sector-specific labour and skills shortages, including by tapping into under-utilised labour potential, and by encouraging mobility to high-productivity sectors and sectors related to societal challenges. • Improve basic skills, including by addressing teacher shortages and tailored support to disadvantaged schools.

MS	Country Specific Recommendation
PL	**The CSR addresses disability explicitly in relation to the labour market. It calls for targeted measures to increase labour market participation among the groups with the lowest employment rates such as persons with disabilities and women. Furthermore, the analysis highlights the gendered dimension of long-term care within an ageing society and justifies the need to introduce better access to formal home care and community-based home care as measures to stimulate women's labour market participation.**
PT	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Accelerate the implementation of the RRP. • Strengthen investments in education and training. • Target active labour market policies. • Ensure equal access to education, health and social services. • Alleviate energy poverty.
RO	**The CSR highlights that it is particularly relevant to improve the effectiveness of labour market activation for persons with disabilities, among other vulnerable and marginalised groups. The CSR states that the accessibility and quality of social and long-term care, as well as health services across the country for vulnerable groups, need improving, while deinstitutionalisation measures need accelerating.**
SE	**Disability is mentioned in the CSR in relation to the disability employment gap and ESF+ programmes to accelerate the labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities.** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Improve the educational performance of students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds by addressing the persistent shortage of qualified teachers. • Take measures to develop the skills of the labour force, especially for people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and migrants, through targeted policies and resources to improve their integration into the labour market. • Prioritise digitalisation and actively promote e-governance, which can provide easier access to government services
SI	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare, long-term care and the pension system by better coordinating public investment planning across sectors and ministries.
SK	**No direct reference to disability in the CSR** Key recommendations of relevance include: • Strengthen active labour market policies to combat long-term unemployment. • Provide quality and affordable early childhood education and care for children under the age of three. • Strengthen the teaching of basic skills, including for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as from marginalised Roma communities. • Increase the availability and use of affordable high-quality early childhood education and care for children under the age of three.

2.3 Update on investment priorities in relation to disability

2.3.1 The role of cohesion policy funds

During the past decade disability equality has been mainstreamed during the use of EU Structural Funds.[31] Funds provided by the European Union facilitated access to rights and the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, by developing community-

[31] Quinn, G., & Doyle, S. (2012), 'Taking the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities seriously: the past and future of the EU structural funds as a tool to achieve community living' *The Equal Rights Review*, *9*, 69-94; McEvoy, E. (2020), EU structural and investment funds and disability' *Research Handbook on EU Disability Law*, Edward Elgar Publishing.

based services (Article 19 CRPD), providing vocational training and employment opportunities (Article 27 CRPD) and creating accessible physical and digital environments (Article 9 CRPD), among others. To support the implementation of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 and of the UN CRPD, the EU continues to promote the use of EU funding by the Member States as provided for in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. For example, in 2024, a new toolkit was released by the European Commission on 'Using the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for staff training in independent living support'.[32]

The Common Provisions Regulation[33] for shared management funds includes a horizontal enabling condition on the 'Implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UN CRPD) in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC'. For the fulfilment of the UN CRPD-related conditionality, Annex III requires that Member States put in place a national framework for the implementation of the UN CRPD that includes:

- objectives with measurable goals, data collection and monitoring mechanisms;
- arrangements to ensure that the accessibility policy, legislation and standards are properly reflected in the preparation and implementation of the programmes; and
- reporting arrangements to the monitoring committee regarding cases of non-compliance of operations supported by the funds with the UN CRPD.

It is beyond the scope of the EDE Semester country reports to provide a comprehensive overview of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) projects that target or are relevant for persons with disabilities in the 2021-2027 period.[34] However, country experts mention some ongoing investments that can serve as an indication of Member States' priorities. Countries where the disability employment and poverty (social exclusion) gaps are the largest, should be encouraged to launch calls for proposals with the aim of improving the situation of persons with disabilities.

The four main areas of ongoing investment from ESF+ that are directly relevant to persons with disabilities as mentioned in the EDE country reports are:

- labour market participation of persons with disabilities;
- deinstitutionalisation/transition to community-based care services;
- training for employees of social and care services; and
- improving access to inclusive education.

For example, in Slovenia, the European Social Fund will be used to support active labour market measures, focusing on young people, especially those neither in employment nor in education and training, and vulnerable groups, such as the long-

[32] European Commission (2024), *Toolkit: Using the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for staff training in independent living support*, 86d1966b-6ea1-4604-8190-399ac601cf6b_en.

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

[34] Such an assessment could take place as a flagship initiative of the EU Disability Strategy 2021-2030 post-2024. It would be interesting to know how ESIF-funded projects, e.g. on deinstitutionalisation, have impacted the lives of persons with disabilities.

term unemployed. Persons with disabilities are covered under this group, but it is not clear how many of them will benefit from programmes financed under ESF+.

In Slovakia, there are several large-scale ESF+ projects, including one that focuses on enhancing employability through financial incentives. While the project has a broader scope, it contains elements specifically targeted at support for employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market by providing financial compensation to sheltered workshops/workplaces for placing their employees with disabilities in the open labour market.[35] This is a good example of designing disability-inclusive programmes.

In recent years, a series of fundamental rights issues have been identified by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), legal scholars and the European Ombudsman[36] in relation to the use of EU funds, such as investment in segregating facilities for different vulnerable groups (e.g. persons with disabilities, Roma people, children or refugees).[37] The EDE country expert for Austria reported that the use of EU structural funds to construct or renovate segregated institutions for persons with disabilities was criticised in the 2023 Concluding Observations by the UN CRPD Committee to Austria and NGOs submitted a complaint directly to the European Commission.

In 2024 in Czechia, there were two Integrated Regional Operational Programmes (IROP) calls open on supporting equal access to inclusive education and quality educational advisory services. The calls included measures enabling the transition of future graduates into an independent way of life, as well as school counselling facilities.[38]

2.3.2 Investments under the Recovery and Resilience Facility

There are new funding opportunities under the Recovery plan NextGenerationEU which hold immense opportunities for improving the situation of persons with disabilities, but there are also some risks if investments are not disability-inclusive. It is important to keep in mind that the legal safeguards are much looser in relation to the use of the RRF than in the case of Structural Funds. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that RRP investments fully respect the provisions of the UN CRPD, for instance when it comes to considering accessibility and non-discrimination. A few EDE country experts reported that the RRP did not include any reference, or only limited mentions, to persons with disabilities (e.g. Austria and Germany).

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35 National project: Financial Incentives for Employability (*Finančné stimuly pre zamestnanost*), PSK-MPSVR-004-2024-NP-ESF+, Allocation: EUR 282 968 131. For more information, see: https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/esf/op-slovensko/vyzvy-np/vyzva-financne-stimuly-zamestnanost-esf.pdf. Source: Kválová, D., Kešelová, D., and Turkovič, Z. (2025), *European Semester 2024-2025 country fiche on disability equality, Slovakia*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=28030&langId=en.

36 European Ombudsman (2020), Decision in case 1233/2019/MMO on how the European Commission ensures that Member State governments spend European Structural and Investment Funds in line with the obligations stemming from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

37 Wladasch, K., Allram-Naaijer, K. & Birtha, M. (2023), *The role of national human rights bodies in monitoring fundamental rights in EU funded programmes*, Policy Brief 2023/2. Vienna: European Centre.

38 See (in Czech): https://irop.gov.cz/cs/vyzvy-2021-2027/vyzvy/95vyzvairop.

In March 2023, the European Commission published guidance on *Recovery and Resilience Plans in the context of REPowerEU*. This was a response to the changed geopolitical context, in light of Russia's unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine which created huge challenges for the EU energy union and aggravated the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. New RePowerEU chapters are now included in the RRPs of Member States to ensure that investments and reforms strengthening EU energy resilience are implemented as soon as possible. It is too early to say how persons with disabilities benefitted from these investments, but it's something that should be monitored in the next Semester cycle.

There are already some good examples of how RRPs can support persons with disabilities. For example, the Slovenian RRP 2021-2026 includes investment priorities for persons with disabilities to improve disability enterprises (*invalidska podjetja*) and employment centres, digitalisation, accessibility of the built environment and transport, the long-term care system, medical equipment and education. The RRP has concrete plans to implement an education reform for children with special needs, including investments in digitalisation, more individualised support and efforts to reduce the achievement gap between children from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds and economically disadvantaged children.[39] Linked to this, the Action Plan of the Republic of Slovenia of the Guarantee of Children 2022-2030 has addressed the fact that children with special needs and mental health problems may be affected by the intersection of poverty, intergenerational disadvantage and disability which is an important recognition.

In the area of deinstitutionalisation, the CR 2024 for Slovenia mentions the development of quality, adequate and affordable community-based social services and, in particular, long-term care, to increase social inclusion.[40] The measure is financed from the RRP and the Budget of the Republic of Slovenia with a total sum of EUR 65 711 000. Furthermore, EUR 6.5 million from national funds, and EUR 4.5 million EU funding was used for maintenance and building accessible housing for persons with disabilities.

Latvia is also implementing investment in housing adaptation for persons with disabilities at a value of EUR 5.7 million (including EUR 4.7 million from the Recovery Fund and EUR 1 million from the national budget). By 2026, it is planned to adapt housing for 259 persons with disabilities. This includes the external and internal environment of the accommodation, financing the purchase, delivery and installation of accessibility technologies, equipment and other material and technical support.

The Slovakian RRP contains investments focusing on integrating the long-term social and healthcare systems, enhancing community-based social services (component 13) and improving the accessibility of school buildings, including school digital infrastructure (component 6).[41] Slovakia also plans to use the RRP to finance the

[39] Zaviršek, D. (2025), *European Semester 2024-2025 country fiche on disability equality, Slovenia*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=28029&langId=en.

[40] European Commission, CR Slovenia 2024, p. 16: https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/237bde97-bc2e-4577-854d-f4c4c4ca5912_en?filename=SWD_2024_624_1_EN_Slovenia.pdf

[41] Source: Kválová, D., Kešelová, D., and Turkovič, Z. (2025), *European Semester 2024-2025 country fiche on disability equality, Slovakia*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=28030&langId=en.

reform of disability assessment as well as the reform of how social services are financed, however, these measures have been postponed.

Another important area of investment is accessibility and the Polish RRP includes investments into accessible public train infrastructure to meet the needs of passengers with disabilities.[42]

A good example of how investments can be disability-inclusive is the 'Implementation of energy efficiency measures to renovate obsolete facilities of judicial authorities (Investment: C2.5.R1-I5)' in Croatia, which also covers adaptation to ensure access to buildings for persons with disabilities.

[42] Source: Król, A. (2025), *European Semester 2024-2025 country fiche on disability equality, Poland*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=28025&langId=en.

3 Update on EU and national disability strategies

3.1 The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030

In March 2021, the European Commission adopted the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 with the aim of promoting equal opportunities and full inclusion for persons with disabilities in Europe and around the world. The Strategy is the policy framework for the European Commission to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The UN CRPD is ratified by the EU and all its 27 Member States and the implementation is in progress, albeit at a varying pace in different Member States. The Strategy is also part of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and, in particular, Principle 17 on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The Strategy includes seven flagship initiatives:

1. To launch a European resource centre AccessibleEU to increase coherence in accessibility policies and facilitate access to relevant knowledge.
2. To create a European Disability Card by the end of 2023 with a view to it being recognised in all Member States.
3. To develop Guidance recommending improvements on independent living and inclusion in the community.
4. To present, by 2024, a specific framework for Social Services of Excellence for persons with disabilities.
5. To present a package to improve labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities.
6. To establish the Disability Platform.
7. To adopt a renewed HR strategy that includes actions to promote diversity and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

By December 2024, six of these flagship initiatives (AccessibleEU, European Disability Card, Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community, Disability Employment Package, Disability Platform and the renewed European Commission HR Strategy) had already been completed.[43] Among these, the Council Directive establishing the European Disability Card, together with the European Parking Card for Persons with Disabilities, is the only legislation adopted under the Strategy so far.[44] All the other flagship initiatives of the Strategy are soft law that either provide guidance and support to Member States to implement the UN CRPD or facilitate the internal implementation of the Convention by EU institutions. AccessibleEU facilitates the implementation of EU legislation on accessibility, such as the European Accessibility Act, which is now in the implementation phase in all Member States.

[43] The European Commission publishes the progress achieved on its actions in the Strategy: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1552&langId=en.

[44] Directive (EU) 2024/2841 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 establishing the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card for persons with disabilities, OJ L, 2024/2841, see: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/2841/oj/eng.

Beyond the flagship initiatives, the European Commission made other commitments in the Strategy, most of which had been implemented by 2024.[45] The European Commission is expected to propose new initiatives for the remaining period of the Strategy until 2030 and data and trends presented in this synthesis report will hopefully contribute to identifying areas for new key actions. Although the Semester traditionally has a strong focus on employment and labour market dynamics, links to poverty and education indicators are increasingly present to better understand the reasons behind the persistent exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market. This complements the other priorities of the Strategy which are also relevant to the Semester analysis, including:

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

3.2 National disability strategies and action plans

In parallel with the publishing of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, several Member States launched or updated national disability strategies and action plans in 2021-2022 which are still running. In 2024, three Member States adopted a new disability action plan: Greece, Latvia and Lithuania.

The main aim of this synthesis report is to monitor and to promote good practice in disability equality mainstreaming in the Semester co-ordination process. Ideally, the Member States' reform programmes should include disability policy planning using an integrated multi-level governance approach. Policy co-ordination should include linkages between NRP measures, relevant principles of the Social Pillar, the SDGs and the Scoreboard, with investments identified in the RRP. From a disability perspective, it should recognise linkages between relevant NRP measures, domestic disability strategies, EU disability strategy and the UN CRPD.[46]

In the latest NRPs (2023 or 2024 respectively), nine Member States reference, or at least acknowledge, their national disability strategy (Austria, Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Sweden). This is fewer than in the 2022 Semester cycle when at least half of the countries did so. While the Semester process is changing and from 2025 medium-term fiscal structural plans will replace the NRPs, visibility of disability issues and links to key strategic documents should be ensured.

[45] For further information, see: European Parliament Briefing, Requested by the PETI committee, Birtha, M. (2024), *The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 - Achievements and perspectives*, European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 767.095.

[46] European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and Priestley, M. (2023), *European Semester 2022 mainstreaming disability equality*, Publications Office of the European Union, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/480741

The most recent information available about national disability action plans (DAPs) in each country (reviewed November 2024) is summarised in Table 5 with links to sources. It is also indicated if the plan is also mentioned in the 2023 or 2024 NRPs.

Table 5: Status of national disability strategies and action plans in 2022

Country	National DAP	Details	NRP 2023/2024
AT	National Action Plan on Disability 2022-2030	The federal government of Austria adopted a new National Action Plan on Disability 2022-2030 in 2022.	Yes
BE	Federal Disability Action Plan 2021-2024 Federal Disability Action Plan 2021-2024, Final Report. Interfederal Plan 2022-2030	The federal government adopted a Federal Disability Action Plan 2021-2024. A final report was adopted by the government in early 2024. An Interfederal Plan 2022-2030 was drawn up and the Interministerial Conference on Disability finally resumed its work.	No
BG	National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030)	A new National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 was adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2020. An action plan for 2023-2024 was adopted by Decision № 740 of the Council of Ministers in October 2023. There is also a National Programme for Accessible Housing and Personal Mobility of Persons with Disabilities, which continued to operate in 2023 and 2024.	No
CY	First National Disability Strategy 2018-2028 and the Third Disability Action Plan 2021-2023	In Cyprus, the First National Disability Strategy 2018-2028 and the Third Disability Action Plan 2021-2023 are currently under revision. A draft National Strategy and Action plan for 2024-2028 was under public consultation (closed in April 2024).	No
CZ	National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021–2025	The National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021–2025 was approved by government in July 2020 and broadly followed the structure of the UN CRPD. It includes 17 themes. An implementation report is evaluated every year. An English version is available.	No
DE	National Action Plan for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2.0 (2016-2021) 2023 update	National Action Plan for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2.0 from 2016 (NAP 2.0). Updated in May 2021 and March 2023 with the Status Report on the National Action Plan on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the NAP 2.0 is to be continuously updated in order to create more transparency and topicality in relation to current issues.	No
DK	Policy Statement and Action Plan for Disability Policy (2013, 2014, 2016)	A disability action plan was developed in 2013 and reviewed in 2014. A Disability Policy Statement was published by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Interior in 2016. In 2019 the Department of Human Rights recommended the government to introduce a national disability action plan, following widespread demands from civil society.	No
EE	Welfare Development Plan 2023-2030	The main strategy document related to disability in Estonia is the Welfare Development Plan 2023-2030, adopted in 2023.	No

Country	National DAP	Details	NRP 2023/2024
EL	National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2024-2030	The National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2024-2030, made available for public consultation in April 2024, will inform the design of disability-specific programmes under the ongoing Social Cohesion Programme Period. The National Strategy builds on the National Disability Action Plan 2020-2023 and aims to address the Concluding Observations issued by the UN CRPD Committee to Greece (2019) by developing a long-term strategy for disability equality and inclusion.	*No[47]
ES	Spanish Disability Strategy 2022-2030	In 2019, the UN Committee recommended Spain to adopt an Action Plan for the previous disability strategy 2014-2020. A new Spanish Disability Strategy 2022-2030 was approved in May 2022. It addresses seven strategic challenges.	Yes
FI	Right to social inclusion and equality: National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) 2020-2023	A National Action Plan on the UN CRPD was prepared for 2018-2019 by the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VANE), following consultation. This was updated in a second plan for the period 2020- 2023, comprising 110 measures.	Yes
FR	Interministerial policy priorities	The interministerial policy was developed by the Interministerial Committee on Disability (*Comité interministériel du handicap, CIH*). At the end of 2017, the CIH published five priorities to meet the EU's strategic goals. Each of these priorities was given five-year targets progressively translated into objectives and measures presented every year by the CIH. Since 2022, the CIH has continued its work along the same lines. In 2023, the CIH focused on universal accessibility (of buildings, transport, telecommunications, services, administration, etc.); education for all; simplifying everyday life and empowering persons with disabilities; and support for independent living. In 2024, in addition to these objectives, the focus was on political participation, as it was election year.	No
HR	National Strategy of Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027	A new National Plan for Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027 was adopted in December 2021, with a corresponding Action Plan for Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities for the period 2021-2024.	Yes
HU	Implementation of the National Disability Programme 2022	The National Disability Programme (OFP) was developed for the decade 2015-2025. The current Action Plan was adopted in 2020 for the period to 2022.	No

[47] The latest NRP for Greece was published in 2023, so there is no reference to the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2024-2030, see https://ypergasias.gov.gr/ethniki-stratigiki-gia-ta-dikaiomata-ton-atomon-me-anapiria-2024-2030-mia-ellada-me-olous-gia-olous/.

Country	National DAP	Details	NRP 2023/2024
IE	National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021[48] Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024	The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 (NDIS) which was extended to 2022 has now ended. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) is currently working on a successor to the NDIS. There is a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024, and a National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 was published in 2022.	Yes
IT	Second biennial action programme for the promotion of the rights and integration of persons with disabilities	A process of biennial action programmes on disability rights was developed in 2009, with the most recent version legislated in 2017. Following public consultation and a national conference on disability policies in December 2021, a third biennial action programme is anticipated. As required by Law no. 18 of 3 March 2009 as amended in 2023, the third action programme will have a duration of three years.	No
LT	2024-2026 Action Plan for the Social Integration of Disabled Persons	The implementation of 2024-2026 Action Plan for the Social Integration of Disabled Persons is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour	No
LU	A National Action Plan for the Implementation of the CRPD 2019-2024	A National Action Plan for the Implementation of the CRPD 2019-2024 was approved in December 2019 and included 29 priorities, 55 objectives and 97 actions.	Yes
LV	Plan Promoting Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities for 2024-2027	The objective of the Plan Promoting Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities for 2024-2027 is to promote the development of a support system oriented towards the needs of persons with disabilities at the cross-sectoral level.	No
MT	Freedom to Live, Malta's 2021-2030 National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons	A National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was published in 2014. Following consultations, a National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons 2021-2030 (Freedom to Live) was launched in September 2021.	Yes
NL	National Strategy for the implementation of UN CRPD	Anew action plan to implement the UN CRPD, entitled the National Strategy for the Implementation of the UN CRPD, was published in January 2024.	No
PL	Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030)	A disability strategy for the period 2021-2030.The Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons is responsible for coordinating implementation of the Strategy as well as for monitoring of its implementation.	No
PT	National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025	The most recent action plan is the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025, which was adopted in August 2021, following a period of public consultation at the end of 2020.	Yes
RO	National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with	Romania adopted a National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2022-2027) as well as a National Strategy on Preventing the	No

[48] The DCEDIY is currently coordinating work across Government to develop Ireland's next National Disability Strategy which will seek to progress Ireland's implementation of the UN CRPD. As part of the development of the new strategy, a public consultation is underway.

Country	National DAP	Details	NRP 2023/2024
	Disabilities (2022-2027)	Institutionalisation of Adults with Disabilities and Accelerating the Deinstitutionalisation Process (2022-2030). The strategy for the latter's implementation is described in the NRP (p. 67).	
SE	National Goal and Focus on Disability policy and Strategy for systematic follow-up of disability policy in 2021–2031	The Semester plans links with the national disability strategy through the mentioning in the NRP (p. 156) of the Strategy for Systematic Monitoring of Disability Policy 2021–2031. The disability policy refers to the proposition 2016/17:188: *National Goal and Focus on Disability Policy*. A new national strategy for disability policy was adopted in 2021, taking the UN CRPD as a starting point and with sectoral actions for the period 2021-2031.	Yes
SI	Action Programme for People with Disabilities 2022-2030	The Action Programme for People with Disabilities 2022-2030 has 13 objectives to implement the UN CRPD.	No
SK	National Programme on Improving the Living Conditions of Persons with Disabilities for 2021-2030	The disability strategy in Slovakia refers to the National Programme on Improving the Living Conditions of Persons with Disabilities for 2021-2030, approved by the Government. The programme is to be regularly updated every two years, with the first review in 2024.	No

4 Update on Member States' participation in the UN processes

Table 6: Summary of progress in the CRPD review cycle

MS	Concluding Observations	Most recent state response	Most recent UN Committee response
AT	2023	2019	2023 Concluding observations
BE	2014	2020	2019 List of issues
BG	2018		2018 Concluding observations
CY	2017	2018	2017 Concluding observations
CZ	2015	2016	2019 List of issues
DE	2023	2019	2023 Concluding observations
DK	2014	2020	2019 List of issues
EE	2021	2019	2021 Concluding observations
EL	2019	2019	2019 Concluding observations
ES	2019	2018	2019 Concluding observations
FI	Not yet scheduled	2024	n.a.
FR	2021	2016	2016 Concluding observations
HR	2015	2011	2020 List of issues
HU	2022	2018	2022 Concluding observations
IE	Not yet scheduled	2021	n.a.
IT	2016	2017	2016 Concluding observations
LT	2016	2023	2023 List of issues
LU	2017	2018	2017 Concluding observations
LV	2017	2021	2017 Concluding observations
MT	2018	2018	2018 Concluding observations
NL	Not yet scheduled	2022	2022 List of issues
PL	2018	2018	2018 Concluding observations
PT	2016	2017	2016 Concluding observations
RO	Not yet scheduled	2022	n.a.
SE	2024		2024 Concluding observations
SI	2018	2017	2023 List of issues
SK	2016	2020	2019 List of issues

Source: data from United Nations Human Rights Treat Body Database (May 2024)

4.1 Information recently requested from Member States in the List of Issues

4.1.1 Information about the labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities

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

MS	Source	Information requested on Employment (Article 27 CRPD and SDG Goal 8.5)
AT	2018 List of issues prior to reporting	42. Please provide information on measures taken to enhance programmes for the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market and to narrow the employment and gender pay gaps. Please provide specific information on measures taken to promote the transition of persons with disabilities from sheltered employment to the open labour market. Furthermore, please provide information on measures taken to ensure that social insurance contributions are made for such persons. Please provide information on measures taken to implement target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
BE	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	25. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Enhance programmes to increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in both the private and the public sectors; (b) Facilitate the transition of persons with disabilities from unemployment or from employment in sheltered workshops to employment in the open labour market; (c) Tackle barriers and discrimination against persons with disabilities in the recruitment process and the workplace, including instances involving a lack of reasonable accommodation.
CZ	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	22. Please provide information on: (a) Employment rates among persons with disabilities, disaggregated by age, sex and impairment type, in both the open labour market and sheltered employment; (b) Measures taken to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, particularly through the prohibition of discrimination on multiple or intersectional grounds, in accordance with Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation; (c) The availability of supported employment programmes and vocational and professional rehabilitation programmes, as outlined as an objective in the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2020, especially with reference to the availability of work in rural and urban areas; (d) Whether some persons with disabilities (those considered as having the third degree of disability) can still only register as 'interested for work' and not as 'job seeking', and on the reasons for such a distinction.
DK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	25. Please provide: (a) Information on measures taken to significantly increase the percentage of persons with disabilities working in the open labour market in Greenland and to close the employment gap for persons with disabilities; (b) Information on measures to combat prejudices preventing persons with disabilities from accessing the labour market; (c) Statistics and data for the reporting period under review, comparable on an annual basis, on the status of persons, with or without disabilities, with regard to unemployment, underemployment and multiple employment, and on persons not currently involved in any form of education, employment or training, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, urban or rural residence and family status.

HR	2020 List of issues prior to reporting	25. Please provide information on the efforts made to eliminate stigma, barriers and discrimination in the recruitment process and the steps undertaken to increase the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market in both the public and private sectors. Please also elaborate on: (a) The status of development of an action plan for the employment of persons with disabilities; (b) Results achieved through the implementation of the new Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act (2015), including data; (c) The sanctions taken for non-compliance of mandatory quotas and for the denial of reasonable accommodation.
FI	2023 List of issues	24. Please inform the Committee about: (a) Actions adopted to prevent and punish discrimination against persons with disabilities in work and employment and the progress made in promoting employment opportunities for them in the open labour market, in both the public and the private sectors, and in mainland Finland and Åland; (b) Efforts to implement the 'linear model' to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and balance earned income with the disability pension; (c) Steps taken to support persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, to exercise their right to freely choose or accept employment in work environments that are open, inclusive and accessible to them; (d) Measures taken in workplaces to ensure the accessibility of work environments and the provision of reasonable accommodation and supports on the basis of individual requirements; (e) Initiatives introduced to strengthen the involvement of persons with disabilities in entrepreneurship and ensure their access to financial support, technical advice, digital tools and technical and professional orientation programmes outside sheltered employment; (f) Efforts made to improve the collection of data on persons with disabilities employed in the public and private sectors, including by ensuring that such data are disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, type of impairment and place of residence.
LT	2023 List of issues	23. Please provide information on measures taken: (a) To develop more programmes aimed at increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, in both the private and public sectors; (b) To facilitate the transition of persons with disabilities from unemployment or work in sheltered workshops to employment in the open labour market; (c) To counter barriers and discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in the recruitment process and the workplace, including cases involving a lack of reasonable accommodation; (d) To develop skills related to employment among youth and young adults with disabilities; (e) To adopt plans of action to restore jobs and employment opportunities to persons with disabilities following the COVID-19 pandemic.
NL	2022 List of issues	25.Please provide information on: (a) Employment rates among persons with disabilities, disaggregated by age, sex and impairment type, in both the open labour market and sheltered employment, as well as on unemployed persons with disabilities; (b) Measures taken to promote inclusive employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, including the quota system that was initiated in 2018, and on measures taken to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace and in the open labour market; (c) The definition of 'people with occupational disabilities' as mentioned in paragraph 291 of the State party report; (d) Measures taken to reduce the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities and to narrow the gender pay gap faced by women with disabilities.

SI	2023 List of issues prior to reporting	25. Please provide information on: (a) Measures taken or planned to increase the employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors, including measures to facilitate their transition from unemployment or work in sheltered workshops to employment in the open labour market; (b) Incentives provided to employers for employing persons with disabilities, and mechanisms for monitoring the provision of support, particularly of support based on the code of enterprises for employing workers with disabilities in the Standard Classification of Activities; (c) Steps taken to protect persons with disabilities from all forms of discrimination in public and private employment, including measures to eliminate barriers in the recruitment process and the workplace, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation; (d) Plans to guarantee equal payment for work of equal value to all persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, and to adopt measures to eliminate the gender gap in employment, including the gender pay gap.
SK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	26. Please provide information on the measures taken to increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in the open labour market, and on the national targets for creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Please also provide information on measures taken to: (a) Ensure the transition of persons with disabilities, including those in the process of moving from institutions into the community, from unemployment or employment in sheltered workshops to employment in the open labour market; (b) Eliminate barriers and discrimination against persons with disabilities in the recruitment process and the workplace, including instances involving the denial of individualised measures.

4.1.2 Information about social policies and healthcare

Table 8: Examples of social protection information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on standard of living and social protection (Article 28 CRPD)
AT	2018 List of issues prior to reporting	NA
BE	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	26. Please describe measures taken to: (a) Mainstream disability in poverty and homelessness reduction strategies. Please focus in particular on the situation of women, children and older persons with disabilities; (b) Ensure that social protection and support services are provided to persons with disabilities, taking into account additional costs related to disability; (c) Eliminate the current backlog of applications for social protection measures to the Directorate-General for Persons with Disabilities of the Federal Public Service for Social Security.
CZ	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	23. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Revise benefit and pension legislation and policy concerning persons with disabilities and their families, in particular to bring the concept of disability and the assessment criteria used to calculate social protection entitlements, such as the disability pension, into line with the Convention; (b) Reintroduce the additional social allowance to bring the standard of living of families with children with disabilities above subsistence level.
DK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	26. Please provide information on: (a) The early retirement reform under Act No. 574 of 2014 amending the Act on Social Pensions and any impact assessments carried out on persons with disabilities under the age of 40 for accessing early retirement pension; (b) Measures adopted to grant non-contributory pensions to persons with disabilities, including those who require more intensive support; (c) Assessments of the impact that the ceiling on entitlements provided under the social security system has had on

		the living conditions of persons with disabilities, including information on disproportionate impact in relation to type of impairment, gender and age; (d) Persons with disabilities who have been awarded early retirement pensions since the entry into force of the early retirement pension regime; on the household income levels of persons with disabilities, compared with those of the general population since 2014; and on persons with disabilities receiving compensation under the Danish unemployment insurance scheme, in the form of disaggregated data.
HR	2020 List of issues prior to reporting	26. Please inform the Committee about the efforts made to develop a disability assessment that fully incorporates a human rights model of disability and whether the design of the disability assessment method has been undertaken in a systematic, consistent and transparent manner through the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities. 27. Please elaborate on the measures to combat poverty among persons with disabilities, in particular among persons with disabilities of Roma origin and in rural and remote areas. 28.Please provide information on: (a) The measures taken to implement the provisions of the Social Benefit Act in order to ensure its full enjoyment by persons with disabilities, irrespective of the cause of their impairment, in all counties and municipalities; (b) The provisions of the social protection schemes to ensure that all persons with disabilities are provided with support for equipment, such as hearing aids, mobility aids and assistive technologies; (c) The steps taken by the State party to increase pension, social welfare and other benefits for both civilian and veteran persons with disabilities throughout the country, including for parents of children with disabilities.
FI	2023 List of issues	25. Please provide information on:(a) Measures taken to ensure adequate levels of social protection and efforts made to reduce poverty among persons with disabilities; (b) The extent to which disability allowances adequately cover the living costs of persons with disabilities and the steps taken to streamline the application process and reduce processing times to facilitate access to those entitlements; (c) The impact of the reform of the social welfare system on persons with disabilities, and the transfer of responsibility for the organization of services to the welfare service counties; (d) The number of persons who have been entitled to disability benefits from the Social Insurance Institution (Kela) since 2016, disaggregated by age, sex, type of impairment, type of entitlement and place of residence.
LT	2023 List of issues	24. With reference to information indicating that persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by poverty, please describe measures taken: (a) To eliminate situations of poverty affecting persons with disabilities and to mainstream disability in strategies to reduce poverty and homelessness, including the ways in which the situation of women and girls with disabilities and of children and older persons with disabilities is addressed [in] such strategies; (b) To ensure that social protection and support services are provided to persons with disabilities, taking into account the additional costs related to disability.
NL	2022 List of issues	26. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Include disability in the collection and publication of data concerning poverty and social protection, disaggregated by sex, age, level of education, ethnicity and national origin, type of impairment and type of residence; (b) Tackle the income inequality faced by persons with disabilities; (c) Address homelessness among persons with psychosocial disabilities.
SI	2023 List of issues prior to reporting	26. Please provide information on: (a) Social protection measures taken or planned to address the high level of poverty among persons with disabilities, particularly persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, women with disabilities and older persons with disabilities, including on remedial measures against the negative impact of fiscal and budgetary measures addressing the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic; (b) National strategies and policies aimed at increasing the availability and accessibility of public housing, including social housing, for persons with disabilities; (c) Effective and expeditious remedies against decisions of administrative

		bodies on persons with disabilities, particularly decisions of the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of Slovenia and of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; (d) The legal framework of the disability pension and insurance scheme and its impact on persons with disabilities. Please include information on whether persons with disabilities may be mandated to bear a part or all of their disability-related costs, in all areas of life, and specify the income taxation of disability benefits, particularly of persons with disabilities living in poverty, and further include information on measures taken or planned to address any gaps in the disability insurance system, including gaps between graduation from school and entering the work force and in other situations where there is no 'sufficient involvement with the insurance'.
SK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	27. Please inform on the measures taken to: (a) Mainstream disability inclusion in strategies to address poverty, with a particular focus on the policies addressing the situation of women, children and older persons with disabilities; (b) Develop public housing programmes that are accessible to and affordable for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others; (c) Ensure that all social protection schemes and support services are provided to persons with disabilities without discrimination related to age, gender or socioeconomic status, and ensure the coverage of disability-related extra costs and disability-related schemes after the age of 65 years; (d) Collect statistical data on poverty, disaggregated by disability, age, gender, place of residence and geographical location, and provide the Committee with the available figures.

Table 9: Examples of healthcare information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on health (Article 25 CRPD)
AT	2018 List of issues prior to reporting	NA
BE	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	23. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Ensure that health-care facilities and services, including specialist services, are accessible and affordable to all persons with disabilities; (b) Train health professionals and support personnel on the human rights model of disability and on measures taken to end discriminatory and negative attitudes towards and the stereotyping of persons with disabilities, particularly persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.
CZ	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	21. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Train and raise awareness among health-care professionals on the rights of persons with disabilities; (b) Ensure that information and communications regarding health-care services are available in accessible formats to all persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual disabilities and persons who are blind or deaf, in both urban and rural communities; (c) Provide access to full health-care and rehabilitative services, including sexual and reproductive health services, for persons with disabilities in their communities.
DK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	23. Please provide information on: (a) Measures to improve access to health facilities and services used by persons with disabilities, including sexual and reproductive health-care services and cervical cancer screening for women with disabilities, women with cerebral palsy and women with intellectual disabilities; (b) Measures to reduce the high mortality rates among persons with psychosocial disabilities, including through early detection and health checks; (c) Measures to ensure coverage of hearing aid treatment by the health-care system; (d) Measures taken to meet the transport requirements of persons with disabilities in accessing health-care facilities and to provide emergency facilities for persons with psychosocial disabilities in the Faroe Islands.

HR	2020 List of issues prior to reporting	24. Please provide information on: (a) The efforts undertaken to provide for persons with disabilities to have access to health insurance and services on an equal basis with others, including public and private health services and equipment that are affordable, accessible and of good quality; (b) The measures taken for training health professionals and support personnel to raise awareness of the human rights model of disability; (c) Whether mental and psychosocial health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, are accessible for women and girls with disabilities in both urban and rural areas.
FI	2023 List of issues	22. Please inform the Committee about: (a) Actions adopted to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the highest attainable standard of health-care services and products in the public and private sectors, on an equal basis with others, in mainland Finland and Åland; (b) How age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education are provided to all persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities; (c) Measures taken to ensure the accessibility of health-care facilities, equipment and information and communications technologies, including Braille, sign language, Easy Read and augmentative and alternative communication, in the health-care system; (d) The periodic training provided to health-care personnel on the human rights model of disability, autonomy and the requirements of persons with disabilities, and the measures taken to evaluate the impact of such training; (e) The availability of community-based mental health services throughout the territory of the State party, in particular for children and young persons with disabilities.
LT	2023 List of issues	21. Please provide information on: (a) Measures taken to ensure that health-care facilities and services, including specialist services, are accessible and affordable to all persons with disabilities; (b) Measures for ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health care and rights by women and girls with disabilities, including accessible equipment at the municipal level and information on sexual and reproductive health in accessible formats; (c) Measures taken to train health-care professionals and support personnel, including persons with disabilities, on the human rights model of disability in order to end discriminatory and negative attitudes in health-care settings towards persons with disabilities, which especially affect persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with psychosocial disabilities.
NL	2022 List of issues	24. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Ensure access for all persons with disabilities to health care, including gynaecological, dental and other health-care services, facilities, amenities and equipment, including through the provision of specific accessible amenities and equipment for women and girls with disabilities; (b) Reduce the waiting time necessary to access health-care services, in particular for persons with psychosocial disabilities; (c) Facilitate training and the promulgation of an ethical standard for health-care professionals, with a view to providing health-care services for persons with disabilities that are of the same quality as those provided to others, including through raising awareness of the human rights, dignity, autonomy and requirements of all persons with disabilities.
SI	2023 List of issues prior to reporting	23. Please provide information on:(a) Measures taken or planned to ensure the physical and communicative accessibility of health-care facilities and services, and their affordability, including of specialist services and palliative care, for all persons with disabilities; and on the impact of the implementation of the Long-term Care Act on persons with disabilities; (b) Steps taken or planned to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services for all persons with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, including information in accessible formats on sexual and reproductive health; (c) Measures taken or planned to ensure access to dental care, especially ensuring the availability of general anaesthesia, for all persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities; (d) Steps taken or planned to train health-care professionals and support personnel on the human rights model of disability, including training on the various requirements of persons

		with disabilities and on their rights and means of accessible communication. Please also provide information on any measures addressing the staff shortage of social care and health-care professionals; (e) The announced health-care legislation reform and its protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, and on the close consultation with and active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organisations in the development and implementation of health-care policy and legislation.
SK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	24. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Ensure that health-care facilities, services and equipment, including specialist services, are accessible and affordable to all persons with disabilities, in particular persons requiring high levels of support; (b) Train health professionals and support personnel on the human rights model of disability, and prevent discriminatory and negative attitudes and stereotypes against persons with disabilities, particularly with regard to persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities; (c) Ensure equal access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for women and girls with disabilities.

Table 10: Examples of independent living information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on independent living (Article 19 CRPD)
AT	2018 List of issues prior to reporting	37. Please provide information on measures taken, including the provision of adequate funding, to enable the diversity of persons with disabilities to enjoy their right to freely choose their residence on an equal basis with others and to access a full range of in-home and other community services for daily life, including personal assistance. 38. Please provide information on the use of European Union structural funds and national funds, including precise data on funds provided for personal assistance, in line with general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, and other support services in communities, including support for the deinstitutionalization of boys and girls with disabilities. 39. Please indicate: (a) The number of residential homes for persons with disabilities in the State party, disaggregated by the number of residents in each of the homes; (b) The number of persons with disabilities placed in residential homes for older persons with disabilities.
BE	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	18. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to implement disability action plans at the federal, regional and community levels to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy the right to independent living and to be included in the community, and to implement plans to eliminate waiting lists for access to personal assistance budgets and other services and support; (b) Steps taken to implement an effective deinstitutionalization strategy, with a clear time frame, for all persons living in institutions. Please include the number of persons with disabilities who have been deinstitutionalized so far, and provide details of their current situation; (c) Measures taken to enable all persons with disabilities to enjoy their right to freely choose their residence on an equal basis with others, and to access a full range of in-home and other community services for day-to-day living, including personal assistance; (d) The use of European Structural and Investment Funds and national funds for personal assistance and independent living. Please include precise data, in absolute and relative numbers, on the funds provided.
CZ	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	16. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to achieve deinstitutionalization, including details on the time frame within which the full deinstitutionalization of all persons with disabilities (particularly children under 3 years of age, persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities and older persons with disabilities) will be achieved; (b) The use of financial resources, including European Structural and Investment Funds, and on the transition plans to enable persons with disabilities to freely choose their living arrangements in the community. Please provide an update on the completion of actions to support independent living, as set out under objectives 6.1 to 6.15

		of the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2020; (c) The availability and accessibility of community-based services for persons with disabilities, including housing services, an open labour market, social services and human rights-based mental health care. Please indicate whether coverage of these services is sufficient and detail measures to ensure their sustainability.
DK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	18. Please provide information on measures taken to: (a) Recognize the individual right of persons with disabilities to live independently and to be included in the community, and to ensure that they can freely make choices regarding their living arrangements, including in living areas and facilities that are currently under the control of public authorities and not open to the public; (b) Prevent the development of institutionalized living environments, including measures to end the building of and investment in large-scale closed institution-like residences (CRPD/C/DNK/CO/1, para. 43); (c) Repeal sections in the Consolidation Act on Social Services of 2015, as amended in 2017, that permit the forced relocation of persons with disabilities to assisted living facilities, thus denying them the opportunity to choose their place of residence; (d) Provide persons with disabilities with individualized support for independent living based on individual assessments at the municipal level, with disaggregated data about access to personal assistance and in-kind or in-cash forms of support, including personal budgets; (e) Adopt strategies and allocate resources to ensure accessible housing for persons with disabilities in all housing sectors in the Faroe Islands.
HR	2020 List of issues prior to reporting	19. In reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations (CRPD/C/HRV/CO/1, para. 30), please inform the Committee about: (a) The personal assistance and community-based services available to persons with disabilities who require them; (b) The progress made with respect to the operational plan for deinstitutionalization, particularly in the case of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities in 24-hour living spaces, in psychiatric hospitals, those living in family homes for more than 20 persons and those living in adult foster families. 20. Please provide information on whether the use of the European Union structural and investment funds is directed to deinstitutionalization and ensuring independent living in the community for persons with disabilities. Please inform the Committee about: (a) The provisions made to ensure their active participation in decision-making, including for the exercise of their choice regarding with whom, how and where to live; (b) The steps taken to amend the Social Welfare Act to prohibit a guardian from having the authority to place a person in any institution or in any other living arrangement without that person's consent; (c) The allocation of personnel, technical and financial means for support services enabling independent life and community inclusion at the national and local level.
FI	2023 List of issues	16. Please provide information on: (a) Actions adopted to accelerate deinstitutionalization for all persons with disabilities, in particular children and older persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and to avoid institutionalization in group homes; (b) Measures taken to provide community-based support and ensure a sufficient number of trained personnel, an adequate budget and coordination of such support; (c) Efforts made to strengthen in-home support and personal assistance, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in those endeavours; (d) The resources allocated to the welfare service counties and municipalities for the provision of support through high-quality personal assistance, taking into account the requirements of the individual concerned, and an appropriate number of hours of support, including for leisure activities. Please indicate the number of persons with disabilities who have received personal assistance since 2016, disaggregated by year, sex, age, type of impairment and municipality of residence; (e) The funding and programmes available for the development of accessible and affordable housing in the community; (f) The implementation of the Views adopted by the Committee concerning communication No. 46/2018, which related to the eligibility criteria for personal assistance; (g) The number

		of children with disabilities who have lived in institutions or care facilities since 2016, disaggregated by type of impairment, age, gender and ethnicity, and the actions taken to end their institutionalization and guarantee their right to family life on an equal basis with other children.
LT	2023 List of issues	16 Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to implement action plans for persons with disabilities at the national, county and municipal levels and to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy their right to live independently and to be included in the community; (b) Measures taken to allow all persons with disabilities to enjoy the right to freely choose their residence on an equal basis with others and to access a wide range of support services at home and in the community for day-to-day life, such as personal assistance, including for persons with disabilities requiring higher levels of support; (c) The number of children with disabilities not living with their families, including those living in institutions, and the financial and other resources invested to ensure their deinstitutionalization and transition to life in the community; (d) Steps taken to implement an effective deinstitutionalization strategy, with a clear time frame, for the approximately 6 000 persons with disabilities still living in residential institutions, following the criteria set out in the Committee's general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community and its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies. Please include the number of persons with disabilities who have been part of deinstitutionalization programmes and provide details about their current situation, support for their transition from institutions to life in the community and the involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in such programmes; (e) The use of European structural and investment funds and national funds for personal assistance and independent living in the community and on measures to redirect funds from large and small congregated settings, including group or family-like homes, to support for living in the community. Please include accurate data, in absolute and relative terms, on the funds provided.
NL	2022 List of issues	17. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to develop a deinstitutionalization policy, including details on the time frame within which the full deinstitutionalization of all persons with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with psychosocial disabilities, will be achieved, and measures to facilitate their full inclusion and participation in the community; (b) The availability of housing and the extent to which it ensures the right of persons with disabilities to freely choose their living arrangements in the community and their right to choose where and with whom to live, including for persons placed under substitute decision-making regimes; (c) Measures taken to ensure that personal assistance programmes provide persons with disabilities, including persons who are still under substitute decision-making regimes, with sufficient financial assistance to allow them to live independently in the community, and to ensure that the differences in criteria applied by municipal authorities are reduced to a minimum; (d) The number of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, who are still living in residential institutions.
SI	2023 List of issues prior to reporting	18. Please provide information on: (a) Any relevant policy, strategy, action plan or measures at the national level aimed at deinstitutionalization, with their respective timeline, and on measures preventing trans- or re-institutionalization, including in smaller institutional settings, and on the function, tasks, powers, personal composition and funding of the Deinstitutionalization Task Force. Please also provide information on close consultation with and the active involvement of persons with disabilities through their organizations in the elaboration and implementation of such policies, strategies, action plans or measures, and in the Deinstitutionalization Task Force; (b) Support services at home and in the community, allowing persons with disabilities to enjoy their right to live independently and to freely choose their place of residence, such as specific measures, personal assistance, reasonable accommodation or long-term health services, as well as the funding of these measures; please also provide information about the application of the Personal Assistance Act and about its results in practice; (c)

		Measures taken or planned to render the housing policy inclusive, and the close consultation with and active involvement of persons with disabilities through their organizations in the drafting and monitoring of that policy; (d) Data and statistics on persons with disabilities still in institutional settings, disaggregated by age, gender, and type of impairment, and on measures facilitating their transition from institutions to life in the community; (e) The use of European and national funds for the maintenance and building of institutional facilities for persons with disabilities, and on any measures ensuring that such funds are used to promote community living and community-based support services. Please include current data on the use of such funds.
SK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	19. With reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations (paras. 56 and 58), please provide information on: (a) Progress made in the deinstitutionalization process of persons with disabilities, as evidenced by data disaggregated by age, sex and ethnicity, as well as on persons who have been deinstitutionalized and on the number of persons who have regained their legal capacity as a result of the deinstitutionalization process; (b) Individualized supports, such as personal assistance, available to persons with disabilities, including those deinstitutionalized in the last five years, who live in the community, and on the personnel and the technical and financial means allocated to such support services at the national and local levels; (c) Measures taken to prevent the reinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities, including older persons with disabilities in small congregated settings, such as group homes; (d) Measures taken to redirect budget allocations for institutions, including those allocations from the European Structural and Investment Funds, towards initiatives that provide support for inclusion in the community, and to ensure accessibility of mainstream community services at the municipal level. Please provide information about any national targets to increase accessibility of community services and on the indicators of progress.

4.1.3 Information about education and training

Table 11: Examples of education information requested in the CRPD review process

MS	Source	Information requested on education (Article 24 CRPD and SDG 4)
AT	2018 List of issues prior to reporting	41. Please provide information on the funding available to provide reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities based on individual requirements, to provide students with disabilities with the support they require within the mainstream education system, and to continue training teachers and all other educational and non-teaching staff to accommodate quality inclusive educational settings, in line with general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education. Please indicate what measures are taken to promote and encourage the training and hiring of teachers with disabilities. Please provide information on measures taken to implement targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals.
BE	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	22. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to adopt and implement a coherent and inclusive education strategy, in all communities of the State party, to transform the parallel-track education system, which includes special education, into a quality, inclusive system that provides support in the mainstream system for all children with disabilities, including children with intellectual disabilities. Please include information on the benchmarks, baselines and indicators used for the strategy, and on the resources allocated to its implementation; (b) The financial, material and human resources available to provide individualized support for students with disabilities, and on the applicable accessibility standards within the framework of inclusive education; (c) Measures taken to promote and encourage the training and hiring of teachers with disabilities.

CZ	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	20. Please provide updated information on: (a) The implementation of the amended School Act (Act No. 561/2004 Coll., amended by Act No. 82/2015 Coll.) to ensure the right to inclusive education; (b) The allocation of financial, technical and human resources to ensure the right of all children with disabilities, including Roma children with disabilities, to a high-quality, inclusive education, and to provide teachers with training that fosters inclusive education, in both rural and urban settings, with Braille and sign language interpretation made available; (c) Efforts to transform segregated education into an inclusive education environment in both urban and rural areas, particularly for persons with intellectual disabilities or autism and deafblind persons. Please also provide an update on the achievement of objectives 10.1 to 10.32 of the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2020.
DK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	22. Please provide information on: (a) Measures taken to include all children with disabilities in the inclusive education system, including in compulsory education, and to provide the required support and accommodation, in particular for autistic children and children requiring high levels of support; (b) Steps taken to train teachers and other members of school staff and to equip them with inclusive education skills, methodological knowledge and expertise to facilitate access by pupils with disabilities to inclusive education, and on the human, technical and financial resources provided to schools, including in Greenland and the Faroe Islands; (c) Measures to tackle the low educational outcomes of persons with disabilities, including in vocational training; (d) The number and percentage of children with disabilities with access to inclusive quality education, disaggregated by age and sex, type of impairment, type of school and municipality; (e) Awareness-raising and the effective dissemination of the Committee's general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education among professionals, in close partnership with representative organizations of persons with disabilities.
HR	2020 List of issues prior to reporting	47. The Committee recommends that the State party formulate a comprehensive inclusive education policy with strategies for promoting a culture of inclusion in mainstream education, including individualized human-rights based assessments of educational requirements and necessary accommodation, support for teachers, respect for diversity in ensuring the rights to equality and non-discrimination, and the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society.'
FI	2023 List of issues	21. Please provide information on: (a) Measures taken to implement a comprehensive inclusive education strategy in mainland Finland and Åland at all levels of education; (b) The accessibility of the physical environment and information and communications in regular schools and higher education settings; (c) Measures taken to ensure that students with disabilities, regardless of type of impairment, have access to individualized support, inclusive learning methodologies and materials, adaptive learning environments and reasonable accommodation, such as textbooks in Braille, Easy Read and accessible electronic formats and sign language interpreters; (d) The training provided for teachers and non-teaching education personnel, including school counsellors, on inclusive education and measures taken to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities in order to reduce stigma, discrimination and bullying in all educational settings; (e) Efforts to overcome disparities in access to early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education; (f) Initiatives to broaden the range of fields of study in vocational education; (g) The number of children with disabilities who have had access to education since 2016, disaggregated by age, sex, type of impairment, type of school and municipality.
LT	2023 List of issues	20. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken to adopt and implement a coherent and inclusive education strategy in all the country's municipalities to transform the parallel education system, which includes special education, into a high-quality and inclusive system that provides support for the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities into regular educational settings. Please include information on the strategy's benchmarks, baselines and indicators, on the resources allocated to its implementation and on the plans

		for improving accessibility in existing schools for all persons with disabilities, regardless of type of impairment; (b) The financial, material and human resources available to provide individual support to students with disabilities and the accessibility standards applicable under the framework of inclusive education in the private and public sectors; (c) Steps taken to promote and encourage the training and employment of teachers with disabilities; (d) Measures to reduce stigma towards children with disabilities in the education system and to provide information and assistance to the parents of children with disabilities who fear the inclusion of their children in regular education; (e) Measures to provide reasonable accommodation to all students with disabilities in the general education system.
NL	2022 List of issues	22. Please provide information on: (a) Plans to discontinue the dual education system and implement the inclusive education system, and plans to build a strategy with clear targets and an allocated budget for inclusive education for all children with disabilities; (b) Plans to recognize the denial of access to education in general schools for a child with disabilities as a form of discrimination; (c) Measures taken to ensure access for all children with disabilities to general schools in their communities, and to ensure the necessary support, in particular the provision of reasonable accommodation, for children with disabilities in the general education system; (d) Measures taken to ensure access to inclusive tertiary education, including vocational and higher education, for children and adults with disabilities; (e) Training provided to general education teachers on the rights of children with disabilities to inclusive education, and on inclusive education methods and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, education techniques and materials; (f) Data, disaggregated by age, sex and type of impairment, on children with disabilities in special education settings, including in special education schools and special education classes within the general education system, as well as on children with disabilities in the general education system.
SI	2023 List of issues prior to reporting	22. Please provide information on: (a) Steps taken or planned to adopt and implement an inclusive education strategy at all levels of education, from kindergarten to tertiary education, and to implement the European Union youth and mobility programmes, including the improvement of accessibility of existing schools for all students with disabilities. Please include information on an eventual strategy's time frame and monitoring mechanisms and indicators, and on the resources allocated for its implementation, as well as on the implementation of the Act Regulating the Integrated Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs, including the percentage of children with disabilities in inclusive preschool; (b) The recognition of a legally enforceable right to inclusive education for all students with disabilities, and a respective obligation by the State party; (c) Measures taken or planned to provide reasonable accommodation and individual support to students with disabilities at all levels of the education system, in the public and private sectors, as well as on the financial, material and human resources available in this regard; (d) Transport services for students with disabilities from their place of residence to their education facilities, particularly on the kindergarten and primary education levels; (e) Steps taken or planned to promote and encourage the training and employment of teachers with disabilities, and for training and awareness-raising of all teachers about inclusive education, curriculum accommodation and teaching methods for students with disabilities.
SK	2019 List of issues prior to reporting	17. Please provide information about: (a) Measures taken to include all children with disabilities in their nearest mainstream education school and ensure the availability of the necessary support; (b) Steps taken to abolish the provision of the Education Act allowing schools to deny a place to pupils with disabilities when taking them would involve significant organizational or financial difficulties, and to allocate sufficient human, technical and financial support to schools; (c) The number and percentage of children with disabilities with access to education, disaggregated by age and sex, type of impairment, type of school, and municipality.

4.2 UN recommendations to Member States

4.2.1 Recommendations relevant to employment

Table 12: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 27 CRPD (work and employment)

MS	Year	Recommendations (employment)
AT	2023	62. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Further develop and implement the projects in the National Action Plan on Disability for the period 2022-2030, in close consultation with and the active involvement of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, and incorporate specific measures into the Plan, endowed with adequate resources, time frames and monitoring mechanisms, ensuring the transition from segregated employment to employment on the open labour market for all persons with disabilities; (b) Render the assessment of the ability to work compliant with the human rights model of disability, do not apply it to children, re-evaluate assessments periodically, provide an effective remedy against assessments, ensure that persons with disabilities retain their social security status, including health and pension insurance, irrespective of the outcome of the assessment, and apply that status retroactively to persons with disabilities already assessed as 'unfit for work'; (c) Ensure equal payment for work of equal value to all persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, adopt measures to eliminate the gender gap in employment, including pay, and secure the provision of employment contracts or the conferment of the legal status of employee, and recognition as self-employed, for all persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others; (d) Harmonize disability benefits with payment from gainful employment, avoiding negative repercussions on disability benefits from taking up employment; (e) Ground the prerequisites for the provision of reasonable accommodation in the workplace, including personal assistance, in the human rights model of disability, as enshrined in the Convention; (f) Provide inclusive vocational orientation and training to persons with disabilities, in particular young persons with disabilities.
BE	2014	39. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary regulatory measures and incentives to guarantee the right of persons with disabilities to employment, in both the private sector and the public sector. It should ensure that they have effective protection against discrimination, vocational training, adequate accessibility and the necessary reasonable accommodation.
BG	2018	58. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Adopt a policy framework and a strategy to promote employment for persons with disabilities in the open labour market, including by increasing resources for it, with the aim to facilitate transition from sheltered employment to the open labour market; (b) Recognize in its legal and policy framework the right of persons with disabilities to reasonable accommodation at the workplace; (c) Raise awareness among public and private companies about reasonable accommodation at work; (d) Strengthen training programmes for persons with disabilities on skills that are required in the open labour market and skills in entrepreneurship, and collect disaggregated and targeted data about the participation of women and men with disabilities in programmes and the outcome of training for them.
CY	2017	54. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure access to employment in the open labour market, including by ensuring that the private sector is also covered by a quota system and by ensuring equal pay for work of equal value in all settings for all persons with disabilities being guided by target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It furthermore recommends that the State party collect data on the employment of persons with disabilities, disaggregated by gender, age and type of impairment.
CZ	2015	52. The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure the same wage for all persons with disabilities, regardless of their disability classification. It also urges the State party to develop measures, intensify efforts and allocate sufficient

		resources to promoting the employment in the open labour market of persons with disabilities, especially women.
DE	2023	62. With reference to its general comment No. 8 (2022) and recalling the recommendations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Develop, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, an action plan to promote the transition of persons with disabilities in sheltered workshops to the open labour market across the Länder that sets forth a suitable allocation of resources and specific time frame; (b) Enforce the implementation of the quotas of employment for persons with disabilities in both the public and the private sectors, including through measures more effective than the current compensatory levy, and ensure the accessibility of and reasonable accommodation in workplaces; (c) Restructure the vocational training system and take measures to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness, including through the establishment of a complaints mechanism to investigate discriminatory practices on the basis of disability in the field of vocational rehabilitation and work.
DK	2014	59. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to significantly increase, as soon as possible, the percentage of persons with disabilities working in the open labour market, including amendments to the general labour legislation so that it imposes clear obligations on employers to afford reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.
EE	2021	53. The Committee recommends that the State party, in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals: (a) Strengthen measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to work and employment in the open labour market and to inclusive work environments, including persons with disabilities taking part in deinstitutionalization processes, persons with disabilities living in rural areas, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with hearing impairments and persons with psychosocial disabilities; (b) Adopt a strategy to abolish sheltered employment. The State party should review the labour conditions of all persons with disabilities and ensure that persons with disabilities are not paid below the minimum wage; (c) Adopt measures, alongside the work ability reform, to combat attitudinal barriers among employers and adopt an action plan to assess periodically accessibility in the workplace, including access to transportation, alternative means of information and communication, sign language and speech-to-text interpretation and pictograms for job seekers and employees. The State party should adopt policies and procedures that establish and support the development of infrastructure for the provision of personal assistance in the workplace; (d) Ensure that the right to seek reasonable accommodation in the workplace is recognized for employees in the public and private sectors; (e) Develop a comprehensive system of vocational and professional training for persons with disabilities and for their effective transition from vocational and tertiary education to work in the open labour market.
EL	2019	39. The Committee recommends that the State party take effective measures to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in the open labour market, with a view to achieving target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also recommends that the State party ensure the provision of specific measures and individualized support in the workplace; promote among employers the right of persons with disabilities to employment on an equal basis with others; and mainstream the disability dimension in all employment policies, measures and programmes, including in the policy design of the Greek Manpower Employment Organization.
ES	2019	51. The Committee recommends that the State party, in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals: (a) Analyse and modify legislation, regulations and policies to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors, with particular emphasis on women with disabilities and persons with disabilities living in rural areas; (b) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is available and accessible for persons with disabilities with administrative safeguards, especially in cases of accidents that have led to disabilities in the workplace; (c) Adopt concrete measures to fully implement the legal quota established in the revised text of Act No. 9/2017 on public sector contracts.

FR	2021	55. The Committee recommends that, in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the State party: (a) Move towards eradicating all forms of segregated work, strengthen measures to effectively abolish sheltered employment and adopt a time-bound policy and benchmarks to ensure that all persons with disabilities have access to work and employment in the open labour market, regardless of the type of impairment or level of support required, and their meaningful inclusion in work environments, in the private and public sectors; (b) Review the labour conditions of all persons with disabilities and ensure that persons with disabilities are not paid below the minimum wage; (c) Promote the employment of women with disabilities in the open labour market, ensuring that they are informed about and can effectively seek individualized support through the provision of reasonable accommodation, and have access to effective measures to balance work and family life; (d) Develop awareness-raising campaigns aimed at promoting the participation of women with disabilities in employment and at shifting attitudinal barriers to the recognition of the capacities of women with disabilities and their contribution to all domains of work in the open labour market, on an equal basis with others; (e) Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, vocational and continuing training, and to guidance towards employment on an equal basis with others, and adopt measures to support the careers of persons with disabilities who wish to work as researchers through multi-year planning in research establishments; (f) Ensure that the right to seek individualized support through the provision of reasonable accommodation in the workplace is recognized by employees in the public and private sectors, and strengthen measures to inform and facilitate the recognition of reasonable accommodation for employees in the workplace.
HR	2015	42. The Committee recommends that the State party develop and implement, in cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities, a plan of action to increase the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market. It recommends that the quota system is complemented with other incentives for employers to hire persons with disabilities. Disincentives to employment for persons with disabilities should be analysed and remedied. Reasonable accommodation, including supported employment with personal assistance, and the accessibility of the workplace, should be regulated and monitored.
HU	2022	53. The Committee recommends that in line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the State party: (a) Revise the existing legislation and measures of support for the employment of persons with disabilities and take comprehensive measures aimed at effectively supporting the work and employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market and in inclusive work environments; (b) Adopt legislative and policy measures to protect the rights of persons with disabilities to just and favourable conditions of work, and ensure that persons with disabilities are not paid below the minimum wage and are provided with work contracts and equal remuneration for work on an equal basis with others; (c) Redirect the allocations for the employment of person[s] with disabilities from sheltered employment to support the employment of persons with disabilities, including of persons who require higher levels of support and deinstitutionalized persons, and ensure that the right to seek reasonable accommodation in the workplace is recognized for employees in the public and private sectors; (d) Monitor, in close consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, the accessibility of workplaces across the State party and adopt an action plan with the aim of outlining measures, with time frames and adequate budgets, to ensure reasonable accommodation in and the accessibility of workplaces, including access to transportation.
IT	2016	70. The Committee recommends that the State party be guided by article 27 of the Convention in implementing targets 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals; and that it ensure the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. In addition, the State party must implement special measures to address the low level of employment for women with disabilities. It also recommends that the State party remove any legislation limiting the rights of

		persons with disabilities to perform any profession on the grounds of their disability.
LT	2016	52. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, eliminate the concept of 'working incapacity' of persons with disabilities and develop and implement efficient strategies and programmes aimed at increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, by eliminating segregated work environments and investing in promoting vocational training, access to appropriately adjusted workplaces, the provision of reasonable accommodation and the training of private and public employers, as set out in target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
LU	2017	47. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt measures to phase out sheltered workshops, with a time-bound schedule and plan for transfer of those currently employed in sheltered workshops into the open labour market, and increase the level of employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, in line with the Convention and in view of target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that it ensure the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. It also recommends that the State party: (a) Designate an entity for monitoring and sanctioning non-compliance of labour quotas in both the private and public sectors; (b) Take measures to ensure the effective monitoring of the provision of reasonable accommodation, with appropriate remedies for the denial of requests; (c) Provide vocational and professional training and provide incentives for the self-employment of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities.
LV	2017	47. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure support for the employment of all persons with disabilities in the open labour market in inclusive employment settings on an equal basis with others; (b) Pay attention to the links between article 27 of the Convention and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
MT	2018	40. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt further enforcement mechanisms and incentives to ensure the implementation of the quota system under articles 15 and 16 of the Persons with Disability (Employment) Act and other measures to support persons with disabilities to work in the open labour market, in accordance with the Convention and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and ensure the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all. It also recommends that the State party: (a) Amend article 17 (3) of its Constitution to bring it in conformity with article 27 of the Convention; (b) Review the quota system under the Persons with Disability (Employment) Act in order to make it applicable to enterprises with less than 20 employees; (c) Replace any assessment of suitability to work with an assessment that considers the needs and requirements for reasonable accommodation at work for persons with disabilities; (d) Step up efforts to raise awareness among employers on the rights of persons with disabilities to work in the open labour market, in particular the provision of reasonable accommodation, and on the benefits of employing persons with disabilities.
PL	2018	48. The Committee recommends that the State party develop legislation and measures for the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, and that it in particular: (a) Promote the work and employment of women with disabilities, and ensure equal income, particularly in rural areas; (b) Promote decent work for persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in public and private sectors and provide specific incentives and support for reasonable accommodation, including individual assistance for employing persons with a wide range of disabilities; (c) Ensure that the employment quota of 6 per cent for persons with disabilities is reached in all sectors, in particular in the public administration sector; (d) Ensure that open labour market activation programmes effectively include all persons with disabilities.
PT	2016	52. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, review its public- and private-sector labour legislation to bring it into line with the Convention and that it take measures to enforce the law and apply the stipulated penalties for non-

		compliance. The Committee also recommends that it do away with segregated working environments, that it review the legislation regulating the Occupational Activity Centres from a human rights perspective to bring them into line with the Convention and that it step up efforts to promote access to the regular labour market for persons with intellectual disabilities and autism. The State party should promote corporate social responsibility in connection with the employment of persons with disabilities. The Committee recommends that the State party consider the links between article 27 of the Convention and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
SE	2014	58. With reference to its general comment No. 8 (2022), the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Review the existing national legislation to address systemic, intersectional and structural barriers experienced by persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities, young persons with disabilities, national minorities with disabilities, migrants with disabilities and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and take measures to increase the number of persons with disabilities in open labour market and review the assessment of reduced capacity to work; (b) Enforce the implementation of the quotas of employment for persons with disabilities in both the public and the private sectors and ensure the accessibility of and reasonable accommodation in workplaces; (c) Strengthen the vocational and professional training system and take measures to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness, including through the establishment of a complaint mechanism to investigate discriminatory practices on the basis of disability in the field of vocational rehabilitation and work, and ensure the effective transition from vocational and tertiary education to work in the open labour market.
SI	2018	46. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Adopt measures aimed at promoting an inclusive, open and accessible labour market in all sectors for all persons with disabilities; (b) Create specific incentives for employers and provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, particularly for persons with intellectual disabilities, aimed at facilitating their inclusion in the open labour market; (c) Ensure the safeguarding of all incomes, including disability pensions for self-employed persons with disabilities; (d) Ensure equal requirements for employment quotas in the public administration and information services and other work sectors, and monitor their implementation. The State party should collect data on compliance with the quota system and provide for adequate sanctions in cases of non-compliance.
SK	2016	74. The Committee recommends that the State party step up efforts on the transition from sheltered workshops to an open labour market for all. The process must include an action plan, timetable, budget and training for public and private sector employers, including on the provision of reasonable accommodation. The Committee also recommends that the State party pay attention to the links between article 27 of the Convention and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4.2.2 Recommendations relevant to social policies and healthcare

Table 13: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 28 CRPD (social protection)

MS	Year	Recommendations (social protection)
AT	2023	66. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Take effective measures, including full coverage by the social security scheme, to eradicate poverty among persons with disabilities; (b) Provide access to disability support schemes for refugees with disabilities and persons with disabilities in refugee-like situations, including persons with disabilities under temporary protection, preventing them from falling into poverty.
BE	2014	There was no recommendation on Article 28.

BG	2018	60. The Committee recommends that the State party revise the criteria for assessing the degree of impairment, incorporate the human rights model of disability in the assessment process, and ensure that persons with disabilities continue to enjoy an adequate standard of living. It also calls upon the State party to intensify its efforts to ensure that all persons with disabilities can meet the additional costs of disability, including by increasing budget allocations and resources accordingly.
CY	2017	56. The Committee recommends that the State party implement progressively measures to ensure adequate income of persons with disabilities in order to reduce significantly the pay gap between persons with and without disabilities, regardless of gender, ethnic origin or age, and that it abolish the requirement of user payment for social services and support and partial payment for disability-related expenses and assistive devices, being guided by target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party identify a social protection floor that is not affected by expenses for disability-related costs and assistive devices and user payments for social services and support, in order to alleviate the socioeconomic disadvantages that result from the exclusion experienced by persons with disabilities.
CZ	2015	54. The Committee calls upon the State party to review the legislation on the provision of benefits to persons with disabilities, with genuine participation of persons with disabilities, to reintroduce the additional social allowance in order to bring the standard of living of families with children with disabilities above the subsistence level. The State party should also broaden the range of and facilitate access to assistive devices for children with disabilities, regardless of age.
DE	2023	64. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Take all necessary measures to address the increased risk of poverty among persons with disabilities and mainstream disability into all studies, research, policies and plans related to poverty reduction; (b) Revise benefit assessment rules for persons with disabilities in order to meet the individual support requirements of persons with disabilities; (c) Revise the integration assistance benefits of persons with disabilities to allow for savings on an equal basis with others and guarantee their financial security in old age.
DK	2014	There was no recommendation on Article 28.
EE	2021	55. Taking into account the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities into the national strategy for poverty eradication, including by taking concrete, expeditious measures and by earmarking budgets to address situations of disadvantage and exclusion concerning older persons with disabilities, in particular older women with disabilities; (b) Prioritize persons with disabilities in the socioeconomic response to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure access to appropriate and affordable services and facilities for the general population, assistance, transportation and public housing programmes for persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities.
EL	2019	41. The Committee recommends that the State party revise the relevant legal provisions and practices on welfare allowances, benefits, pensions and tax exemptions for persons with disabilities, harmonizing the existing rules and repealing discriminatory rules and practices, including in the disability certification system. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure the effective implementation of the existing social protection framework, and progressively develop further measures to ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities.
ES	2019	53. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure that the national strategy for reducing poverty incorporates a disability perspective, including specific measures and an allocated budget; (b) Repeal the co-payments system for all services necessary for living independently in the community and ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to those services.

FR	2021	57. 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) Assess the implementation of disability legislation and policies at the national and regional levels with the aim of ensuring equal access to support for persons with disabilities regardless of their age, and streamline procedures at the municipal level to provide persons with disabilities with support. The State party should provide persons with disabilities with information about their rights and entitlements in accessible formats, including Easy Read; (b) Review the provisions concerning the allocation and the amount of the adult disability allowance in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities; (c) Streamline social security support systems to ensure that they are accessible to all persons with disabilities, as a measure to tackle poverty; (d) Design and implement programmes to establish accessible housing and reinforce human rights-based support schemes for all persons with disabilities to cover disability-related expenses and to enable them to gain access to an adequate standard of living.
HR	2015	44. The Committee recommends that poverty reduction programmes be strengthened. It also recommends that benefits aimed at alleviating increased costs arising from disability should be based on an assessment of the individual's support needs and should disregard any financial assets test.
HU	2022	55. The Committee recommends that the State Party take appropriate legislative steps to:(a) Recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for them and their families and to progressive improvement in their living conditions through decent disability allowances and benefits and accessible and available housing and services in the community; (b) Redress the negative impacts of the reform of the disability benefits schemes in 2012 and ensure that persons with disabilities are compensated for the damage caused by the reform; (c) Revise the disability entitlement system to make it accessible and easy to use for all persons with disabilities, through the provision of alternative and augmentative modes of information and communication.
IT	2016	72. The Committee recommends that the State party expedite constitutional reform to homogenize social protection interventions and policies throughout the national territory; expedite the adoption and implementation of the Minimum Standards of Social Assistance; conduct assessments of the impact of austerity measures on children and adults with disabilities; and prevent any further reduction in resources that could increase levels of poverty. It also recommends that the State party be guided by article 28 of the Convention in implementing target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, including by mainstreaming disability in its poverty reduction policies.
LT	2016	54. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt new policies that secure income levels among persons with disabilities and their families that are adequate and equal to the income levels of others, and that take into account additional disability-related costs. 56. The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to secure that persons with disabilities and their families are not disproportionately affected by budget cuts and to ensure an adequate standard of living through income support and social security, taking note of target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which calls on States to implement appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors.
LU	2017	49. The Committee recommends that the State party collect data on the socioeconomic situation of persons with disabilities to design appropriate policies to ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and their families. It also recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure that social protection policies and programmes secure income levels by taking into account the additional costs related to disability; (b) Guarantee that persons with disabilities have access to sufficient community-based social services, public housing programmes and support services for living independently respectful of the rights, will and preferences of persons with disabilities; (c) Pay attention to the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the

		Sustainable Development Goals, which calls upon States to implement appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors.
LV	2017	49. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and their families, by guaranteeing, inter alia, that social protection and poverty reduction programmes take into account the additional costs related to disability; (b) Pay attention to the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
MT	2018	There was no recommendation on Article 28.
PL	2018	50. Taking into account the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Emphasize the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly of women with disabilities, and mainstream them into the national strategy for reducing poverty with concrete measures and relevant budget; (b) Ensure that the employment of persons with disabilities does not make them ineligible for disability-related protection schemes, such as disability allowances; (c) Collect disaggregated data on the poverty of persons with disabilities, and monitor the effectiveness of social security mechanisms designed to combat poverty; (d) Ensure specific measures to ensure access to housing for persons with disabilities; (e) Ensure that the term 'public housing' is translated correctly in the Polish-language version of the Convention.
PT	2016	54. The Committee recommends that the State party, in cooperation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, take the following measures: (a) Urgently review austerity measures to prevent further negative and regressive effects on the standard of living and social protection of persons with disabilities by taking steps that enable them to be included in the community; (b) Provide support services for living independently and residential homes respectful of the rights of persons with disabilities, their wishes and preferences, in addition to providing cash subsidies to make it possible for unemployed persons with disabilities and without family support to have a decent standard of living; (c) Step up efforts, in line with the human rights approach of the Convention, to strengthen the right to a decent standard of living and the social protection of persons with disabilities who are living in poverty and extreme poverty, allocating funds sufficient for that purpose; (d) Consider the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of their disability.
SE	2014	60. Recalling the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to empower and to promote the economic inclusion of all persons, irrespective of disability status, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Take all measures necessary to address the increased risk of poverty among persons with disabilities and mainstream disability into all studies, research, policies and plans related to poverty reduction; (b) Ensure equal access to support by persons with disabilities, across all regions and municipalities, and simplify procedures for the submission of applications for support; (c) Provide access to disability support schemes for asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants with disabilities, including persons with disabilities under temporary protection in order to prevent them from falling into poverty.
SI	2018	48. In the light of the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection and poverty reduction programmes for persons with disabilities, especially persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities; (b) Restore all support measures curtailed under the austerity policy and prevent any hardship that may be faced by persons with disabilities whose income was reduced as a result of that policy; (c) Ensure the accessibility of public housing for persons with disabilities, disseminate information about available and affordable housing in accessible formats and engage with the private sector with a view to promoting the development of accessible housing units; (d) Implement positive measures to provide taxation relief in respect of pensions and disability

		insurance for persons with disabilities living in poverty; (e) Recognize the right of persons with disabilities to receive a full disability pension and insurance through the relevant legal and administrative mechanisms; (f) Ensure a dignified and inclusive social protection system for older persons with disabilities.
SK	2016	76. The Committee recommends that the State party provide an adequate standard of living to persons with disabilities, including those from an ethnic minority background and those over the age of 65, and ensure that social protection schemes are regularly monitored to track the alleviation of poverty. The Committee also recommends that the State party pay attention to the links between article 28 of the Convention and target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Table 14: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 19 CRPD (living independently)

MS	Year	Recommendations (independent living)
AT	2023	48. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2017) and its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Establish a comprehensive, nationwide deinstitutionalization strategy, with benchmarks, time frames and funding, encompassing the competencies of the federal Government, the Länder and the municipalities, and ensure close consultation with and the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in all deinstitutionalization processes; (b) Enact legislation, at the federal, Länder and – if appropriate – municipal levels, providing the requisite legal bases to end the institutionalization of persons with disabilities and to provide adequate accessible housing and support services for persons with disabilities to live independently in the community, and implement it expeditiously; (c) Guarantee an enforceable legal right to adequate financial, technical and personal support to live independently in the community; (d) Urge the participation of all Länder in the pilot project to harmonize personal assistance regulations; (e) Refrain from any further investment, including through European Funds, in existing or new institutions for persons with disabilities and allocate appropriate financial, technical and educational resources to foster the right to independent living of all persons with disabilities.
BE	2014	33. The Committee recommends that the State party work towards deinstitutionalization by reducing investment in collective infrastructure and promoting personal choice. The Committee urges the State party to implement a disability action plan at all levels of the State to guarantee access to services and an independent life for persons with disabilities so that they are able to live in the community. The action plan must eliminate current waiting lists and ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sufficient financial resources and that communities are accessible for persons with disabilities. The Committee recommends that the State party devise international cooperation programmes that respect the right of persons with disabilities to live in the community and involve disabled persons' representatives and their families in their preparation.
BG	2018	40. The Committee, in accordance with its general comment No. 5, recommends that the State party: (a) Accelerate the transition process to ensure that all persons with disabilities living in any form of institution, such as psychiatric hospital units or in small community-based group homes, have the right to live independently within the community with choices equal to those of other persons; in the deinstitutionalization process, the State party should focus on the situation of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, and children and elderly persons with disabilities; (b) Allocate greater resources for developing individualized support services for persons with disabilities, regardless of the type of impairment or age; such services should include peer support and personal assistance; (c) Adopt legislation on individualized and self-managed personal assistance and social and support services, recognizing the right to live independently and be included in the community as a subjective right for all persons with disabilities, regardless of their impairment or required level of support; (d) Implement a procedure to consult in a meaningful and disability-sensitive manner with organizations of persons with disabilities on all aspects of the

		implementation of article 19, including deinstitutionalization strategies and processes; (e) Allocate national financial resources and those provided by the European Union to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, and introduce efficient remedies and guidelines to avoid spending national and international funds on establishing infrastructure, housing and/or services that are not accessible or affordable to all persons with disabilities.
CY	2017	44. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, and in line with article 4 (3) of the Convention: (a) Develop and implement safeguards securing the right to independent living; (b) Adopt and immediately implement an adequately funded deinstitutionalization strategy; (c) Redirect resources allocated to institutionalization and earmark and allocate them to community-based services and increase the budget enabling persons with disabilities to live independently across the State party with access to individually assessed and adequate services, including personal assistance, within the community.
CZ	2015	40. The Committee recommends that the State party take all measures necessary to ensure that policy processes for deinstitutionalization, including the development of the National Plan on Promoting Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2020, have a clear timeline and concrete benchmarks for implementation that are monitored effectively at regular intervals. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to abolish the placement of children under 3 years of age in institutionalized care as soon as possible.
DE	2023	44. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2017), its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities on the transformation of services for persons with disabilities, the Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities: (a) Develop a comprehensive deinstitutionalization strategy to end, as a matter of priority, the institutionalization of persons with disabilities, including in small residential homes, with measures to prevent trans institutionalization and to support the transition from institutions to life in the community, with specific time frames, human, technical and financial resources and clear responsibilities for implementation and monitoring; (b) Develop measures to remove barriers for persons with disabilities to choose where and with whom they live, including by committing to increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing, establishing personal assistance supports and services, removing additional cost requirements and the forced pooling of inclusion benefits and services, reducing the complexity of utilizing personal budgets and basing benefit allowances on individual requirements rather than shared accommodation.
DK	2014	43. The Committee recommends that the State party end the use of State-guaranteed loans to build institution-like residences for persons with disabilities; that it amend the legislation on social services so that persons with disabilities may freely choose where and with whom they live, while enjoying the necessary assistance to live independently; and that it take measures to close existing institution-like residences and to prevent the forced relocation of persons with disabilities, in order to avoid isolation from the community.
EE	2021	39. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 5 (2017) and recommends that the State party: (a) Adopt a strategy that includes awareness-raising activities to promote understanding of the right to choose and self-determination of persons with disabilities concerning their living arrangements, the right not to be obliged to live in a particular living arrangement and the value of inclusion in, as opposed to segregation from, the community; (b) Enact a moratorium on the institutionalization of persons with disabilities, revise its deinstitutionalization strategy, redirect the use of public funds, including the European regional development funds, to the development of individualized support for living independently and ensure that programmes based on congregated settings, such as ‘home-like institutions’, ‘family type houses’ and ‘special care villages’, are amended so as to prioritize inclusion in the community; (c) Develop a system for self-managed personal assistance that includes person-directed tools for supporting living independently in the community in accordance with an individual’s requirements and preferences; (d) Set up a time frame and

		benchmarks for achieving the accessibility of mainstream services for the general population by persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others.
EL	2019	29. The Committee recommends that, in line with its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, the State party: (a) Adopt a comprehensive national strategy with clear time-bound measures and sufficient funds for effective deinstitutionalization at all levels; (b) Ensure the active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in the development of independent living strategies and schemes that provide accessible community-based services, especially at the local level.
ES	2019	38. With reference to the Committee's general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, the Committee recommends that the State party, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities: (a) Recognize the right to personal assistance in law, ensuring that all persons with disabilities are entitled to personal assistance, with individualized criteria for their independent living in the community and with access to a wide range of person-directed or user-led support and the self-management of service delivery; (b) Discontinue the use of public funds to build residential institutions for persons with disabilities and invest in independent living arrangements in the community and in all general services to make those arrangements inclusive, guaranteeing their accessibility and availability for all persons with disabilities, to enable their inclusion and participation in all spheres of life; (c) Design, adopt and implement a comprehensive deinstitutionalization strategy and implement safeguards to ensure the right to live independently and be included in the community across all regions, by redirecting resources from institutions to community-based services and increasing budgetary support for persons with disabilities to enhance their equal access to services, including personal assistance.
FR	2021	41. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, and recommends that the State party, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities: (a) End the institutionalization of children and adults with disabilities, including in small residential homes, and launch a national strategy and action plans to end the institutionalization of persons with disabilities, with time-bound benchmarks, human, technical and financial resources, responsibilities for implementation and monitoring, and measures to support the transition from institutions to life in the community; (b) Ensure the implementation of the agreement concerning the moratorium on placing persons with disabilities in Belgian institutions, and strengthen measures to support families of children with disabilities and to uphold the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and in the community; (c) Recognize the right to live independently and to be included in the community in legislation and take measures to implement it, and develop awareness-raising measures, including campaigns, about it and about the harmful effects of institutionalization on persons with disabilities; (d) Ensure the availability of support to live independently and in the community, such as user-led budgets and personalized support, and enable persons with disabilities to exercise choice and control over their lives and to make decisions concerning where and with whom to live, as outlined in general comment No. 5 (2017); (e) Adopt measures to ensure the access of persons with disabilities to affordable and accessible housing on the basis of individual choice and outside any type of congregated premises; (f) Establish a time frame and benchmarks for achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities to mainstream community services, such as education, health, work and employment.
HR	2015	30. The Committee recommends that the process of deinstitutionalization include all residential institutions and foster homes for all persons with disabilities. It recommends that a legal framework be adopted to provide for entitlement to personal assistance services in the community and that a process be initiated to make local communities and mainstream services accessible to persons with disabilities.
HU	2022	41. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2017), the Committee reiterates the recommendations set out in its report on the inquiry concerning Hungary under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, urging the State party to: (a) Discontinue the institutionalization of children with disabilities and ensure their right to a family life by redirecting investments from institutions into support measures for

		families and the provision of inclusive community services, such as inclusive early intervention, across the State party; (b) Ensure independent monitoring of the deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities and independent methodological support for that process, with the close involvement of disability rights organizations; (c) Revise its deinstitutionalization strategy with the aim of redefining its objectives; (d) Redesign its measures and redirect its efforts and budgets into community-based support services, including personal assistance, with the aim of providing for persons with disabilities to live independently in the community equally with others, regardless of their type of impairment, guarantee that community services and facilities for the general population are available for persons with disabilities and ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity and right to choose their place of residence on an equal basis with others in the community.
IT	2016	48. The Committee recommends that the State party implement safeguards to retain the right to autonomous independent living across all regions, and redirect resources from institutionalization to community-based services and increase budget support to enable persons with disabilities to live independently across the country and have equal access to services, including personal assistance.
LT	2016	40. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities: (a) Adopt an adequately funded strategy for deinstitutionalization ensuring a range of community-based services for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, including for children with intellectual and/or psychosocial impairments, including their right to live independently in the community, with the possibility of individualized personal assistance support services in their home; (b) Effectively implement the action plan for the implementation of the national programme for the social integration of persons with disabilities for the period 2013-2019 at all levels of the State; (c) Adopt a moratorium on new admissions of children into institutionalized care; (d) Eliminate excessive waiting time for receiving support services by investing in developing new services and rendering existing services accessible and inclusive and ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sufficient financial resources for independent living and improved access to accessible services in the community. 42. The Committee recommends that the State party further prioritize investing in a social service system for independent living in the community, and immediately refrain from using national and structural funds of the European Union to renovate, maintain or construct residential institutions for persons with disabilities.
LU	2017	37. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account its general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, and: (a) Adopt the legal and other measures necessary, including repealing Reform Act 7014 and relevant disability insurance systems, replacing them by legislation promoting the right to independent living and being included in the community, providing for, among others, personal assistance and clarifying the responsibilities and resource allocations of central and local authorities; (b) Develop and implement an effective deinstitutionalization plan, with a clear time frame and benchmarks, involving persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in all stages; (c) Adopt the measures necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities have a legal entitlement to a sufficient personal budget for independent living, which takes into account the additional costs related to disability and, at the same time, redirect resources from institutionalization to community-based services, while increasing the availability of personal assistance.
LV	2017	31. The Committee urges the State party to: (a) Expedite the complete deinstitutionalization of all persons with disabilities within a set time frame in order to close all remaining institutions, both those run by the State and the municipalities, ensuring that residents are not subject to transinstitutionalization; (b) Reinforce the engagement of municipalities in implementing the deinstitutionalization strategy, including through raising awareness about independent community-based living for persons with disabilities and ensuring sustainable provision of services to promote independent living following termination of European structural funds; (c) Ensure the provision of quality personal assistance that takes into account the individual needs of persons with disabilities and ensures their social inclusion and participation.
MT	2018	30. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account its general comment No. 5 (2017) and: (a) Ensure that existing residential institutions that

		contribute to the isolation of persons with disabilities are closed and that the provision of appropriate community-based services is strengthened; (b) Ensure that all projects supported by public funds are carried out in a community setting, do not contribute to isolation of persons with disabilities, are monitored by organizations of persons with disabilities and are provided with sustainable continuous funding; (c) Adopt the legal and other measures, such as the planned bill on personal autonomy and the bill on the Convention, necessary to make article 19 of the Convention justiciable; (d) Ensure that financial and other measures are in place to allow persons with disabilities to be provided with personal assistance and that personnel supporting persons with disabilities in the community are appropriately trained, if necessary.
PL	2018	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.
PT	2016	39. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, adopt a national strategy for living independently, including increased investment to facilitate living independently in the community rather than in institutions, that it regulate personal assistance and that it increase the availability of sign language interpreters and fingerspelling systems in public services. It also urges the State party to establish support services in the community for persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities.
SE	2014	42. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2017), its guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies, and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities on the transformation of services for persons with disabilities, the Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, take immediate action to develop and implement a national deinstitutionalization strategy that includes the following: (a) Legislative, administrative, policy and other measures to ensure nationally consistent access to individualized personal assistance and support to all persons with disabilities, including the 1 500 persons with disabilities who lost personal assistance between 2015 and 2022, and to persons with disabilities over the age of 66; (b) Independent monitoring of institutions until they are closed; (c) Relevant policies to close existing institutions and to prevent the reinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities; (d) Measures to strengthen the support system for children with disabilities to live with their families or grow up in family environments instead of institutions; (e) Measures to remove barriers for persons with disabilities to choose where and with whom they live, including an increase in the supply of safe, affordable and accessible community-based housing.
SI	2018	32. With reference to the Committee’s general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Adopt and implement a strategy and action plan, within a time frame, aimed at deinstitutionalization; (b) Prevent any form of reinstitutionalization and provide sufficient funding for developing community-based independent living schemes; (c) Allocate sufficient resources to ensure that services in the community are available, accessible, affordable, acceptable and accommodating of persons with disabilities, so that such persons may exercise their right to live independently and be included in their communities, in both urban and rural areas; (d) Strengthen the national and municipal capacity to implement deinstitutionalization, in close cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities.

SK	2016	56. The Committee recommends that the State party provide and implement a timetable to ensure that the implementation of the deinstitutionalization process is expedited, including by putting in place specific additional measures to ensure that community-based services are strengthened for all persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities and older persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the State party should ensure that the use of European structural and investment funds complies with article 19 and that new follow-up national action plans on the transition from institutional settings to community-based support are initiated with the comprehensive involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities and civil society organizations, including in the area of monitoring. The Committee also recommends that the State party no longer allocate resources from the national budget to institutions and that it reallocate resources into community-based services in accordance with the investment priorities of the European Regional Development Fund (art. 5.9 (a) of European Union regulation No. 1303/2013 . 58. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the equal distribution of resources for social care, with an emphasis on community-based services. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure that community-based social services and home-care services are available in all geographic regions and rural areas, and that funds are allocated to persons with disabilities who require them, especially those who are unemployed or in low-wage employment.

Table 15: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 25 CRPD (health)

MS	Year	Recommendations (Health)
AT	2023	58. The Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Significantly improve access to community-based mental health services for persons with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities, and collect data on the provision of such services and their results, disaggregated by age, sex, region and type of impairment; (b) Ensure access for women and girls with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities still in institutions, to sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception, and sex education; (c) Provide quality sign language interpretation in health services for persons with disabilities, including refugees and stateless persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities in refugee-like situations; (d) Effectively guarantee the accessibility, including physical accessibility, of health facilities and services.
BE	2014	There was no recommendation on Article 25.
BG	2018	51. The Committee notes with concern the lack of training for health-care professionals on the human rights of persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. It is also concerned about the lack of accessible information and services on sexual and reproductive health and the rights of women with disabilities. 52. The Committee recommends that the State party raise awareness of the human rights model of disability among all health professionals, including by providing training on the right to free and informed consent, and take note of article 25 of the Convention in the implementation of target 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also recommends that the State party adopt a policy framework and a time-bound strategy to provide women with disabilities with accessible sexual and reproductive health care and information, and with services appropriate to their age. The Committee notes with concern the limited access of persons with disabilities, in particular those with chronic, genetic and rare diseases, to diagnostics, health care and medical rehabilitation. 54. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular those with chronic, genetic and rare diseases, have access to diagnostics, health care and medical rehabilitation.
CY	2017	52. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with representative organizations of persons with disabilities with a special focus on the collaboration with women and girls with disabilities, and in line with article 4 (3) of the Convention, ensure accessibility to health services and facilities, and to information and communication regarding sexual and reproductive health rights and services on an equal basis with others, and that the health personnel be educated and trained on

		the rights of persons with disabilities. The Committee also recommends that the State party strengthen and implement mechanisms to combat discrimination and stereotyping in line with general comment No. 3 (2016) and targets 3.7, 3.8 and 5.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals in the field of access to health services. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party apply a human rights-based approach to disability in the provision of health services to persons with disabilities.
CZ	2015	50. The Committee calls upon the State party to intensify its efforts to make information on health care accessible for persons with disabilities and parents of boys and girls with disabilities, including by making information on relevant services available and accessible to persons with disabilities and their families and by providing sufficient sign language interpreters to deaf persons when they seek health care.
DE	2023	58. The Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Take measures to guarantee the availability and accessibility of health services across the Länder, in particular for women with disabilities and in rural areas, without discrimination, by identifying and removing barriers and providing accessible medical equipment; (b) Strengthen mechanisms for the regular training of health professionals about human rights, dignity, autonomy and the requirements of persons with disabilities; (c) Enforce regulations on the legal protection of persons with disabilities against discrimination in health-care services and define standardized protocols concerning the delivery of medical information to persons with disabilities and their free and informed consent for medical interventions in accordance with the Convention and the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2014); (d) Ensure that asylum-seekers with disabilities have access to comprehensive health services upon their arrival, on an equal basis with others.
DK	2014	57. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that persons with disabilities, in particular persons with psychosocial disabilities, have equal access to the highest attainable standard of health, including by providing adequate and accessible health services needed by persons with disabilities, and by providing training to health professionals and officials in the public health authorities, including on the right to free and informed consent.
EE	2021	49. Taking into account the links between article 25 of the Convention and targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Strengthen action plans to ensure the accessibility and availability of health-care services and equipment for persons with disabilities; (b) Provide women and girls with disabilities with access to sexual and reproductive health care and services and ensure supported decision-making for women with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities so that they can reaffirm their sexual and reproductive autonomy and self-determination; (c) Develop training for health-care professionals on the rights of persons with disabilities, including their skills, support measures and information and communication means and methods; (d) Allocate human, technical and financial resources for the development of quality health services and for health-related supervision for persons requiring higher levels of support; (e) Provide all persons with disabilities with access to all the health-care services available for the general population during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring priority access to diagnostic, vaccination and recovery treatments; (f) Ensure that persons with disabilities can gain access to medical services on the basis of their free and informed consent.
EL	2019	37. The Committee recommends that, taking into account targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the State party:(a) Put in place a stable, continuous, long-term strategy containing effective and harmonized measures to guarantee persons with disabilities access to health services; (b) Effectively monitor the implementation of the provision of health services by health service providers to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. The Committee also recommends that the State party render health facilities, equipment and instruments accessible, particularly to ensure that women and girls with disabilities have access to sexual and reproductive health services in urban and rural areas.
ES	2019	49. The Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Ensure the accessibility and availability of health-care services for all persons with disabilities, particularly in rural areas; (b) Ensure that persons with disabilities have accessible information and that

		health-care services are provided with alternative means of communication, such as sign language interpretation, Braille, Easy Read and all required augmentative means for that purpose; (c) Guarantee universal access to accessible sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, and information and education, particularly for women and girls with disabilities, and integrate the right to reproductive health into national strategies and programmes, as set out in target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
FR	2021	53. Taking into account the links between article 25 of the Convention and targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Ensure priority and equal access for persons with disabilities and their networks to vaccines against COVID-19 and the accessibility of health services for persons with disabilities, particularly by developing public health programmes to reach out to the most marginalized persons with disabilities and by providing accessible transportation to health-care centres, including vaccination centres; (b) Ensure the development of and promote investment in universal design of medical devices, equipment and health-care facilities and reinforce measures to provide persons with disabilities with information about health care in accessible formats; (c) Ensure that plans for recovery include measures to guarantee the access of persons with disabilities to health care, paying particular attention to persons still in institutions and those in penitentiary facilities; (d) Provide women and girls with disabilities with appropriate and accessible sexual and reproductive health care, and consult with organizations of women with disabilities about gaps and measures to ensure progress in this regard; (e) Develop awareness-raising and training programmes, including in health-related higher education curricula, for medical and health administrative staff about diversity and the rights of persons with disabilities, in close cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities.
HR	2015	38. The Committee recommends that further efforts be made to ensure that people with disabilities who do not have compulsory health-care insurance have access to health-care facilities. The Committee also recommends that access to mainstream health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, are made accessible to people with disabilities, especially in rural areas. It also recommends that health professionals in mainstream health services are urgently trained in treating persons with disabilities and respecting the rights enshrined in the Convention.
HU	2022	51. Taking into account the links between article 25 of the Convention and targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Develop action plans to ensure the accessibility and availability of health-care facilities, services and equipment for persons with disabilities across the State Party, with a specific emphasis on the sexual and reproductive health of women with disabilities, as well as on accessible information and communication for autistic persons, persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with visual and hearing impairments in general treatment in the health-care system; (b) Develop training programmes, including in universities and in-service training curricula, for health-care professionals on the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.
IT	2016	62. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with organizations representing persons with disabilities and particularly those representing women with disabilities, ensure accessibility to facilities and equipment, information and communications regarding sexual and reproductive health services, and that it provide training to health personnel about the rights of persons with disabilities. It also recommends that the State party strengthen mechanisms to combat discrimination and stereotyping in line with its general comment No. 3. 64. The Committee recommends that the State party abolish all laws that permit medical treatment, including sterilization, consented by a third party (parent or guardian) without the free and informed consent of the person, and that it provide related high-quality training to health professionals. 66. The Committee recommends that the State party expedite the adoption, funding and implementation of Minimum Standards of Health Care so all children have access to early identification and intervention according to their requirements. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account article 25 of the Convention while implementing targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

LT	2016	50. The Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Take appropriate legislative measures to secure access for persons with disabilities to free and affordable health-related habilitation and rehabilitation goods and services; (b) Train health personnel on the human rights model of disability, including on the right to free and informed consent, and ensure the accessibility of health-care facilities and equipment to ensure that all such facilities and equipment, including in hospitals and in the practices of dentists, gynaecologists and obstetricians, are accessible to persons with disabilities, regardless of their impairments; (c) Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, information and education, and ensure also the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes as set out in target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
LU	2017	45. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to ensure the accessibility of health-care services and facilities in the community, particularly persons with intellectual disabilities or psychosocial disabilities and those that require extensive support. Specifically, it recommends that the State party: (a) Raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities under the Convention among medical professionals through training and the promulgation of ethical standards; (b) Take measures to provide persons with disabilities, especially women, with information in accessible formats, on accessible health-care services and facilities, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health.
LV	2017	43. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the availability, adequacy and accessibility of general health-care services and facilities for all persons with disabilities throughout the country.
MT	2018	38. The Committee urges the State party to withdraw its interpretative declaration on article 25 (a) of the Convention in order to allow persons with disabilities to enjoy the right to health on an equal basis with others.
PL	2018	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.
PT	2016	50. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have unrestricted access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, by explicitly prohibiting discrimination on grounds of disability in its legislation, ensuring the universal accessibility of its programmes and services in both urban and rural areas and providing health professionals with adequate training. The primary prevention of disability should also be excluded from health programmes.
SE	2014	54. Recalling the link between article 25 of the Convention and targets 3.7 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Take measures to ensure that all persons with disabilities, in particular persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, persons with disabilities living in remote areas, persons with disabilities still living in institutions and children and women with disabilities, have access to information on an equal basis with others and to affordable, accessible, high-quality and culturally sensitive medical equipment

		and health services, including sexual, reproductive and mental health services; (b) Strengthen the requirements for the systematic participation of persons with disabilities in the planning, design, monitoring and evaluation of accessibility, care processes and working methods in health care and strengthen the implementation of the human rights model of disability.
SI	2018	42. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the accessibility and availability of health services for all persons with disabilities, whatever their impairment and wherever they live, whether in institutions or elsewhere. It also recommends that the State party ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, information and education, and integrate the right to reproductive health into national strategies and programmes, as set out in target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee further recommends that the State party pay due attention to the links between article 25 of the Convention and target 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure the implementation of the Health Care and Health Insurance Act.
SK	2016	70. The Committee recommends that the State party remove physical, information and communication barriers to gaining access to health-care services, and that medical services and treatment be provided on the basis of the free, prior and informed consent of all persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party provide training for all health and social care personnel on the rights enshrined in the Convention.

4.2.3 Recommendations relevant to education and training

Table 16: UN Recommendations to Member States under Article 24 CRPD (education)

MS	Year	Recommendations (Education)
AT	2023	58. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016), the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Promptly end the expansion of and phase out the segregated school system, ensure transition resources, including funding, from segregated education to inclusive education, develop a nationwide strategy for inclusive education that encompasses all education systems at all levels of education, including those of the Länder and the municipalities, establish inclusive education policies and guidelines, including at the level of the Länder and the municipalities, develop harmonized inclusive education curricula, in close consultation with and the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, and implement the strategy in a timely manner; (b) Redevelop and expand teacher training for inclusive education; (c) Provide reasonable accommodation, including personal assistance, for students with disabilities at all levels of education; (d) Render administrative procedures for access to inclusive education fully accessible, easy to navigate and quick; (e) Take measures at all federal levels, including the municipalities, to ensure access by all children with disabilities to extracurricular pedagogical supervision services, such as complementary care facilities; (f) Enact legislation providing for an enforceable, legal right of all children with disabilities to attend inclusive education, including at the secondary and tertiary levels; (g) Recognize Austrian Sign Language in education and effectively implement it as a language of instruction in schools and as a subject to be taught; (h) Comprehensively collect data on inclusive and non-inclusive education of all children with disabilities, disaggregated by sex, age, level of education, region and type of impairment, and on financial, organizational, educational and political measures taken to implement inclusive education in accordance with the Convention.
BE	2014	37. The Committee requests that the State party implement a coherent inclusive education strategy for children with disabilities in the mainstream system and ensure the provision of adequate financial, material and human resources. It recommends that the State party ensure that children with disabilities receive the educational support they need, in particular through the provision of accessible school environments, reasonable accommodation, individual learning plans, assistive technology in classrooms, and accessible and adapted materials and curricula, and guarantee that all teachers, including teachers with disabilities, receive

		comprehensive training on the use of Braille and sign language with a view to improving the education of all children with disabilities, including boys and girls who are blind, deaf-blind, deaf or hard of hearing. The Committee also recommends that inclusive education should form an integral part of teacher training at university and during continuing professional development.
BG	2018	50. The Committee recommends that the State party, in accordance with general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education:(a) Replace segregated education systems with quality inclusive education; (b) Raise awareness of the advantages of quality inclusive education for society, in particular for teachers and other education staff, and also for parents of children without disabilities; (c) Intensify its efforts to ensure quality inclusive education and the provision of reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities in mainstream schools, including by allocating sufficient human, technical and financial resources for it; (d) Collect data on the number of children and young people with disabilities not currently enrolled in any form of education, disaggregated by age, sex, type of impairment and place of residence, and develop a strategy to include these children in the mainstream education system.
CY	2017	50. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Decide upon a clear legislative scope of inclusive education and monitor its implementation with a view to fully replacing segregated education by inclusive education; (b) Adopt a clear, targeted and adequately funded plan of action that includes access to reasonable accommodation and adequate teacher education and training, and progressively ensure that children and adult learners with disabilities are able to exercise their right to inclusive education; (c) Be guided by general comment No. 4 (2016) and targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals in ensuring equal access to all levels and types of education, education facilities and vocational training by persons with disabilities.
CZ	2015	48. The Committee recommends that the State party implement the amended School Act, incorporate inclusive education as the guiding principle of the education system and ensure the admission of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. in line with article 24 of the Convention. The Committee calls upon the State party to intensify its efforts and to allocate sufficient financial and human resources for reasonable accommodations that will enable boys and girls with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities and autism, and deaf-blind children, to receive inclusive quality education.
DE	2023	54. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016), the Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of students with disabilities, their families and representative organizations: (a) Develop a comprehensive plan to accelerate the transition from special schooling to inclusive education at the Länder and municipal levels, with specific time frames, human, technical and financial resource allocations and clear responsibilities for implementation and monitoring; (b) Implement awareness-raising and educational campaigns to promote inclusive education at the community level and among the relevant authorities; (c) Ensure that children with disabilities can attend mainstream schools, including by enhancing accessibility and accommodation for all kinds of disabilities and providing appropriate arrangements for transportation, in particular in rural areas; (d) Guarantee ongoing training for teachers and non-teaching staff on inclusive education at all levels, including training in sign language and other accessible formats of communication, and develop a monitoring system to eliminate all forms of direct and indirect discrimination against children with disabilities and their families. 55. The Committee is concerned about the lack of data on the access of refugee children with disabilities to education and to mainstream schools. 56. The Committee recommends that the State party allocate sufficient resources for the regular collection of data, disaggregated by sex and type of disability, on the number and proportion of refugee children with disabilities who access education and are enrolled in mainstream and special schools, as well as on dropout rates.
DK	2014	53. The Committee recommends that the State party amend its legislation to ensure the inclusion of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system, with adequate support and accommodation, in particular through the provision of adequate training to teachers and other employees in the school system in all parts

		of the Kingdom of Denmark, in order to ensure quality education for pupils with disabilities. The State party should take measures to address discrepancies in accomplishment rates between pupils with and without disabilities at all levels of education.
EE	2021	47. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) and target 4.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Develop a strategy for implementing quality, inclusive education with specific targets, timelines and a budget and share responsibilities between the national and municipal levels; (b) Establish a policy framework that recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to seek individualized support as reasonable accommodation in education, when so required; (c) Ensure that education is an area of life covered by anti-discrimination legislation and policies and that the denial of reasonable accommodation is included as a form of discrimination; (d) Provide students with disabilities with assistive compensatory aids and learning materials in alternative and accessible formats, such as inclusive digital access, modes and means of communication, including Easy Read, communication aids and assistive and information technology, and make sure that there are enough teachers fluent in Estonian sign language; (e) Take measures, including the provision of technical equipment and the adoption of regulations, to ensure that children with disabilities, especially those in rural areas and those facing economic hardship, receive the individualized support they need, within a quality, inclusive education system, during the COVID-19 pandemic and guarantee for children with chronic diseases equal access to school.
EL	2019	35. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, and taking into account Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially targets 4.5 and 4.a, the Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to guarantee inclusive education, and in particular that it:(a) Adopt and implement a coherent strategy on inclusive education in the mainstream educational system; (b) Ensure the accessibility of school and university environments, in line with the Convention, by promoting universal design, the provision of specific measures and individualized support, such as accessible and adapted materials, inclusive curricula, inclusive information and communication technologies for pupils and students with disabilities, and digital pedagogy; (c) Immediately ensure access to formal education for all refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children with disabilities, and for Roma children with disabilities; (d) Allocate effective and sufficient financial and material resources and adequately and regularly trained personnel, including persons with disabilities, to effectively guarantee inclusive education; (e) Incorporate inclusive education training into higher education curricula for trainee teachers, and into training programmes for current teaching staff, with an adequate budget.
ES	2019	46. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and targets 4.5 and 4.A of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee reiterates the recommendations provided in its report on the inquiry concerning Spain under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention (CRPD/C/20/3), urging the State party to expedite legislative reform in line with the Convention, in order to clearly define inclusion and its specific objectives at each educational level. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to view inclusive education as a right, and grant all students with disabilities, regardless of their personal characteristics, the right to access inclusive learning opportunities in the mainstream education system, with access to support services as required. The Committee also recommends that the State party implement all other recommendations contained in the report on the inquiry. 47. The Committee recommends that the State party formulate a comprehensive inclusive education policy with strategies for promoting a culture of inclusion in mainstream education, including individualized human-rights based assessments of educational requirements and necessary accommodation, support for teachers, respect for diversity in ensuring the rights to equality and non-discrimination, and the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society.
FR	2021	51. The Committee recalls its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals and recommends that the State party strengthen measures to attain quality, inclusive education for all children with disabilities, including in the overseas territories. The State party should promptly implement the recommendations issued by the Special

		Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities in this regard. The Committee also recommends that the State party:(a) Develop systems to collect data on children with disabilities disaggregated by age, place of residence, sex and ethnic background, including information about the percentage of enrolment in and attendance at school, and ensure that Roma, asylum-seeking and refugee children with disabilities and children with disabilities who are in an irregular migration situation have effective access to education; (b) Adopt systems for parents and legal tutors to complain and seek redress in cases of refusal to admit their children to a school on the basis of disability; (c) Develop a framework recognizing the right of children with disabilities to seek individualized support through the provision of reasonable accommodation to meet their individual educational requirements, including accommodations in the context of examinations for children with disabilities, particularly autistic children and children with Down syndrome; (d) Adopt programmes at the municipal level and involving public and private actors to provide support for children with disabilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; (e) Ensure that education in French Sign Language is provided at early stages of education and promote the deaf culture in inclusive educational environments; (f) Ensure the effective learning, teaching and use of Braille and Easy Read for persons who are blind and visually impaired and persons with intellectual disabilities; (g) Take measures to eliminate abuse against and bullying of children with disabilities in schools; (h) Adopt programmes with specific goals and time frames in order to promote the access of persons with disabilities to higher education, ensuring that young persons with disabilities can seek individualized support through the provision of reasonable accommodation in tertiary education, including to facilitate their international mobility, and access to sign languages.
HR	2015	36. The Committee recommends that the State party take immediate steps to ensure that all persons with disabilities have access to inclusive quality primary, secondary and tertiary education and that reasonable accommodation is provided in mainstream education. It also recommends establishing the principle that exclusionary and segregated education is discriminatory. It recommends that teachers and other professionals receive training on inclusive education and that all secondary education facilities be made accessible to persons with disabilities.
HU	2022	49. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) and target 4.5 and indicator 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Revise its Public Education Act with the aim of eliminating all discriminatory provisions regarding the education of children with disabilities and explicitly provide for quality inclusive education to ensure that no child with disabilities is excluded from the general education system on the basis of impairment; (b) Ensure access to the general education system in the community and provide the necessary reasonable accommodations for all children with disabilities on an equal basis with other children; (c) Guarantee access to regular education facilities and transportation for children with physical disabilities in their communities across the State party; (d) Provide comprehensive and focused training for general education teachers and administrative staff on the principles and methods of inclusive education, the capacities of children with disabilities and the individualized support measures required by children with disabilities; (e) Provide access to the general education for deaf and hard-of-hearing children and promote bilingual education opportunities within an inclusive educational setting, particularly through quality sign language and other support that is required; (f) Ensure the accessibility of regular vocational education facilities and programmes for all children with disabilities, particularly for autistic children and children with intellectual disabilities, through measures of universal design and reasonable accommodation; (g) Take measures aimed at ensuring access to inclusive, high-quality and free primary, secondary and vocational education for children with disabilities, including Roma children, on an equal basis with others.
IT	2016	56. The Committee recommends that the State party implement an action plan — with sufficient resources, timelines and specific goals — aimed at monitoring the implementation of laws, decrees and regulations to improve the quality of inclusive education in classrooms, support provisions and teacher training across all levels. It also recommends that the State party be guided by article 24 of the Convention, including its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, in

		implementing targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training, and build and upgrade education facilities that are disability-sensitive and safe. 58. The Committee recommends that the State party monitor and provide highly qualified sign language interpreters for any deaf child who requests such assistance, and to desist from recommending general communication assistants as an exclusive alternative. 60. The committee recommends that the State party undertake, through legislative and other measures, including the newly drafted decree on education, to guarantee the availability of accessible learning materials and the provision of assistive technology in a timely manner in order to ensure inclusive and quality education in the mainstream setting.
LT	2016	46. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt and implement a coherent strategy on inclusive education in the mainstream educational system in accordance with article 24 of the Convention and with reference to Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially its targets 4.5 and 4.8. Through such a strategy, the State party should: (a) Ensure the accessibility of school environments, the provision of reasonable accommodation, accessible and adapted materials and curricula, and the compulsory pre-service and in-service training of all teachers on inclusive education; (b) Secure a sufficient number of accessible means of transport to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities; (c) Set clear timelines, targets, baselines and indicators to secure time-bound and measurable progress; (d) Allocate effective and adequate financial, material and adequately trained human resources. 47. The Committee recommends that the State party guarantee a legally enforceable right to inclusive, quality and free primary education and to affordable secondary education on an equal basis with others. 48. The Committee also recommends that the State party facilitate access for persons with disabilities to tertiary education and vocational training, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation in higher education.
LU	2017	43. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially its targets 4.5 and 4.a, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Amend the laws on education to ensure that no student is refused admission to mainstream schools on the basis of disability, ensure accessibility and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation, including assistant support staff, including pre-school and tertiary education and the private sector; (b) Adopt a legally defined procedure for the provision of reasonable accommodation at all levels of education and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation according to individual requirements in consultation with the person concerned; (c) Design and implement an action plan on inclusive education with sufficient resources, timelines and specific goals; (d) Increase awareness-raising initiatives, including training on inclusive education and its implementation mandatory for teachers, support teachers and non-teaching education personnel; (e) Increase data collection on, among others, the implementation of education laws and policies, and accessibility of school infrastructures, information and communications, including information and communications technology, to inform inclusive education policies.
LV	2017	41. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially targets 4.5 and 4 (a) thereof, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that no child is refused admission to mainstream schools on the basis of disability, and that it further allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation to facilitate the accessibility of all students with disabilities to quality, inclusive education, including in preschool, tertiary and lifelong learning institutions.
MT	2018	36. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially targets 4.5 and 4.a, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure the implementation of its laws on education, and accelerate the adoption process of the bill on the Convention, to ensure that violations of the rights under article 24 of the Convention become justiciable in the State party; (b) Adopt measures to ensure that students with disabilities, including students with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, are

		provided with reasonable accommodation at all levels of education, and allocate the resources necessary to guarantee reasonable accommodation according to individual requirements in consultation with the person concerned, including the provision of learning support educators and their replacements when they are absent; (c) Ensure accessible mechanisms for accountability and redress in cases in which educational institutions, such as childcare centres and summer schools, or teachers discriminate against students on the basis of their disability; (d) Review the curriculum of students with disabilities through individualized education plans to ensure that the curricula allow them to learn the skills required to access the job market on an equal basis with others; (e) Carry out research on the extent to which accessibility standards are being complied with in the State party to obtain a full understanding of the barriers persons with disabilities face in the education system and the solutions required to enable their full participation, and to make research findings on the socioeconomic and cultural benefits of inclusive education available to all relevant stakeholders.
PL	2018	42. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and Sustainable Development Goal 4, targets 4.5 and 4 (a), the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Enact specific provisions to support the implementation of reasonable accommodation, individualized learning curriculum and inclusive classroom teaching in accessible learning environments; (b) Support measures for schools, including support for teachers, to advance inclusive education for students with moderate or severe disabilities; (c) Raise awareness among parents of non-disabled children about the advantages of inclusive education for all, and provide training for school masters and teachers on inclusive education methods and best practices.
PT	2016	45. The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with organizations representing persons with disabilities, review its legislation on education to bring it into line with the Convention and take measures to provide additional resources and materials to facilitate access to and enjoyment of inclusive education of high quality for all students with disabilities, providing public schools with the resources they need to ensure the inclusion of all students with disabilities in ordinary classrooms. 46. The Committee recommends that the State party consider the relationship between article 24 of the Convention and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training, as well as to build and upgrade education facilities to make them disability-sensitive and safe. 48. The Committee recommends that the State party introduce in its legislation regulations on the access of students with disabilities to higher education and vocational training on an equal basis with other students, while providing reasonable accommodation and the required support services.
SE	2014	52. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, learners with disabilities and their families: (a) Develop a national inclusive education strategy to transition from segregated education to inclusive education and establish a mechanism to monitor and enforce the implementation of national legislation on inclusive education; (b) Ensure that children with disabilities can attend mainstream schools, including by enhancing accessibility and reasonable accommodation for all kinds of disabilities and providing appropriate arrangements for transportation, in particular in remote areas; (c) Provide students with disabilities with assistive compensatory aids and learning materials in alternative and accessible formats, such as inclusive digital access, modes and means of communication, including Easy Read, communication aids and assistive and information technology, and ensure that there are enough teachers fluent in Swedish sign language; (d) Guarantee ongoing training for teachers and non-teaching staff on inclusive education at all levels, including training in sign language and other accessible formats of communication, and develop a monitoring system to eliminate all forms of direct and indirect discrimination against children with disabilities and their families; (e) Allocate further resources to provide reasonable accommodation and dedicated

		assistance programmes in higher education institutions, including professional training for students with all types of disabilities.
SI	2018	40. Recalling its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education and targets 4.5 and 4.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:(a) Recognize the right of all children with disabilities to inclusive education and abandon segregated education schemes; (b) Adopt a strategy and action plan with a clear time frame for the implementation of inclusive education at all levels for all children with disabilities and, further, establish a comprehensive monitoring system to assess the progress of inclusive education; (c) Strengthen the capacity of inclusive schools to train teachers in inclusive education, curriculum accommodation and teaching methods. The State party should enhance the quality of educational support by adopting an individualized approach to children with disabilities and their capacity-building; (d) Provide lifelong learning for persons with disabilities and ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodation in all tertiary education institutions, including vocational and higher education schools; (e) Provide transport services for students with disabilities from their place of residence to their education facilities.
SK	2016	1. The Committee recommends that the State party pay attention to the links between article 24 of the Convention and targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee also recommends that the State party:(a) Introduce an enforceable right to inclusive and quality education in the Education Act, including by defining inclusive education in accordance with the Incheon Declaration on education 2030: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and Sustainable Development Goal No. 4; (b) Adopt a legally binding plan for the transition from segregated schools into inclusive education at all levels, including by setting timelines, identifying responsible authorities, and allocating adequate resources; (c) Ensure that all children with disabilities who so require have access to personal assistance and allocate resources for this purpose; (d) Ensure available, accessible and inclusive preschool education for all children with disabilities; (e) Put an end to the process of placing Roma children in segregated schools for children with disabilities on the basis of their ethnic background.

5 Trends and policies relevant to disability

The 2022 European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey (EU-SILC) provide a snapshot in 2022 with 2021 as the income reference year. Income-related variables may therefore be affected by the latter period of the COVID-19 pandemic and lag differently from other variables depending on the collection period in each EU Member State. For most of the Member States, field work took place between January and July 2022.[49]

Unless specified, the summary statistics presented in this report are drawn from EU-SILC microdata[50] (EU-SILC 2022) or from corresponding statistics published in the Eurostat disability database[51] (2022 & 2023). The sample does not include people living in collective households and institutions. Disability is operationalised as an activity limitation corresponding to the Global Activity Limitation Indicator (GALI). The proxy used to identify persons with disabilities is part of the Minimum European Health Module and is collected yearly.

Since 2021, the activity limitation question (PH030) has consisted of a main question and a follow-up question. The main question is 'Are you limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do?' with the answer options of 'Severely limited', 'Limited but not severely' and 'Not limited at all'. If the answer to the question is 'Severely limited' or 'Limited but not severely' the person is asked 'Have you been limited for at least the past 6 months?'. A self-evaluated 'some' or 'severe' activity limitation in the past 6 months has been used as a proxy for disability.[52] Response rates to this question vary between countries and national data sources are added in the country reports for comparison or context.

Due to the exclusion of persons living in collective households and in institutions, EU-SILC estimates may underestimate the number of persons with disabilities, especially among persons aged at least 65 years. These methodological issues are analysed and explained in some detail in past annual statistical reports published by ANED[53] and summarised in the most recent EDE statistical report.[54] The underpinning concepts and implementation are also explained on the Eurostat web pages.[55]

The chapter presents trends in the situation of persons with disabilities regarding inclusion in the labour market, poverty reduction and skill developments in 2022 and, depending on data availability, in 2023.

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49 Eurostat (2023), European EU-SILC Comparative quality report SIMS 2022, see https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions/quality.

50 EU-SILC 2022, release October 2023 (EU-SILC 2022 release 2023 ver2), DOI: 10.2907/EUSILC2004-2022V1, see https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/203647/16993001/EUSILC_DOI_2023_release_2.pdf.

51 See: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/disability/database.

52 EU-SILC (2022), *Methodological guidelines and description of EU-SILC target variables*, p. 326f.

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

54 European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Human European Consultancy and Grammenos, S., European comparative data on persons with disabilities – Equal opportunities, fair working conditions, social protection and inclusion – Analysis and trends – Data 2022, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/7901991.

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

5.1 Prevalence of activity limitation

The tables and charts here show the most recent data available for the EU27. In most cases, this requires an analysis of microdata that is two years old (e.g. presenting EU-SILC estimates from 2022 in 2024). The main indicators may be updated during the policy cycle to include the latest year's estimates for some items published by Eurostat (notably for estimates of poverty or social exclusion). This allows for a closer alignment with Commission analyses during the Autumn phase of the Semester.

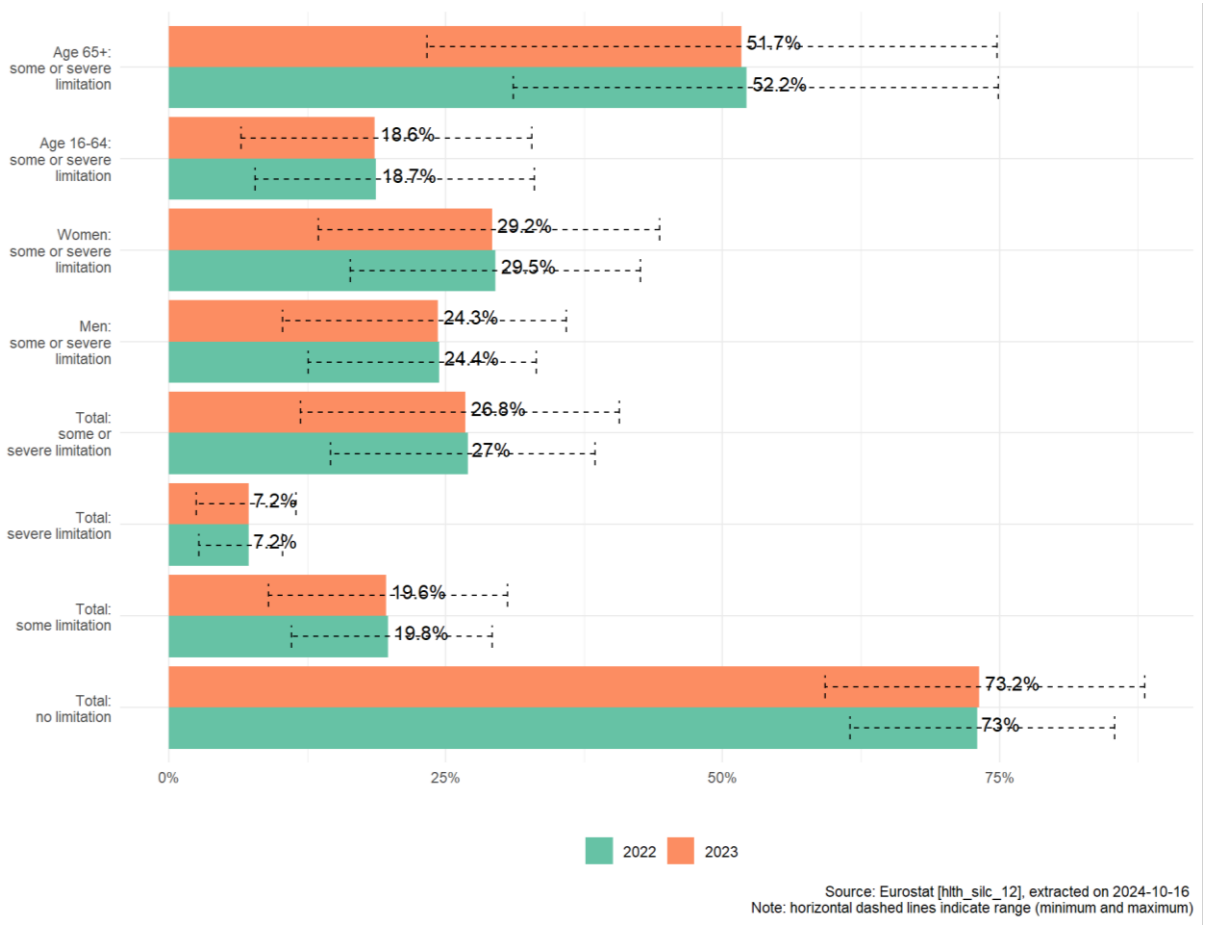
Disability prevalence data is routinely published by Eurostat and includes estimations for all 27 Member States in 2022 and 2023.[56] Figure 1 disaggregates the activity limitation data by level of limitation, gender and main age group for 2022 and 2023. The data show a minor decrease in the overall proportion of the EU population, aged over 16 and living in private households, who report 'some or severe activity limitation'. On this measure in 2023, persons with disabilities made up one quarter of the EU population aged at least 16 years (26.8 %) and one half of the population aged 65 years and over (51.7 %). In 2023, 21.3 % of the EU population was aged 65 years and over and more than half the population aged above 44.5 years, coinciding with the age after which the rate of onset of activity limitation also tends to increase.[57]

Disability data are not collected annually on the population of children under the age of 16 years in the EU-SILC and no data are collected from adults living in congregate households (such as residential care homes and hospitals). Persons with disabilities may be over-represented in the latter group.

[56] Eurostat (2024), Level of disability (activity limitation) by sex, age and income quintile (online data code: HLTH_SILC_12), https://doi.org/10.2908/HLTH_SILC_12.

[57] Eurostat (2024), 'Population structure and ageing', https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_structure_and_ageing.

Figure 1: Self-reported activity limitation (age 16+) by gender and age group – EU27 average (2022 & 2023)



As noted in the EDE statistical reports, the 2023 data showed a slight decrease on the previous year, but the data since 2016 reveal an upward trend in the population with disabilities in line with the ageing demographic of European societies.[58] In 2023, 7.2 % of the EU population declared a severe level of activity limitation, while 19.6 % reported some but not severe activity limitations. The share of persons with severe activity limitations has been stable in recent years, while the rate of persons with some limitations was increasing until 2022. A higher share of women (29.2 %) compared to men (24.3 %) in 2023 declared an activity limitation. The difference coincides with the gendered pattern of ageing.

Figure 1 indicates considerable variations in the prevalence levels by gender, age group and level of activity limitation among EU Member States. The variation is particularly high among the group of persons aged 65 years and more with some or severe activity limitation. The variation among Member States is further analysed in the next chapter.

Although estimates of disability prevalence from general household survey data should be treated with caution, they do evidence, consistently, that a large group of EU citizens

[58] Anomalies in historical EU trends have arisen from methodological changes or breaks in the time series of some Member States, including Germany and Italy, which affect the average due to the large size of these countries, and by the UK's withdrawal from the EU (France, Germany, Italy and the UK accounted for more than 50 % of the population with disabilities in the EU28).

are affected, and they underline the policy significance of disability issues for the EU and its Member States.

In subsequent tables, these prevalence data are used as a proxy to estimate 'disability' equality in the main policy areas of employment, education and poverty risk.[59] Tables are presented by disaggregating the estimated proportion of people who report and do not report activity limitations for each indicator (among those who are employed, unemployed, at risk of poverty, etc.).

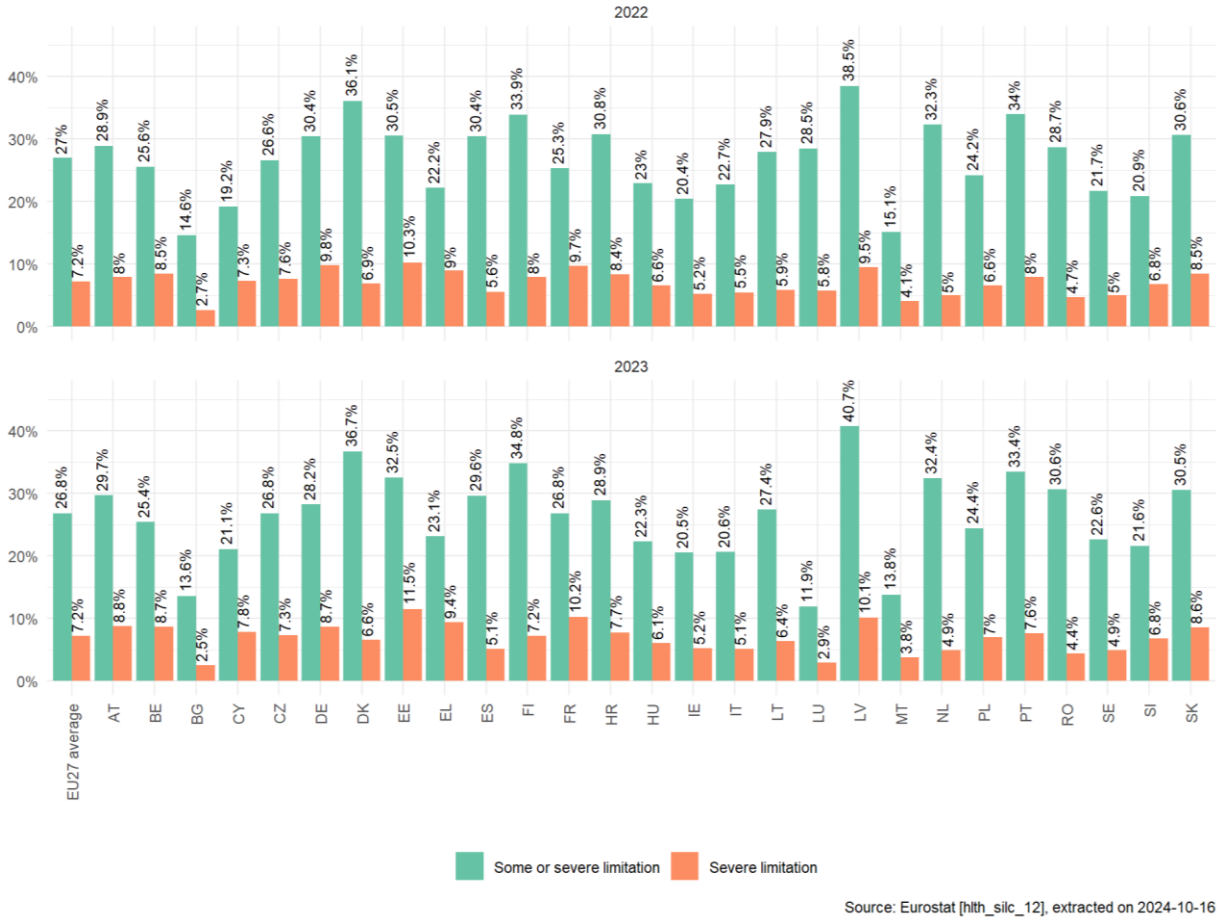
5.1.1 Variation in prevalence estimates

The range of prevalence estimates for the Member States in 2022 and 2023 is shown in Figure 2. EU Member States show large variations in the share of persons reporting 'some or severe' activity limitations. The standard deviation and range of prevalence rates increased from 2022 to 2023. There is less variation among Member States in the estimate for persons declaring 'severe' limitation in activities.

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

[59] The methodology is further explained in the annual statistical reports produced by ANED, available at http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators.

Figure 2: Prevalence of activity limitation level (age 16+) by Member State (2022 & 2023)

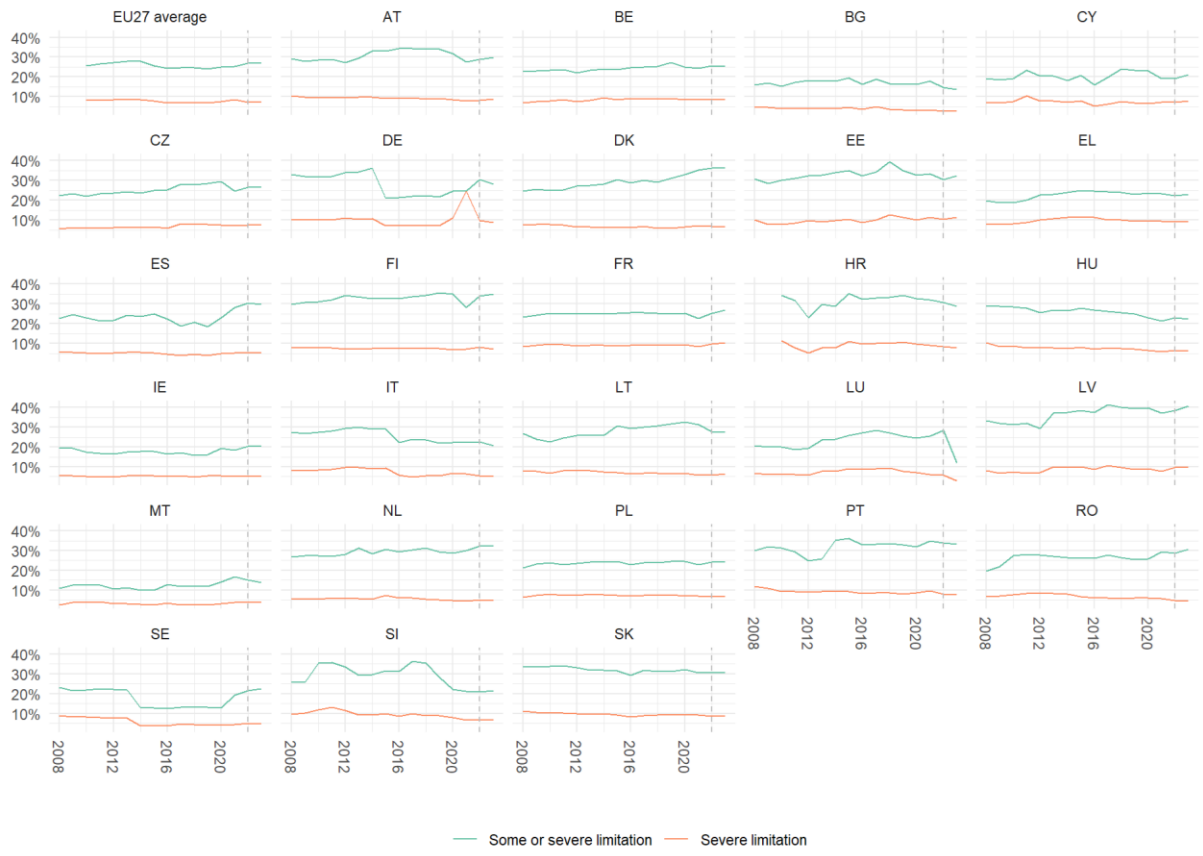


Source: Eurostat [hlth_silc_12], extracted on 2024-10-16

Figure 3 plots the annual national averages for all available observations from the past 15 years (2008 to 2023) for those with 'severe' and 'some or severe' activity limitations. The lowest observed prevalence rate for some or severe activity limitation was 9.7 % in Malta in 2015 and the highest 41.3 % in Latvia in 2012. The widest in-country variation was in Luxembourg, due to a sharp decline in 2023 compared to 2022. The estimates for Luxembourg between 2020 and 2022 were affected by breaks in time series, which might explain the sudden change. This and other countries' anomalies are explained in the EDE statistical report and previous ANED reports.

The range of the prevalence of persons with severe activity limitations is narrower. However, there are also several anomalies, such as Germany's wide in-country variation, due to a change of methodology (with similar anomalies affecting Sweden). It is worth noting that, while there is wide variation in the rate within and between countries, the ranking of countries on this indicator is much less variable.

Figure 3: Development of activity limitation level (age 16+) by Member State (2008-2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_silc_12], extracted on 2024-10-16
Note: dashed line indicates year 2022

Variation in disability prevalence estimates is a well-known phenomenon in social surveys.[60] For example, using the Washington Group Short Set questions may underestimate inequalities on some outcome measures compared to the GALI survey measure.[61] Such discussions lead to some speculation about the impact that prevalence estimates may have on other dependent variables when used as input for cross-national comparisons (e.g. when estimating disability employment rates or disability poverty rates). These impacts of cross-country variation in prevalence are examined later but, overall, do not appear to invalidate broad comparisons if they are considered and controlled as a contributory factor in the analysis (e.g. by noting outliers, using multi-year averages or adding the variable in regressions).

5.2 Disability and inclusion in the labour market

The following analysis draws on the summary statistical tables produced from EU-SILC data by EDE to inform Commission input to the Semester process (and consistent with those produced for ANED since 2008 for the same purpose). Continuity of reporting

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

[61] Amilon, A., Hansen, K. M., Kjær, A. A., & Steffensen, T. (2021), 'Estimating disability prevalence and disability-related inequalities: Does the choice of measure matter?', *Social Science & Medicine*, *272*, 113740.

assists in establishing general patterns and trends, and in controlling for some data variability effects between years. The inclusion of GALI items every second year into the harmonised core of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) presents new, and greatly enhanced, opportunities for disaggregation and analysis. However, the biennial cycle does not provide the regular data needed for the annual EDE reports. The latest EDE annual statistical report compares the disability-relevant variables of the EU-SILC and LFS surveys in detail.

5.2.1 Strategic context

Article 27 of the UN CRPD refers to a wide range of policy steps that need to be taken, including the prohibition of disability discrimination in 'all matters concerning all forms of employment', protecting 'just and favourable conditions of work' and 'labour and trade union rights', promoting equal opportunities in work and training, ensuring 'reasonable accommodation' is provided in the workplace, and ensuring access to employment in the 'open labour market'.[62] As a general recommendation in the Concluding Observations to all Member States, the UN CRPD Committee recommends the States Parties review their national legislation and Disability Action Plans to address the above-mentioned issues.

In October 2022, the UN CRPD Committee published a General Comment on Article 27.[63] The General Comment outlines several concerns. The Committee has consistently raised issues that legislation and policies of States Parties fail to recognise persons with disabilities as rights holders and instead define them primarily by their impairments. This approach perpetuates discriminatory treatment and the exclusion of persons with disabilities, normalising a medically driven, incapacity-based view of disability. Such ableism prevents States parties from addressing entrenched barriers, including stereotypes and stigmas, which hinder the ability of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. To address these concerns, the Committee recommends that States parties adopt the human rights model of disability. This model, as elaborated in General Comment No. 6 (2018) on equality and non-discrimination, views disability as a social construct, values impairments as part of human diversity and dignity, and rejects impairments as valid grounds for denying or restricting human rights. In this context, in its General Comment No. 8 (2022) the Committee emphasises the following core obligation for Member States:

> '63. States parties have an immediate, minimum core obligation to ensure the satisfaction of, at the very least, minimum essential levels of the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment. In the context of article 27, this core obligation encompasses the obligation to ensure non-discrimination and equal protection of employment.'

The core obligation has also been reflected in the Concluding Observations (COs) for certain countries published after 2022, where the Committee recommends that the

[62] Article 27 of the Convention incorporates several interdependent and interrelated rights within the right to work. Specifically, Article 27(1)(b) ensures that persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, are entitled to just and favourable working conditions, including safe workplaces and protection from harassment. Meanwhile, Article 27(1)(c) highlights the collective aspect of the right to work, guaranteeing that persons with disabilities can exercise their labour and trade union rights equally with others.

[63] UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2022), General comment No. 8 (2022) on the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment: g2251857.pdf

States parties update their legislation and Disability Action Plans to be compliant with a human rights approach and the above-mentioned core obligation (i.e. the case of UN CRPD COs for Austria, Germany and Hungary).[64]

The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030[65] builds on the Employment Equality Directive and the European Pillar of Social Rights, emphasising the right to participate in the labour market free from discrimination and with access to an adapted work environment. It highlights that employment is key to achieving economic independence and social inclusion (p. 13). In 2021, the European Commission reported on the Directive's implementation alongside the Racial Equality Directive, situating the disability strategy within broader frameworks addressing gender equality, anti-racism and LGBTIQ equality, strengthening the Charter, and implementing the Social Pillar. This underscores the growing mainstreaming of disability policies into EU-wide coordination efforts aimed at combating discrimination and enhancing data collection.

The Disability Employment Package – completed in 2024 – supports Member States to foster social inclusion and economic independence for persons with disabilities through employment. Furthermore, in November 2024 the Council adopted two new directives: one establishing the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card for persons with disabilities,[66] and the other extending it to non-EU citizens legally residing in a member state.[67] The directive establishing the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card for persons with disabilities will ensure equal access to special conditions or preferential treatment for persons with disabilities during short stays throughout the EU. The Disability Card is also helpful for persons with disabilities moving for longer periods to other Member States for employment.

In addition, the Commission has adopted Guidance[68] that focuses on promoting the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community. Its goal is to make independent living a tangible reality by ensuring access to diverse community support services and guaranteeing equal opportunities in social and healthcare, employment, education and training. Emphasising the importance of inclusive labour markets, the Guidance advocates for increased investment in areas such as work trainers, reasonable accommodations, workplace adjustments and co-worker training, as outlined in the Disability Employment Package.

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64 UN CRPD Concluding Observations for Austria (2023) states: 'Render the assessment of the ability to work compliant with the human rights model of disability, do not apply it to children, re-evaluate assessments periodically, provide an effective remedy against assessments, ensure that persons with disabilities retain their social security status, including health and pension insurance, irrespective of the outcome of the assessment, and apply that status retroactively to persons with disabilities already assessed as "unfit for work"'.

65 See: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/persons-disabilities/union-equality-strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030_en.

66 Directive (EU) 2024/2841 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 establishing the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card for persons with disabilities, OJ L, 2024/2841, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/2841/oj/eng

67 Directive (EU) 2024/2842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 extending Directive (EU) 2024/2841 to third-country nationals legally residing in a Member State, OJ L, 2024/2842, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/2842/oj/eng.

68 European Commission (2024), 'Guidance on independent living for persons with disabilities', https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-adopts-guidance-independent-living-persons-disabilities-2024-11-20_en.

The Strategy 2021-2030 is scheduled for an update, as the initiatives outlined in 2021 only extend until 2025.[69]

Despite progress in promoting the employment and social inclusion of persons with disabilities, the Council of the European Union, in its December 2024 Conclusions,[70] urged Member States to take further actions. This includes adopting national employment targets to improve employment rates among persons with disabilities, fostering a non-discriminatory approach to labour market participation and strengthening national frameworks for reasonable accommodation. Additionally, the Council emphasised the need to enhance rehabilitation services and improve data collection, as also recommended by UN CRPD General Comment No. 8 (2022).[71] It also called on the European Commission to prepare a report on the implementation progress of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to monitor the employment status of persons with disabilities.

5.2.2 Employment

Data on the employment situation of persons with disabilities is presented in the EDE statistical review accompanying this synthesis report, using the most recent disability data from 2022. Some individual Member States do report on the employment situation of persons with disabilities from national labour surveys and, where available, this should be shown in country reports for comparison.

The following tables use data from EU-SILC to calculate employment rates for persons with some or severe activity limitation and, for comparison, also for the general population. Employment rates at the EU level are generally calculated using EU-LFS data. There is some variation between estimations based on EU-LFS and those based on EU-SILC. The two surveys adopt different definitions of employment and EU-SILC produces an estimated employment rate for the general population that averages slightly lower than the LFS estimate,[72] but the evolution of the two surveys has remained strongly correlated over the past decade and previous findings have proved sufficiently consistent to justify their reliability as indicators of significant gaps and trends. Nevertheless, measurement differences between surveys are larger in some Member States than others.

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69 Birtha, M. (2024) *The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 - Achievements and perspectives,* Briefing. Brussels: European Parliament, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 767.095. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/767095/IPOL_BRI(2024)767095_EN.pdf.

70 Council of the European Union, 'Council calls for greater support to help persons with disabilities access the labour market', 2 December 2024, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/12/02/council-calls-for-greater-support-to-help-persons-with-disabilities-access-the-labour-market/.

71 Paragraph 82(k) of General Comment No. 8: 'Establish methods for collecting appropriately disaggregated data, according to a strong human rights conceptual and methodological framework, as set out in *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation*, to facilitate understanding of the situation of persons with disabilities in and out of employment, with particular attention to the relevance and efficacy of State party measures to promote employment in the formal economy'.

72 This is due mainly to slight differences in definition and methodology, and of sampling and seasonal factors, which were demonstrated in previously published EDE and ANED statistical reports.

Eurostat has published retrospective statistics on the disability employment gap, in percentage points (pp), using EU-SILC data (but did not publish the employment rates from which the gap was calculated).[73] This estimation used a slightly different data definition of employment from the estimates produced by EDE (and by ANED over the previous decade).[74] This is the measure used in the Social Scoreboard for the disability employment gap in 2022 and cited in the Commission Country Reports.

Figure 4 shows a breakdown of employment rate estimates at the EU level for women and men and for persons with different levels of activity limitation. The dashed lines indicate the range among EU Member States. A similar table is shown for each country in the EDE country fiches, compared to the EU27 average. For continuity, this uses the same method as previous EDE and ANED fiches contributing to the Semester.

Using EDE's EU-SILC estimation, at the European level in 2022, the employment rate of persons with disabilities for the EU27 was about 54.3 % compared to 76.2 % for other persons (on this measure, the total population employment rate in the EU was 72.1 % compared to 74.6 % in the EU-LFS, for persons aged 20-64[75]), as shown in Figure 4. On this measure, the EU employment rate of persons with disabilities rose from 50.9 % in 2021 to 54.3 % in 2022. The employment rate of persons with disabilities was rising slightly faster than the general employment rate, causing a reduction in the disability employment gap from 23.1 pp in 2021 to 21.4 pp in 2022 and 21.5 pp in 2023. However, the low rate of employment among persons with disabilities reduces the EU's overall employment rate by around 4 pp.

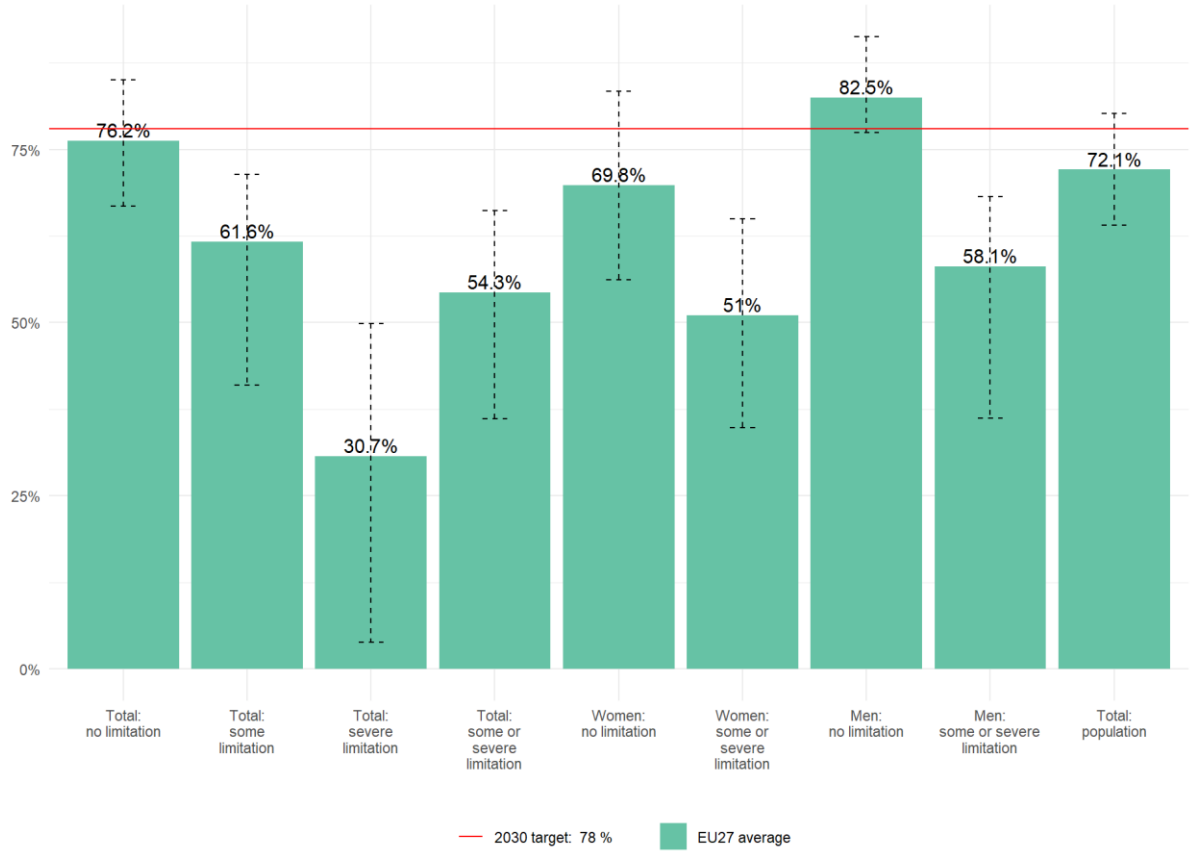
The employment rate of persons with disabilities differs strongly by activity limitation level. The employment rate of persons with some limitations is estimated to be 61.6 % while that of persons with severe limitation is estimated to be 30.7 %. The variation in national averages is especially high among persons with severe activity limitation. The gender gap in employment rates between women and men with no activity limitation can also be observed among men and women with some or severe activity limitation. The absolute difference in the employment rates of women with activity limitations (51 %) and men with activity limitation (58.1 %) is smaller, and their employment rates grew more strongly than their counterparts without activity limitations.

[73] Disability employment gap by level of activity limitation and sex (source EU-SILC) (hlth_dlm200) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=hlth_dlm200.

[74] While the EDE estimates consider self-reported employment status (and age) at the date of the survey interview, the Scoreboard measure considers persons who were employed (salaried, non-salaried, other employed) for more than 5 months of the 12-month reference period.

[75] Eurostat (2024), 'Employment rate by sex' [tesem010], see https://doi.org/10.2908/TESEM010.

Figure 4: Employment rate (age 20-64) by activity limitation level and gender – EU27 average (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

The 2024 Joint Employment report and the Country Reports by the European Commission include the Social Scoreboard indicator for the disability employment gap. EU Member States are categorised according to the ranking of their disability employment gap in relation to the EU 27 average (see Table 17). EU Member States' categorisations are based on 2022 estimates, while the now available 2023 estimates already indicate their development in the last year. Among the countries described as 'best performers', Denmark and Luxembourg experienced a sharp increase in their disability employment gap (10.5 pp and 15.2 pp). Bulgaria as a country 'to watch' recorded a 10 pp increase, while Estonia, also a country 'to watch', reduced the disability employment gap by 6 pp. The disability employment gap in Croatia was ranked in the category 'critical situations', recording a further increase of 3.2 pp. The EU average disability employment gap increased by 0.1 pp from 21.4 pp in 2022 to 21.5 pp in 2023.

Table 17: Categorisation of 2022 disability employment gaps in the Social Scoreboard 2024

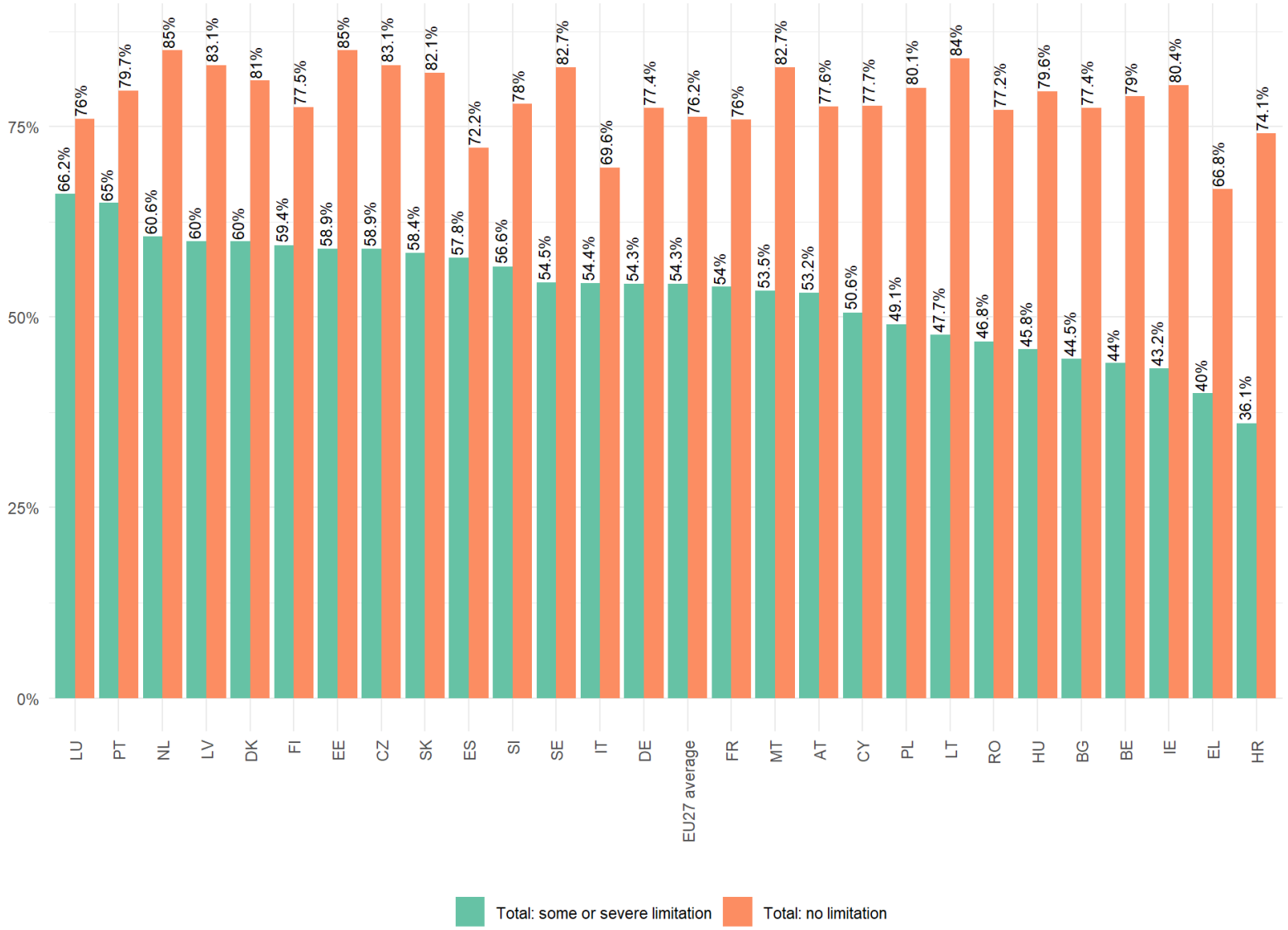
Member State	Social Scoreboard Categorisation (2022)	2022 disability employment gap (Eurostat)	2023 disability employment gap (Eurostat)	2022 disability employment gap (EDE)
EU27 average	EU27 average	21.4 pp	21.5 pp	21.9 pp
DK	Best performers	:	20.4 pp	21.1 pp
ES	Best performers	14.6 pp	13.8 pp	14.5 pp
IT	Best performers	14.0 pp	15.9 pp	15.2 pp
LU	Best performers	8.5 pp	23.7 pp	9.9 pp
PT	Best performers	13.1 pp	14.0 pp	14.7 pp
DE	Better than average	24.2 pp	22.6 pp	23.1 pp
FI	Better than average	19.0 pp	19.4 pp	18.1 pp
SI	Better than average	18.8 pp	17.3 pp	21.3 pp
AT	On average	23.8 pp	26.1 pp	24.5 pp
CY	On average	25.7 pp	24.7 pp	27.1 pp
CZ	On average	22.7 pp	22.2 pp	24.2 pp
EL	On average	25.9 pp	26.0 pp	26.8 pp
FR	On average	20.8 pp	19.9 pp	22.0 pp
LV	On average	20.8 pp	18.5 pp	23.1 pp
NL	On average	25.2 pp	23.8 pp	24.5 pp
SK	On average	21.0 pp	22.1 pp	23.7 pp
BG	To watch	29.5 pp	39.5 pp	32.9 pp
EE	To watch	26.2 pp	20.2 pp	26.1 pp
MT	To watch	30.1 pp	25.8 pp	29.3 pp
PL	To watch	31.3 pp	33.9 pp	31.0 pp
RO	To watch	32.0 pp	29.2 pp	30.4 pp
SE	To watch	25.7 pp	23.2 pp	28.2 pp
BE	Critical situations	35.3 pp	33.6 pp	35.0 pp
HR	Critical situations	36.0 pp	39.2 pp	38.0 pp
HU	Critical situations	32.4 pp	29.6 pp	33.8 pp
IE	Critical situations	36.6 pp	36.7 pp	37.2 pp
LT	Critical situations	35.0 pp	32.4 pp	36.3 pp

Source:
2022 EDE estimates: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
2022 & 2023 Eurostat estimates: Eurostat [hlth_dlm200], extracted on 2024-10-14
Social Scoreboard categorisation: European Commission (2024) Joint Employment Report 2024, p. 28
Note: The retracted 2022 disability employment gap for Denmark was 9.9pp in the Joint Employment Report 2024

Employment rates were notably lower among persons with disabilities than among other persons in every EU Member State (Figure 5), but the estimated disability

employment gap varies widely between countries (as shown in Figure 6). The disability employment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation was only below 40 % in Croatia and additionally below 45 % in Belgium, Ireland and Greece. It was above 60 % in the Netherlands, Portugal and Luxembourg using the EDE measure. These observations and the Social Scoreboard categorisation should be contextualised for methodological factors, as explained above.

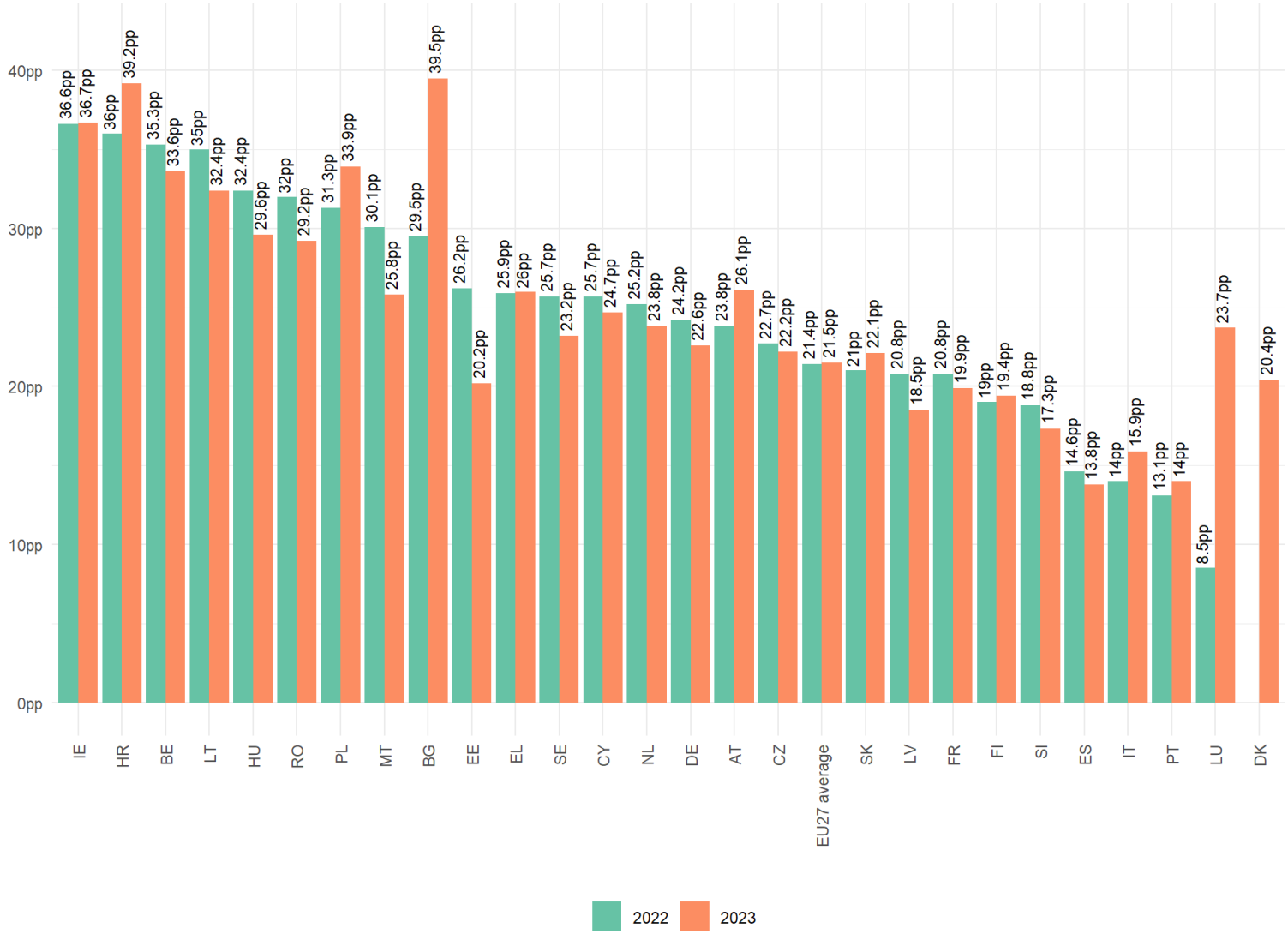
Figure 5: Employment rate (age 20-64) by activity limitation and Member State (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation

The disability employment gap estimates in Figure 6 (next page) correspond to the 2022 and 2023 estimates in the Social Scoreboard (Table 17). Bulgaria had the highest disability employment gap in 2023 and replaced Ireland in the ranking. Spain, closely followed by Portugal, recorded the lowest disability employment gap in 2023, thus replacing Luxembourg which experienced a strong increase above the EU average of 21.5 pp in 2023.

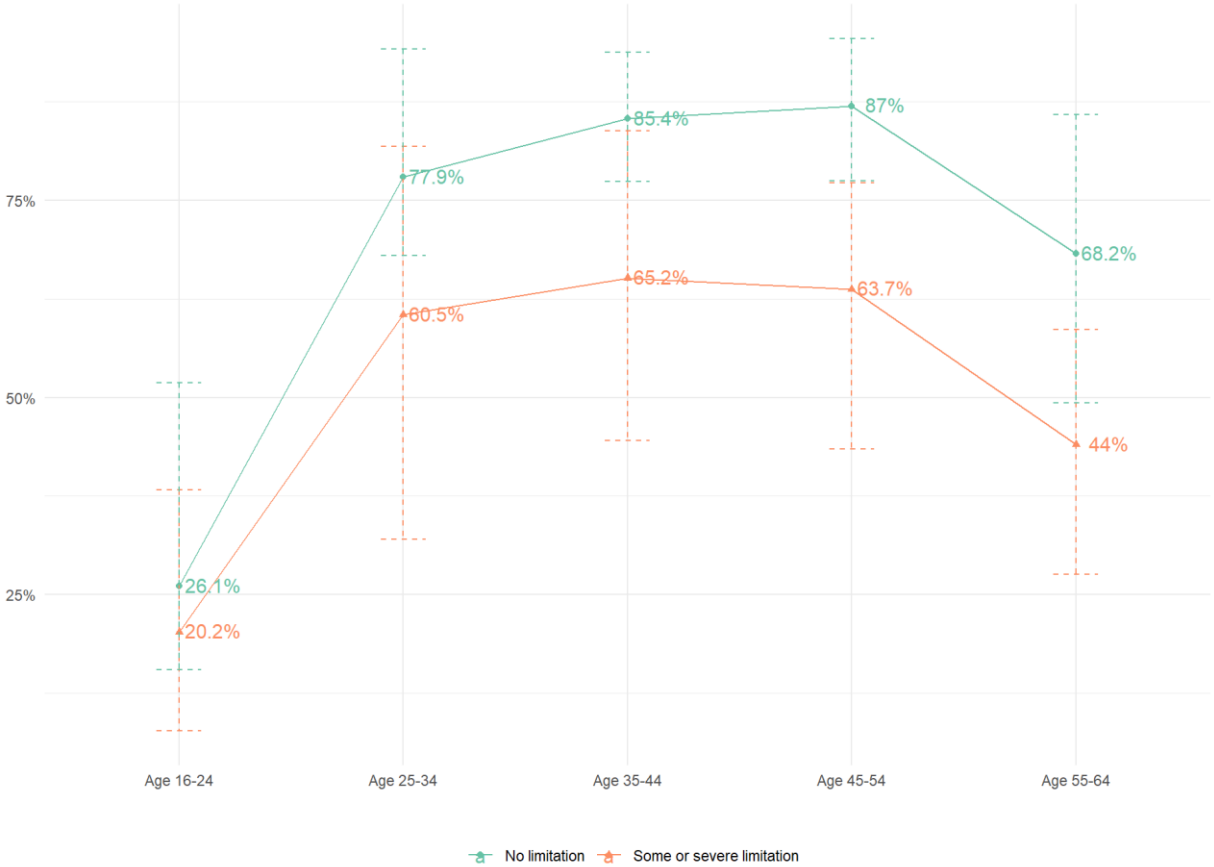
Figure 6: Disability employment gap (age 20-64) by Member State (2022 & 2023)



Source: Eurostat [tepsr_sp200], extracted on 2024-10-16

Figure 7 presents the employment rates of persons with and without disabilities by age groups. Persons aged 16-24 years generally have the lowest employment rates compared to the other age groups. The difference between persons with and without disabilities is also the smallest in this age group (20.2 % compared to 26.1 %). The employment rates of both groups increase in the following age categories of 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 years, however, not to the same level. The disability employment gap increases up to around 24 pp which also persists in the 55-64 age group in which the employment rate of both groups decreases to the second lowest level. Persons with disabilities have their highest employment rate in the 35-44 age group (65.2 %), while persons without activity limitations have their peak employment rate in the 45-54 age group (87 %). The variation among EU Member States in the employment rate of persons with disabilities is the highest in the 25-34 years category. In summary, we see comparable employment patterns over life-course, however, at a lower level for persons with disabilities.

Figure 7: Employment rate (age 20-64) by age group and activity limitation level (2022) – EU27 average



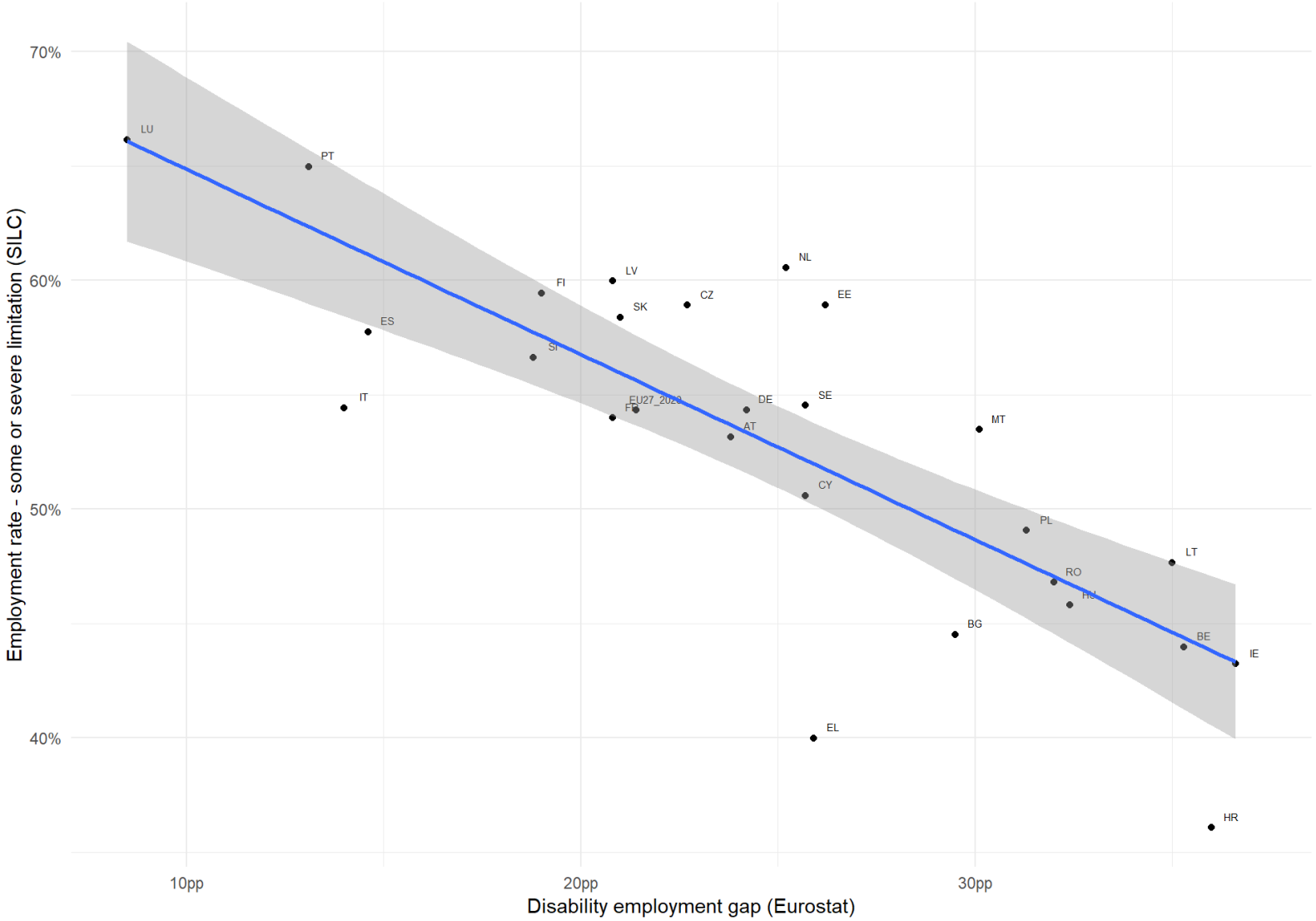
Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

In general, countries that show a high disability employment rate in the EU-SILC data might be expected to present a small disability employment gap on the Scoreboard, but there is not a direct relationship. The two measures shown above are based on different employment conceptualisations, but it is interesting to compare them for illustration. As expected, Figure 8 shows a moderately strong inverse relationship but

with some outliers.[76] For example, Luxembourg indicates a high disability employment rate overall with a narrow disability employment gap. Croatia indicates a low disability employment rate and wide disability employment gap. By contrast, Greece indicates a very low disability employment rate but only a moderate disability employment gap (which might be due to generally low employment rates for persons without disabilities too). Spain and Italy also indicate smaller employment gaps than might be expected from the disability employment rates. Conversely, the Netherlands and Estonia indicate somewhat wider disability employment gaps than might be expected from the employment rate. This raises some questions about the most appropriate measures to consider in comparisons.

[76] 2022: $r=-0.807$, $p=6.212e^{-07}$, $R^2=0.652$.

Figure 8: Employment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 20-64) and disability employment gap (age 20-64) (2022)



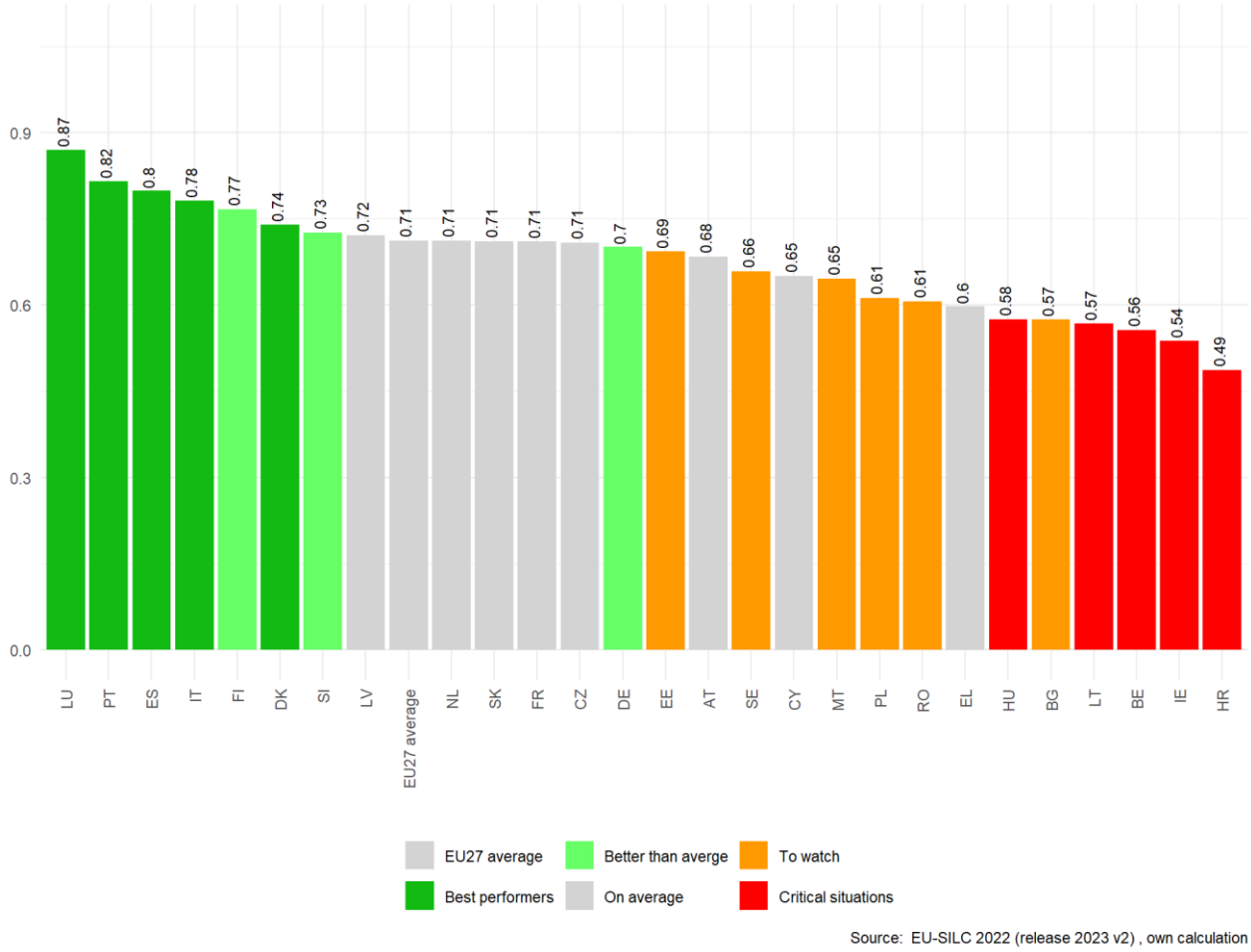
Source:
Gap: Eurostat [tepsr_sp200], extracted on 2025-02-14
Rate: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

To contextualise the headline statistics, it is relevant to consider both the disability employment rate and the disability employment gap in relation to general labour market conditions in each country (the general availability of jobs) and to the reported prevalence of disability in each country (the proportion of persons reporting activity limitation in the survey). An apparently low disability employment rate in a country with weak labour market opportunities might not be surprising and a narrower disability employment gap might be predicted if job opportunities are also suppressed for persons without disabilities (e.g. in the years following the economic crisis of 2008 low disability employment rates in Greece and Spain were somewhat obscured by low general rates of employment, especially because of the high levels of youth unemployment). A wide disability employment gap in a country with generally weak employment opportunities merits further analysis and explanation. One way of controlling for context is to represent the chances of employment for persons with disabilities relative to persons without disabilities in each country, rather than the gap.[77] The employment rates used to estimate the disability employment rate for the Social Scoreboard were not available, but this can be illustrated using employment rates estimated from the microdata.

The relative chances of being in employment for persons with disabilities, compared to other persons, ranged from approximately 0.87 in Luxembourg to approximately 0.49 in Croatia. On average persons with disabilities in the EU have a 0.71 chance of employment compared to persons without disabilities. Using this measure does not have a large impact on the categorisation of ‘Best performers’ and ‘Critical situations’ used for the Social Scoreboard, but it does alter the rankings, notably among those categorised as ‘Better than average’ and ‘To watch’, as illustrated in Figure 9. The employment ratio indicator takes the employment level into consideration and not just the absolute gap between employment rates of persons with and without disabilities. A wide employment gap is a significant concern and provides national authorities with a focus to narrow it. A low disability employment ratio might be a more reliable comparative indicator and provides national authorities with a focus to improve employment rates of persons both with and without disabilities.

[77] The relative employment chances of persons with disabilities are conceptualised in relation to the employment rate of persons without disabilities. A value of 1 would indicate that persons with and without disabilities have equal chances and thus equal employment rates. This corresponds to an employment gap of 0 pp. A value of 0.5 indicates that persons with disabilities have half the likelihood of being employed, based on the size of the employment rate of persons with disabilities in relation to the size of the employment rate of persons without disabilities.

Figure 9: Disability employment ratio (age 20-64) for persons with some or severe activity limitation by Member State (2022)

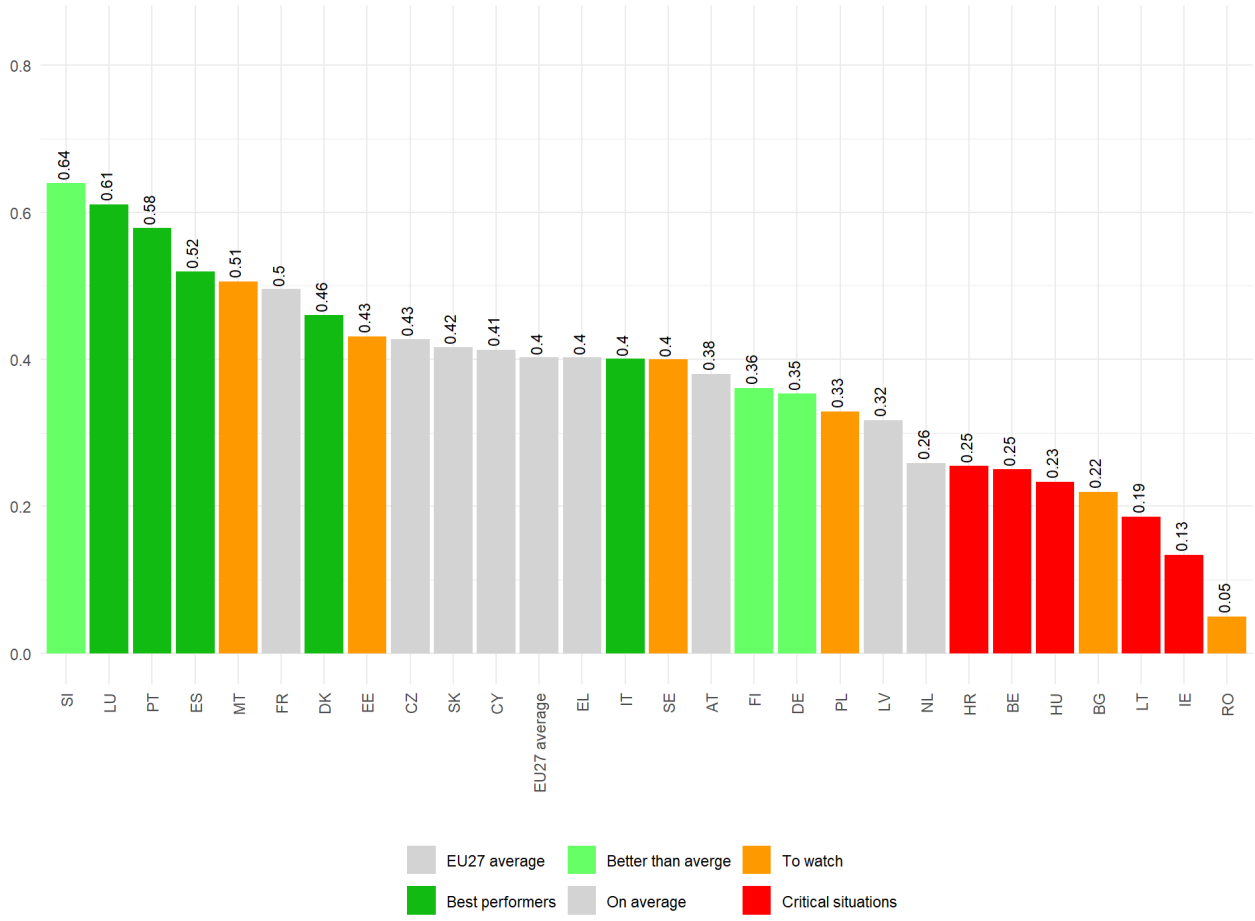


Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

The employment chances of people reporting only severe activity limitation are much lower when compared to persons without disabilities and the variation among countries is wider. In 2022, this disability employment ratio of persons with severe limitations varies from more than 0.6 in Slovenia and Luxembourg to less than 0.2 in Lithuania, Ireland and Romania (0.05 in Romania). This is shown in Figure 10 below. On average, persons with severe activity limitation have a 0.4 chance of being employed compared to persons without activity limitation.

The sub-group of people with severe activity limitation is significant from a policy perspective because they are more likely to be impacted by disabling barriers to employment (e.g. inaccessibility or discriminatory attitudes) and by disability policies (e.g. the availability of disability benefits or target employment support). Looking at the employment ratio for people with severe activity limitation presents different indications of ranking than the 'Best performers' and 'Critical situations' on the Scoreboard (based on employment gap and for all persons with disabilities). For this reason, a disaggregation of severity is always worthy of consideration in analysis. Among the 'best performers', Italy has an employment ratio for persons with severe activity limitation equal to the EU average, while Malta, a to-watch country, has an employment ratio for persons with severe activity limitation higher than average and close to other best-performer countries. Member States with very low employment ratios for persons with severe activity limitations are exclusively to-watch and critical-situations countries.

Figure 10: Disability employment ratio (age 20-64) for persons with severe activity limitation by Member State (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

5.2.2.1 Gender gaps in disability employment rates and gaps

The widest gender employment gaps between women with disabilities and men with disabilities in 2022 were in Malta, Romania and Hungary, but it is relevant to note that this gender gap is now minimal (or even reversed) in some Member States. On average, the absolute gender gap in employment rates of persons with some or severe activity limitation in 2022 was 7.06 pp.

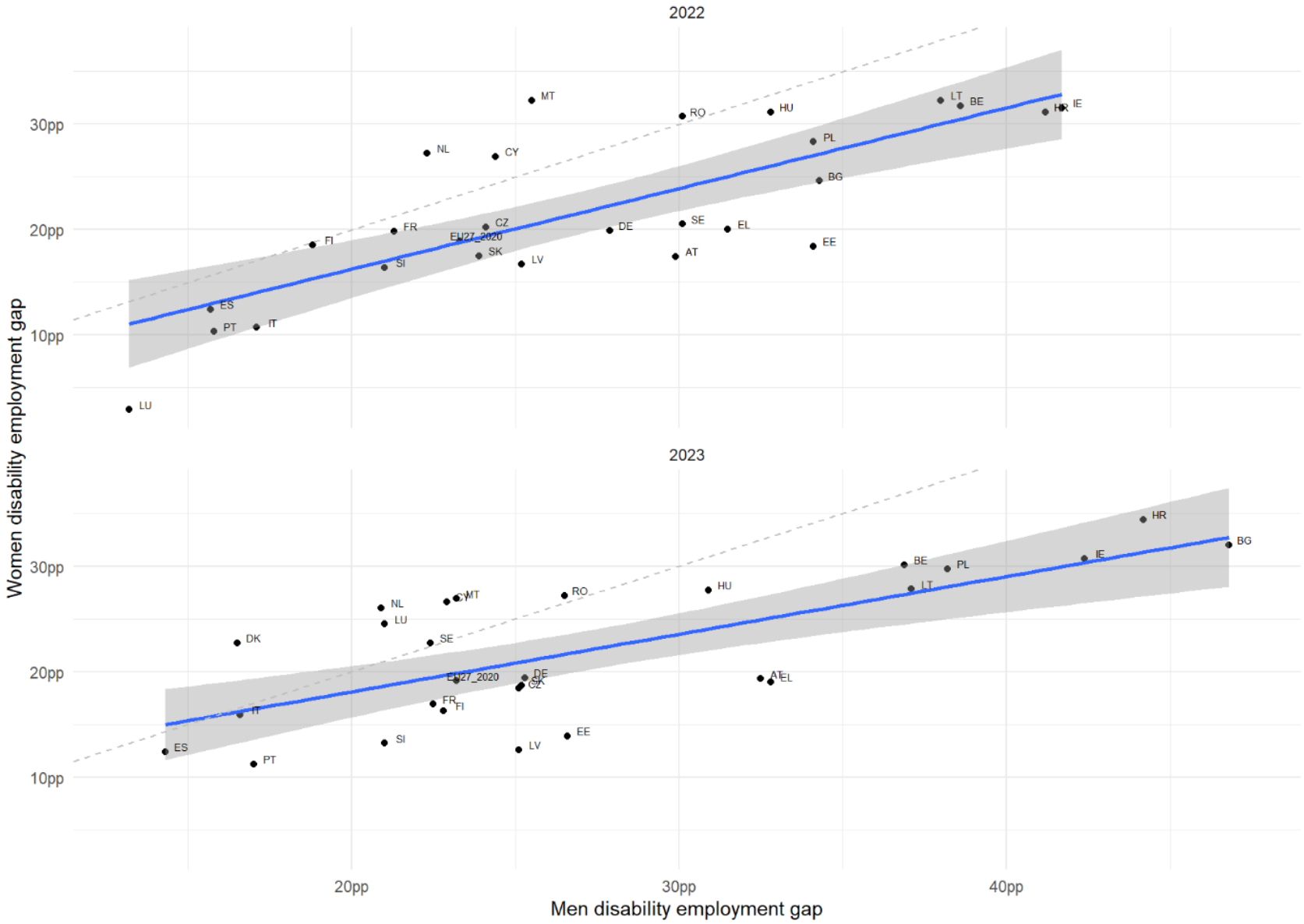
The indication is that the employment rate of women with disabilities has been rising faster than that of men with disabilities in most countries and might account for more of the narrowing in the overall disability employment gap in recent years. The 'feminisation' of contemporary labour markets is well known in general.[78] This is evident, for example, in the shift from (traditionally male) jobs in heavy industries towards (more traditionally female) service sector jobs, accompanied by trends towards (more traditionally female) patterns of flexible, part-time and precarious employment. There is some indication that employment participation of women with disabilities has increased even more rapidly than women's employment overall, at least in some countries. This would merit further investigation.

[78] Coyle, A. (2005), ‚Changing times: flexibilization and the re-organization of work in feminized labour markets', *The Sociological Review*, *53*(2_suppl), 73-88.

Figure 11 shows the relationship between the disability employment gap for women and men with some or severe activity limitation in 2022 and 2023. The correlation is statistically significant in both years and explains around 60 % of the variation in 2022 and 50 % in 2023.[79] On average, the employment gap for women decreases with the employment gap for men and vice versa. However, the relationship is not directly proportional. Countries with low disability employment gaps also have close to equal employment gaps for women and men. An increase in the gender-specific employment gap increases the gender gap. The disability employment gap is generally higher for men than for women in most EU member states, with some Member States deviating from this relationship.

[79] 2022: $r=0.773$, $p=3.61e^{-06}$, $R^2=0.599$; 2023: $r=0.707$, $p=3.677e^{-05}$, $R^2=0.501$

Figure 11: Disability employment gap (age 20-64) by gender (2022 & 2023)

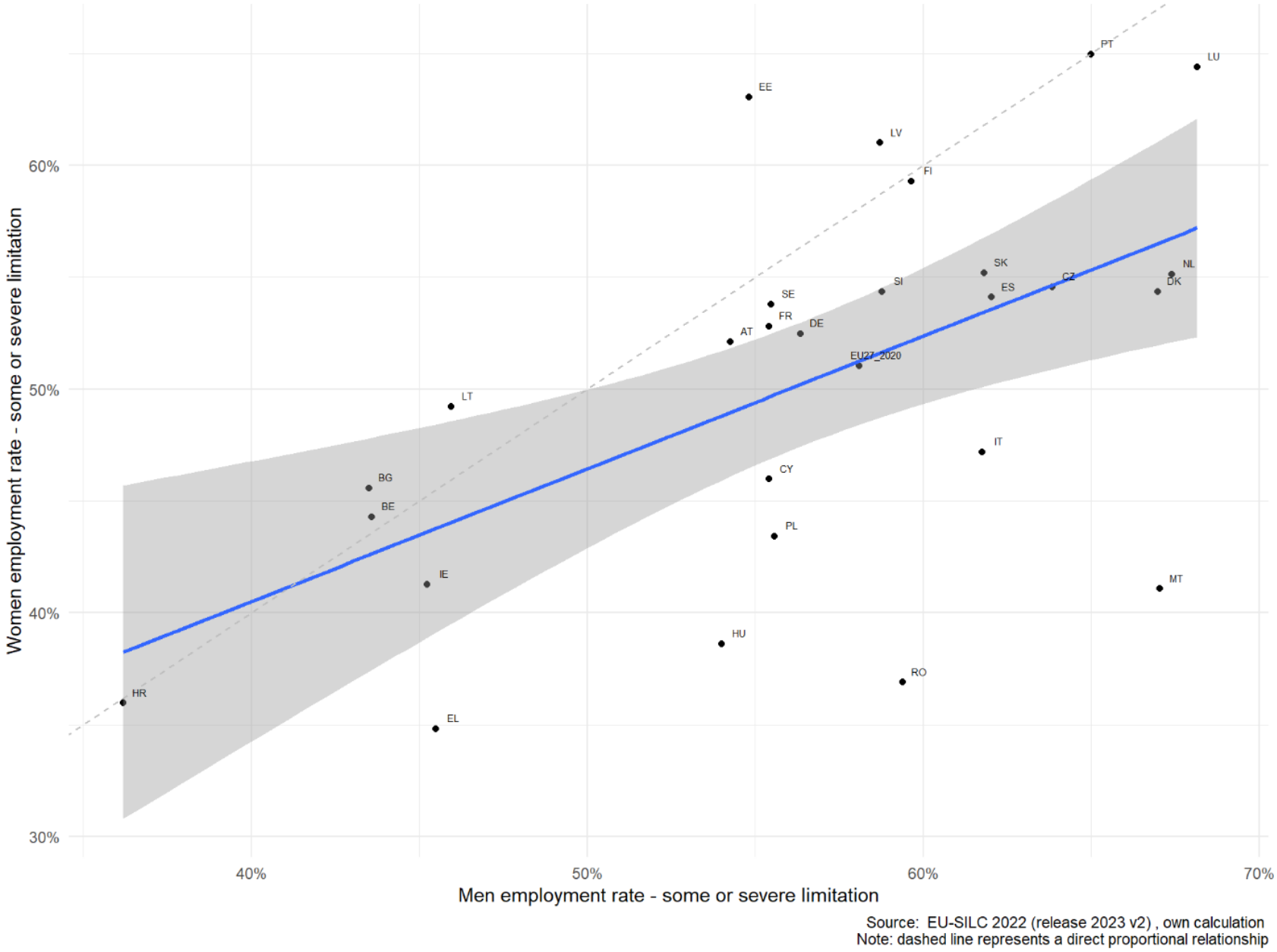


Source: Eurostat [tepsr_sp200], extracted on 2024-10-16
Note: dashed line represents a direct proportional relationship

The pattern of the gender gap in employment rates for women and men with some or severe activity limitation is less clear (Figure 12, next page). The relationship remains significant but explains only 33 % of the variation.[80] In most EU Member States the employment rate of men with activity limitation is higher than that of women with activity limitation. The employment rates of both are associated with an increase when the other increases. Most of the countries are, however, outside the 95 % confidence interval.

[80] 2022: r=0.573, p=0.001784, R^2=0.329

Figure 12: Employment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation by gender (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation
Note: dashed line represents a direct proportional relationship

5.2.2.2 Controlling for variation in labour market conditions

Employment outcomes for persons with disabilities depend on various factors. These include personal factors, the availability of supportive policies and general labour market conditions, especially labour market changes due to external shocks such as COVID-19 and the previous financial crisis. The extent of the disability impact might depend, for example, on the degree of segmentation in the labour market (e.g. job protection in sheltered or quota-based employment), the effectiveness of non-discrimination sanctions, the amount of targeted support for jobseekers with disabilities (disability employment services and subsidies) and the accessibility of the environment (including public transport and workplaces).

Such factors cannot be easily disaggregated from general labour market data and require country-level analysis of policy factors (which is provided in the EDE country fiches). Nevertheless, it is helpful to contextualise the employment chances of persons with disabilities in relation to general labour market conditions. This can be illustrated by plotting the disability employment rate in each country against the general employment rate (as shown in Figure 13), which confirms the positive association (i.e. countries with higher general employment rates tend to exhibit higher disability employment rates). The correlation is statistically significant ($r=0.453$; $p=0.0177$; $R^2=0.205$). However, it explains only 21 % of the variation.[81] This indicates a strong heterogeneity among EU Member States. Taking the Social Scoreboard categorisation into account, countries that are 'best performers' have high employment rates for persons with disabilities but not the highest general employment rates. On the other hand, several to-watch countries (Malta, Sweden and Czechia) have higher general employment rates and comparable employment rates for persons with disabilities.

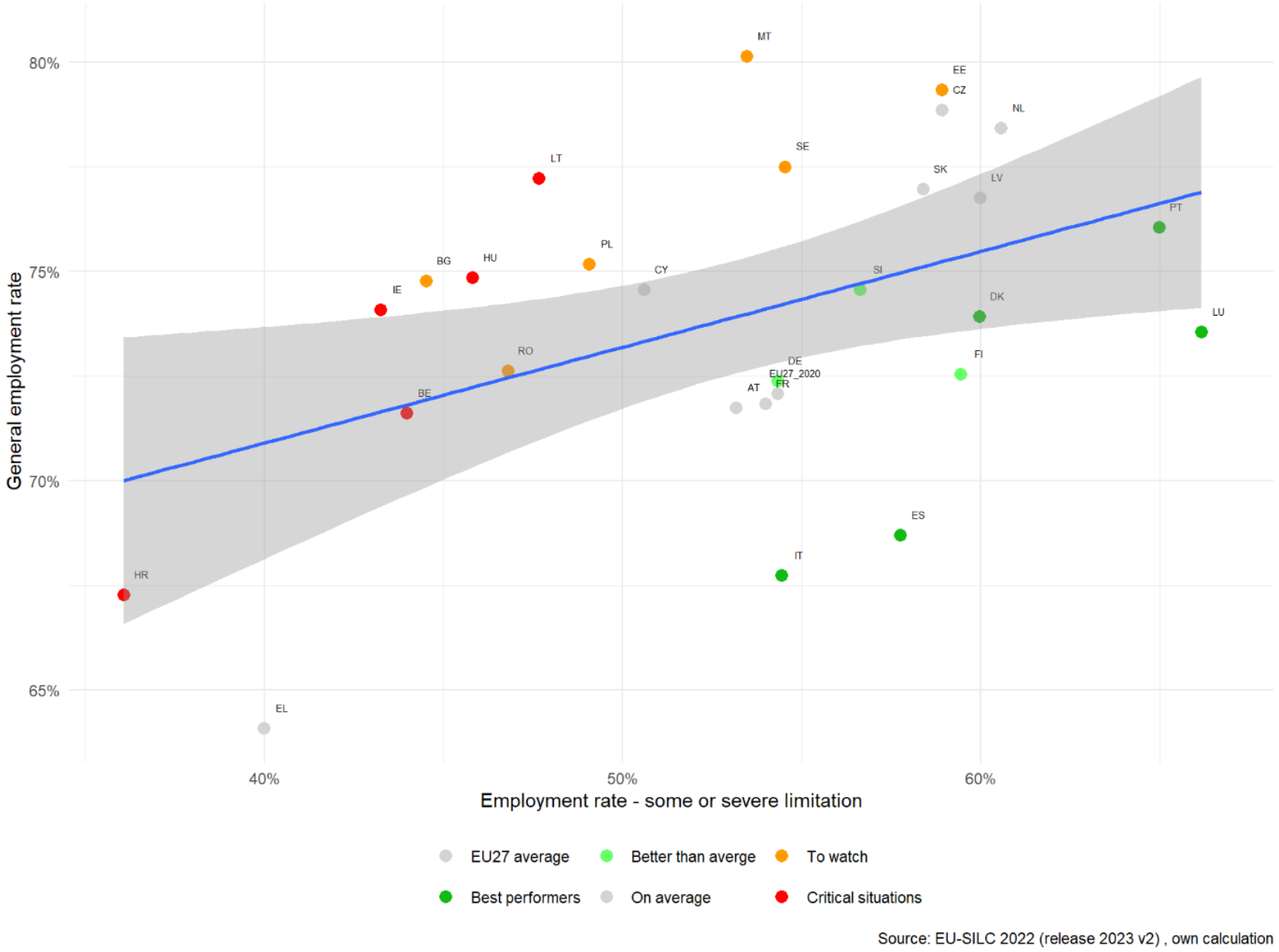
This general association had strengthened to some extent before the COVID-19 crisis, consistent with the observation of a slowly narrowing disability employment gap. As the disability gap narrowed, the association with general labour market conditions strengthened. This trend already appeared to have weakened in 2020, with the onset of COVID-19, and it weakened further following the pandemic. The association and correlation were stronger in 2019 compared to 2020[82] and were stronger in 2020 compared to 2022, which might indicate different labour market opportunities for persons with and without disabilities after COVID-19.

Caution is needed at the country level as disability employment outcomes vary widely and most of the cases lie outside the predicted confidence bands for the trend (95 %). Nevertheless, the data raises interesting policy questions. Outlier country cases may merit further analysis since their divergence might be explained by a combination of policy factors or methodological factors (in sampling, data definition or response factors).

[81] Since persons with disabilities are included in both the general employment rate and the disability rate it is worth noting the exclusive comparison between persons with and without disabilities ($r=0.34$; $p=0.083$; $R^2=0.115$). However, this tends to exaggerate the effect of differences in the prevalence of self-reported activity limitation between national surveys, which is addressed later.

[82] See: European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and Priestley, M. (2023), *European Semester 2022 mainstreaming disability equality*, Publications Office of the European Union, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/480741.

Figure 13: General employment rate and employment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

5.2.2.3 Controlling for variation in disability prevalence rates

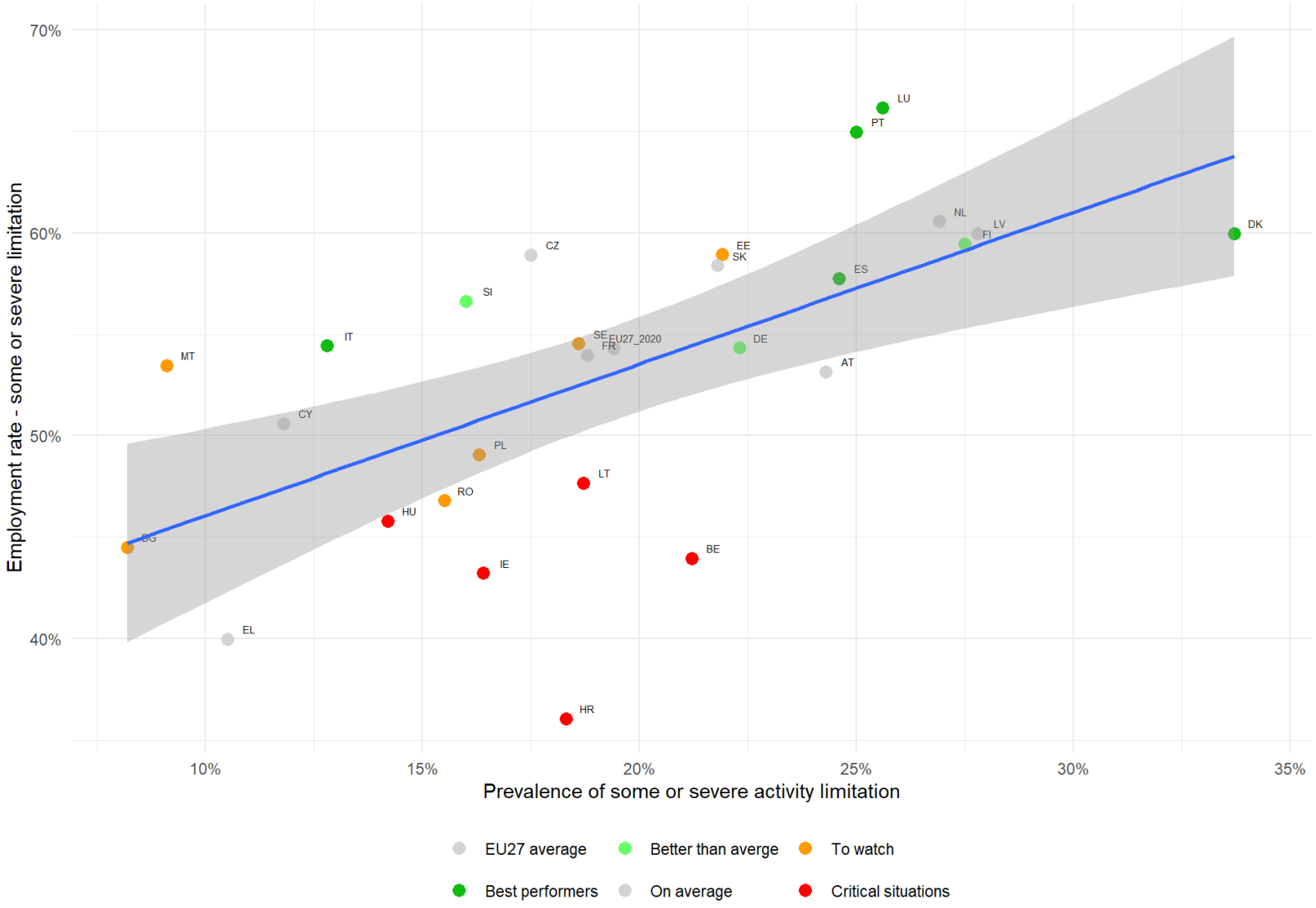
Caution is needed concerning methodological anomalies and variations in the prevalence of self-reported activity limitation and its association with employment outcomes (i.e. countries with higher disability prevalence rates among working age people do tend to average higher disability employment rates too, but not consistently). One common assumption is that high rates of self-reported activity limitation might over-represent persons with moderate levels of activity limitation, with more positive participation outcomes (i.e. less disabled by societal barriers), and that low prevalence rates might over-represent people with more severe levels of activity limitation (and lower participation rates). In this case, countries with high prevalence rates might tend to indicate better than expected average outcomes for persons with disabilities and vice versa. This merits investigation to establish the possible effects.

Taking all the data points for the EU27 countries in 2022, there was a statistically significant but only moderate positive correlation between the reported prevalence of activity limitation in the 20-64 age group and the disability employment rate per country overall ($r=0.620$, $p=0.0006$, $R^2=0.385$). This association is shown for 2022 in Figure 14 which illustrates the variation as well as the moderate association. For example, while Denmark, the Netherlands, Latvia, Finland, Estonia and Czechia appear to have high disability employment rates they have varying prevalence rates. Likewise, Malta, Bulgaria and Greece report low prevalence rates but widely varying disability employment rates.

To control some of the fluctuation, Figure 15 shows the same relationship between the employment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation and the prevalence rate of some or severe activity limitation as national averages between 2020 and 2022. It covers the COVID-19 years and the subsequent year. The positive association remains similar ($r=0.598$, $p=0.001$, $R^2=0.357$) and most of the countries are not inside the 95 % confidence interval of the linear regression line. Greece, Ireland and Croatia seem to be stable outliers with low disability employment rates but with different levels of disability prevalence.

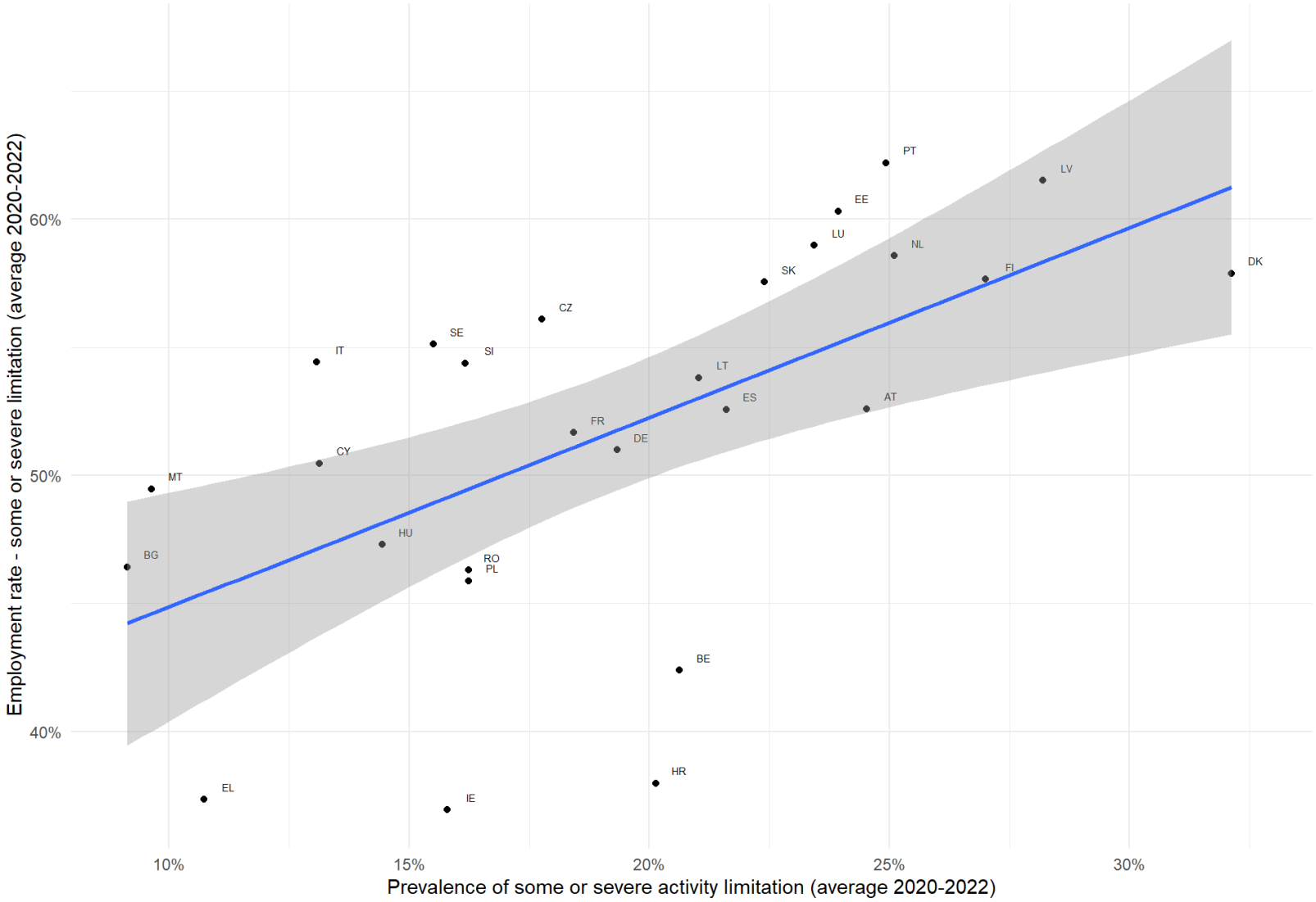
In summary, there is greater variation in prevalence rates than in the estimation of employment rates, which are both based on self-reporting in EU-SILC. Prevalence estimates may play a part in some cases as an artefact of the survey methodology, but other factors are needed to explain the patterning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

Figure 14: Employment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 20-64) and prevalence of activity limitation (age 20-64) (2022)



Source:
Prevalence: Eurostat [hlth_silc_12], extracted on 2024-10-16
Rate: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

Figure 15: Employment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 20-64) and prevalence of activity limitation (age 20-64), using three-year averages (2020-2022)



Source:
Prevalence: Eurostat [hlth_silc_12], extracted on 2024-10-16
Rate: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation
Note: missing values for Germany 2020, Italy 2020, Slovakia 2021

A popular hypothesis to explain the prevalence effect, outlined earlier, is that estimated disability employment rates might be inflated optimistically in countries that over-report persons with low levels of activity limitation in the disability category (because such persons might be closer to the labour market and more likely to be in employment). A more expansive disability definition may dilute negative outcomes, based on averages, while a restrictive definition may intensify them. This is clearly shown by comparing the employment rates of persons with moderate activity limitation and those with severe activity limitation in the EU-SILC data (see Figure 4). However, such effects do not easily explain country variations on equivalent measures, except in specific cases.

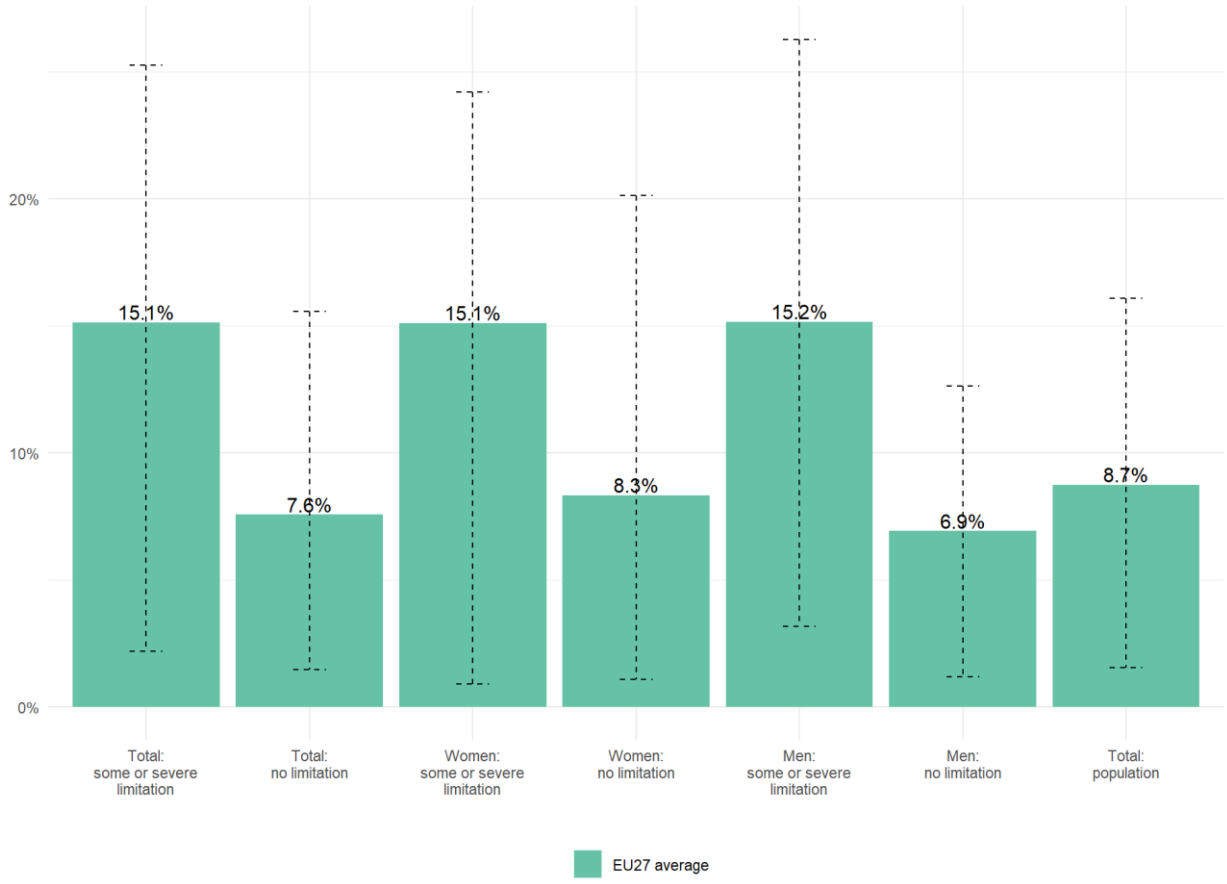
In summary, it is important to be aware of a weak positive association between estimates of prevalence and estimates of employment outcomes, based on self-reporting in EU-SILC. It is also relevant to be aware of significant time series breaks within countries. Prevalence should be factored into modelling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

5.2.3 Unemployment

Disability unemployment rates are relevant not only for the Semester but as a disaggregated measure supporting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The challenges encountered when comparing disability employment rates are compounded for unemployment rates, for two reasons – the numbers of persons with disabilities in the unemployment category are much smaller and national administrative rules and definitions of ‘unemployment’ vary in relation to disability (e.g. whether people in vocational ‘rehabilitation’ programmes are counted as job seekers, trainees or employees). In some countries, only ‘registered’ persons with disabilities are counted by the employment service, while the EU-SILC data are self-reported. Figure 16 shows that the variation among EU members states in all disaggregated groups is higher for persons with disabilities than for those without disabilities.

The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities in the EU was on average 15.1 % in 2022 compared to 7.6 % for persons without activity limitations. Women and men with disabilities report much higher levels of unemployment across the EU compared to other persons. Compared to 2020, we observe a general improvement and thus a decrease in unemployment rates. However, the reduction is greater for persons without disabilities than with disabilities. While the disability gap remains, the unemployment rates of women and men with disabilities are similar (around 15 %). Among men and women without disabilities, there was a gender gap, with lower unemployment rates for men (around 1.4 pp difference).

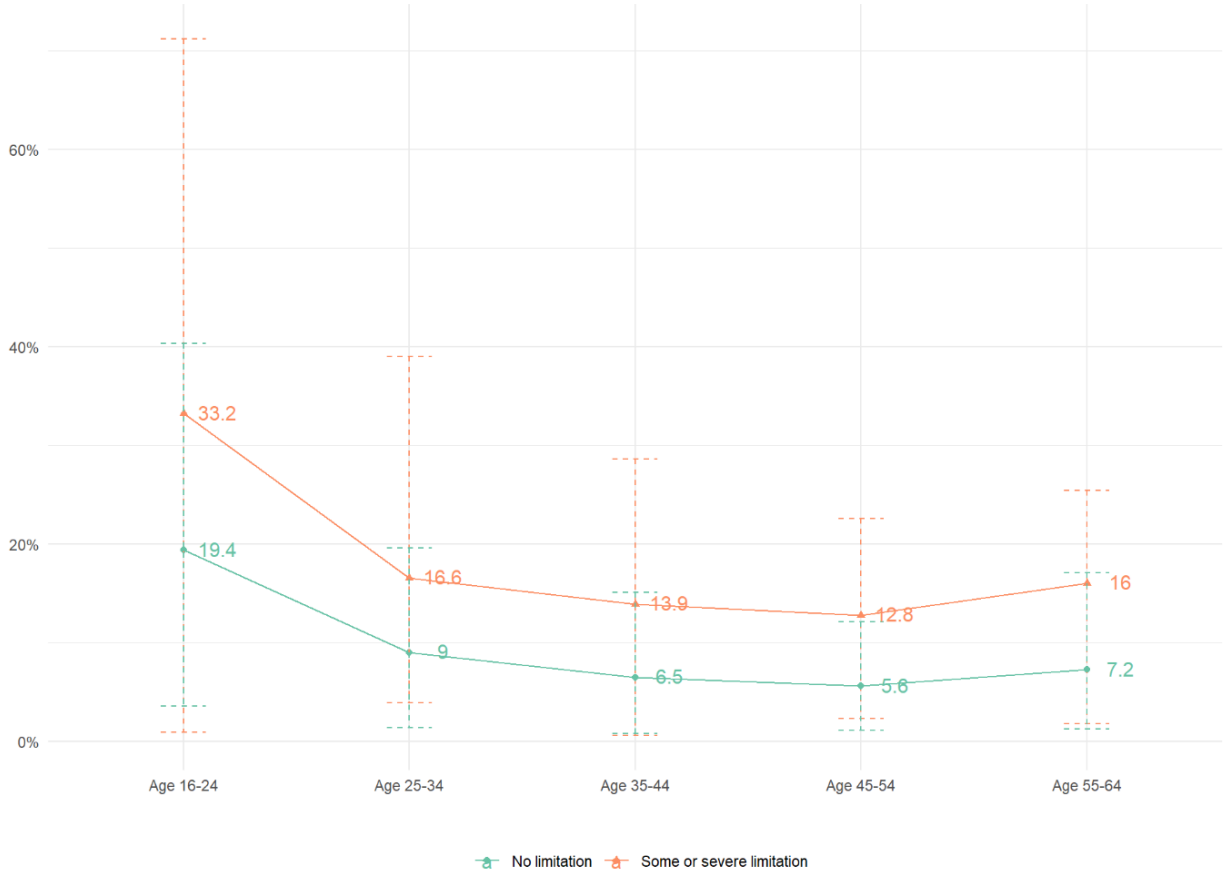
Figure 16: Unemployment rate (age 20-64) by activity limitation level and gender (2022) – EU27 average



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

The pattern of unemployment rates across age groups deviates from the pattern of employment rates (Figure 17). The gap in unemployment rates between persons with and without disabilities is the highest in the 16-24 age group. The youth unemployment rate of persons with disabilities was 33.2 % in 2022, while the youth unemployment of persons without disabilities was 19.4 %. The gap decreases in the following age groups, with the unemployment rates for persons both with and without disabilities decreasing. In the oldest age group of 55-64 years, the unemployment rate of both groups increases, however, the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities increases more strongly. This widens the disability gap again, but not to the same level as among the youngest age group. The variation among Member States is also the widest among the youngest age group, ranging from 0.88 % in Luxembourg to 71.2 % in Bulgaria.

Figure 17: Unemployment rate (age 16-64) by activity limitation level and age group (2022) – EU27 average



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

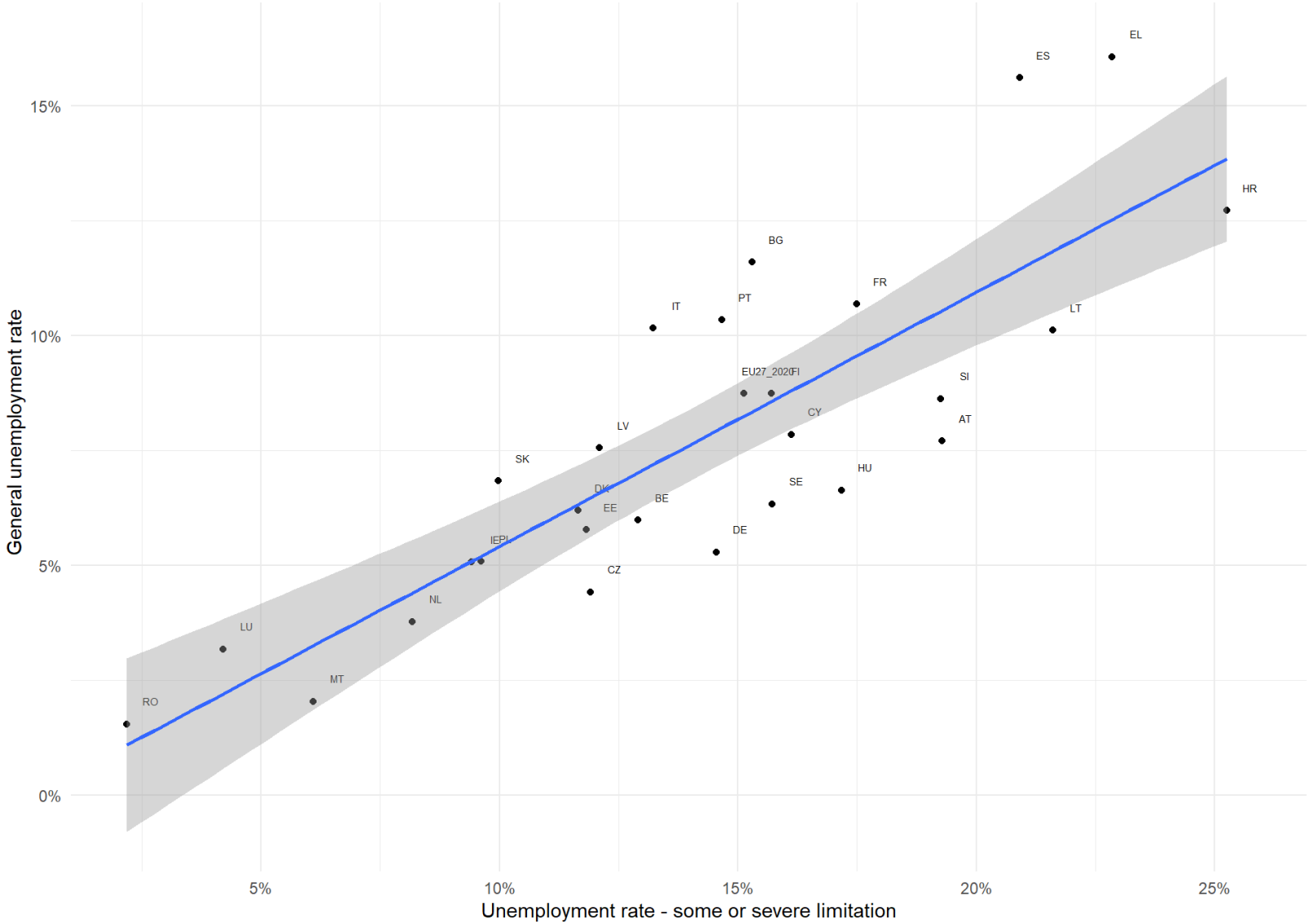
Repeating the same type of indicative analysis provided for employment data, there is a strong positive association between the general unemployment rate and the rate for persons who declare activity limitations, which is also highly statistically significant ($r=0.839$; $p=4.672e\text{-}^{08}$; $R^2=0.703$). Persons with disabilities are much more likely to be unemployed in countries that have generally high unemployment rates, and to a greater degree (Figure 18). The association between disability and general unemployment rates is stronger than the association between disability and general employment rates. There is no significant association between reported prevalence and unemployment rates.[83]An analysis of country-level factors, including different policy approaches, might be even more important in explaining divergent outcomes.

The clustering of countries around the average unemployment trend is closer than for employment rates. For example, the very high rates of general unemployment in Greece, Croatia and Spain are reflected in correspondingly high rates for persons with disabilities. Conversely, countries with low levels of general unemployment tend to report low levels of unemployment for persons with disabilities (Romania, Luxembourg and Malta). Some countries report disability rates above the trend expectation and some below. The reported rate of unemployment among persons with disabilities in Romania has remained notably low (as it is generally), while higher than expected rates are observed in Czechia, Germany, Sweden, Hungary and Austria. Such cases

[83] $r=-0.0999$; $p=0.613$; $R^2=0.01$

merit further analysis (for example, examining the policy relationship between disability and unemployment status).

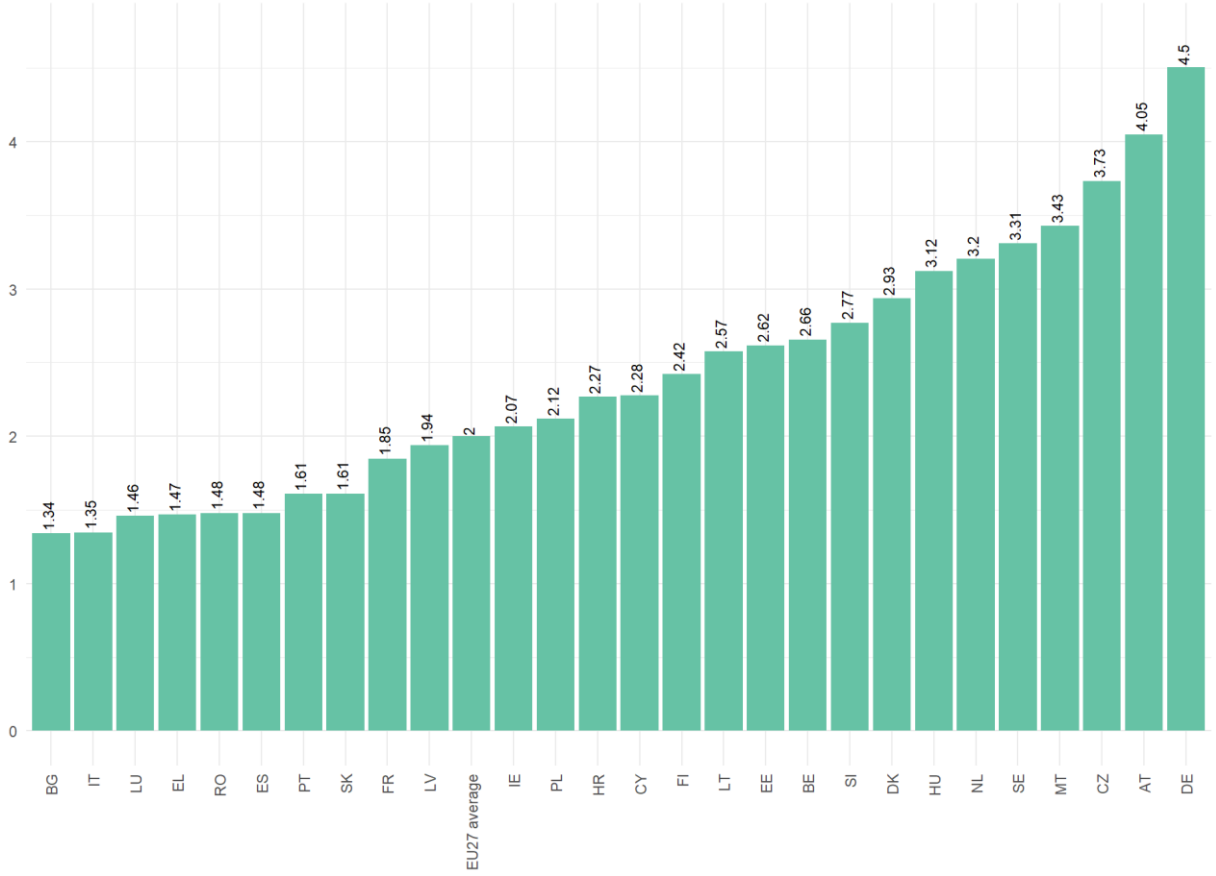
Figure 18: General unemployment rate (age 20-64) and unemployment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 20-64) (2022)



Source:
Rate: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

In 2022, the chance of being unemployed for persons with disabilities compared to persons without disabilities was on average twice as high (2). The figure increases up to 4.5 in Germany and decreases to 1.34 in Bulgaria. This is shown in Figure 19 but, as with the case of employment, it is important to consider the possible effect of self-reported prevalence (which requires further analysis).

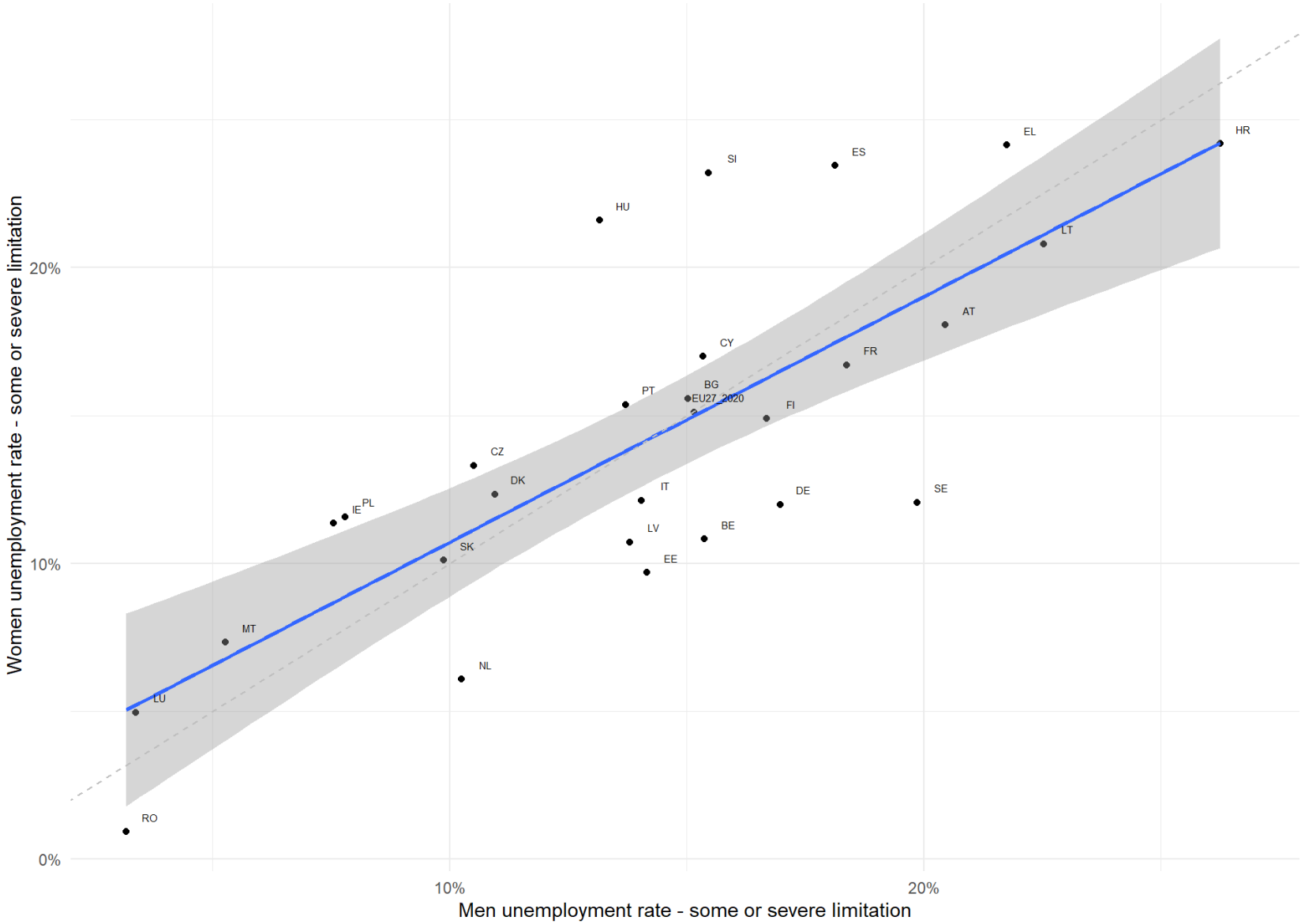
Figure 19: Disability unemployment ratio (age 20-64) by Member State (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

The general narrow gender gap in the average unemployment rate for persons with disabilities already indicated a strong association between the unemployment rates of men and women with disabilities. The association is positive and statistically significant ($r=0.783$; $p=1.366e^{-06}$; $R^2=0.613$) and close to a directly proportional relationship (Figure 20). Some countries deviate from the pattern of comparable unemployment rates for men and women with disabilities. The Netherlands and Sweden have lower unemployment rates for women with disabilities than expected compared to the unemployment rate for men with disabilities. Hungary, Slovenia and Spain, on the other hand, have lower unemployment rates for men than expected.

Figure 20: Unemployment rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation by gender (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation
Note: dashed line represents a direct proportional relationship

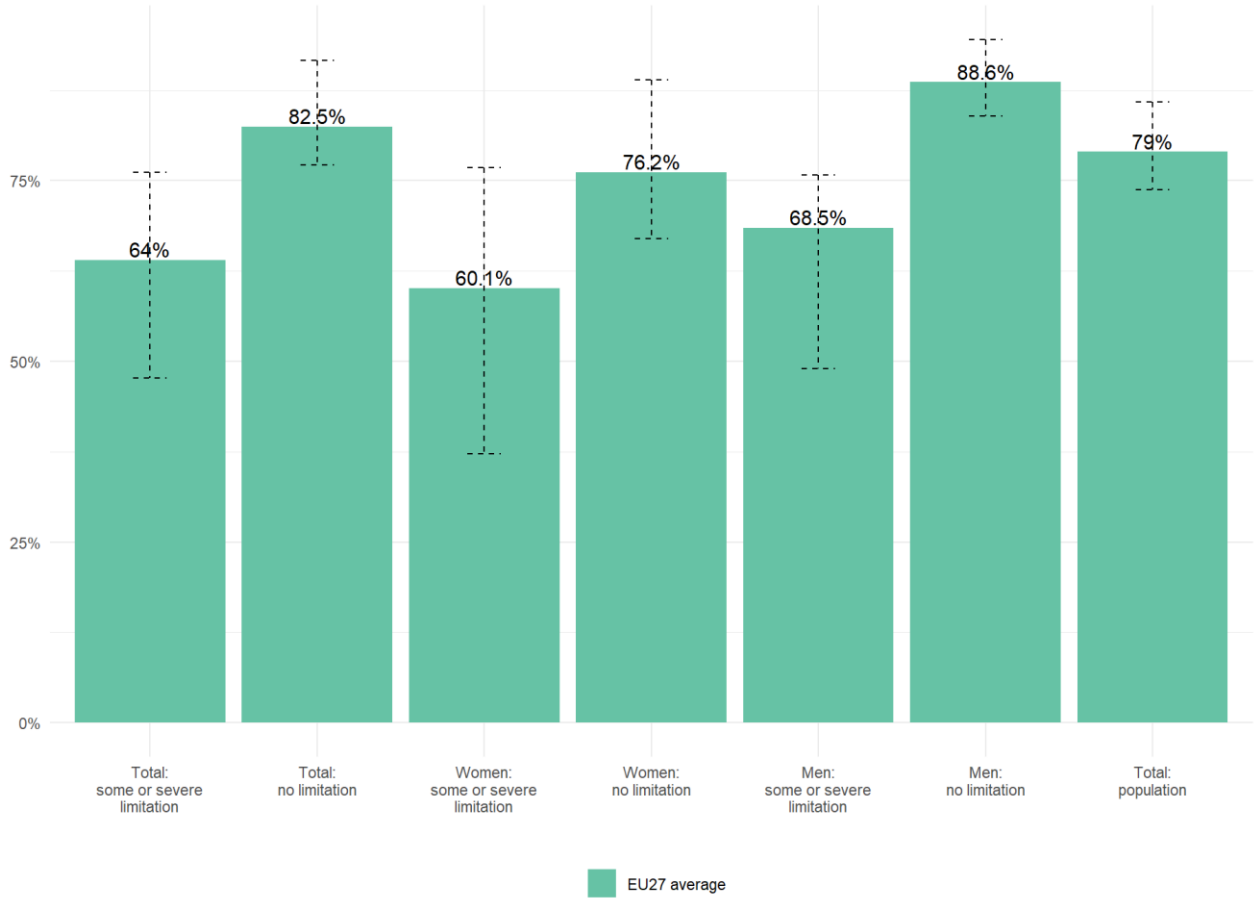
In summary, in a fully inclusive and non-discriminatory labour market, with the provision of appropriate employment support, rates of unemployment among persons with and without disabilities should be similar (assuming all who enter the labour market are capable of work). Clearly, this is not the case. Unemployment rates are higher for persons with disabilities than for other persons in every EU Member State. A range of supply and demand side explanations are possible, which may work in combination in different national contexts, for example the extent to which:

- employers discriminate against persons with disabilities when hiring from the general pool of job seekers; or
- job seekers with disabilities lack some of the skills or qualifications needed for the job opportunities available in the labour market; or
- insufficient accessibility or support is available to help suitably qualified job seekers with disabilities into work, or to sustain them in work.

5.2.4 Economic activity

Across the EU and in every Member State (gendered) activity rates of working age persons with disabilities fall well below those for other persons in the population. There have been increases in economic activity, which may reflect improving labour market conditions and/or policy advances, but the key policy question is whether access to the labour market results in employment chances (rather than adding to unemployment). Figure 21 presents an overview of economic activity rates for women and men at the EU level in 2022. Persons with disabilities had an economic activity rate of 64 % compared to 82.5 % of persons without disabilities. Women and men with disabilities both have lower activity rates than their counterparts without activity limitations. The disability gap is somewhat wider for men than for women. Women generally have lower economic activity rates than men. The highest variation among Member States exists for the economic activity rate of women with some or severe activity limitation.

Figure 21: Economic activity rate (age 20-64) by activity limitation level and gender (2022) – EU27 average

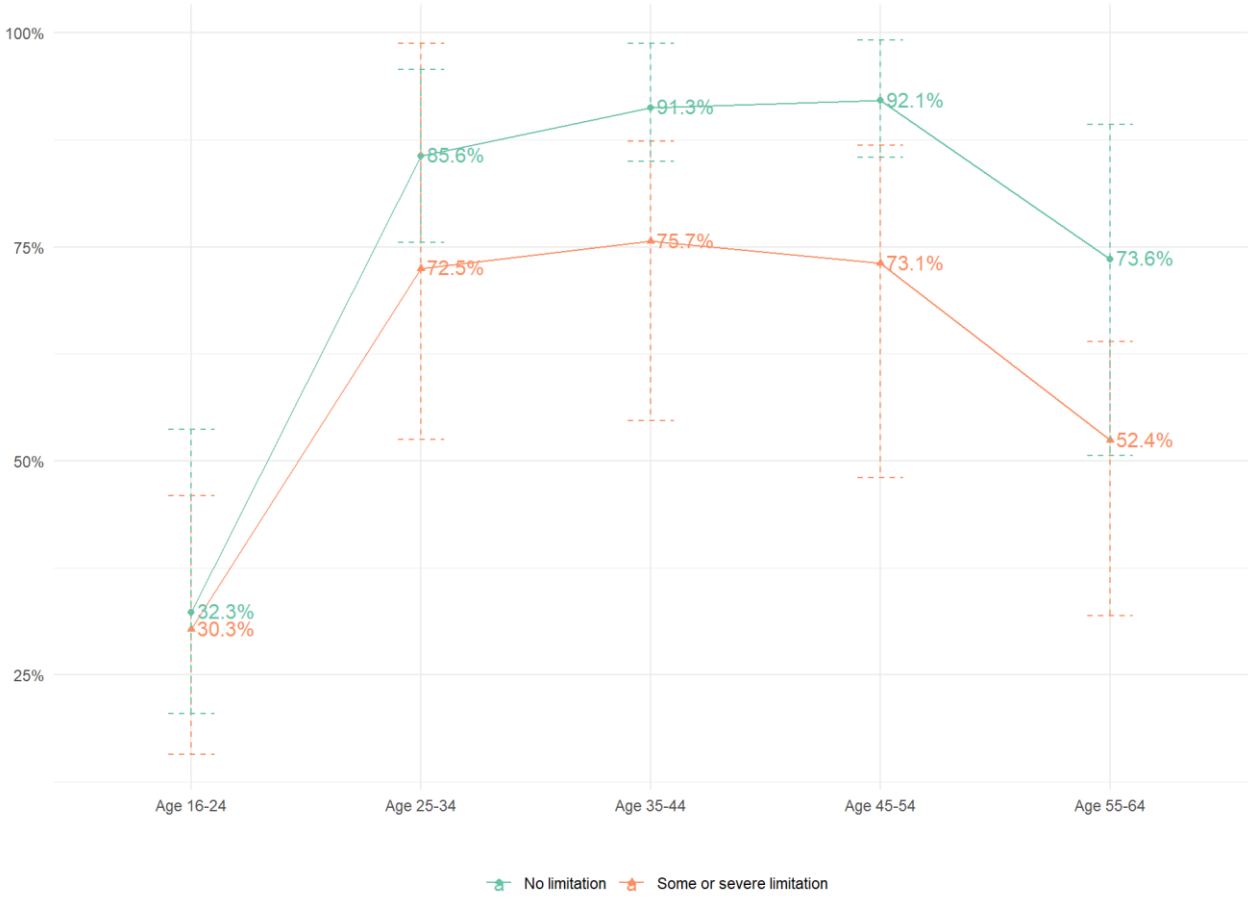


Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

A familiar pattern is evident across the working age life course, with an accentuation of exclusion among older workers (see Figure 22). Comparable to the employment rates, young persons have the lowest activity rates and the smallest disability gap. The gap in activity rates between persons with and without disabilities increases over the life course. This reinforces the tendency, discussed earlier, for an early exit from working life among workers who acquire disabilities later in their working careers (via disability or early retirement schemes). The extent of this gap varies between countries, as shown in the EDE country fiches.[84]

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

Figure 22: Economic activity rate by activity limitation level and age group (2022) – EU27 average

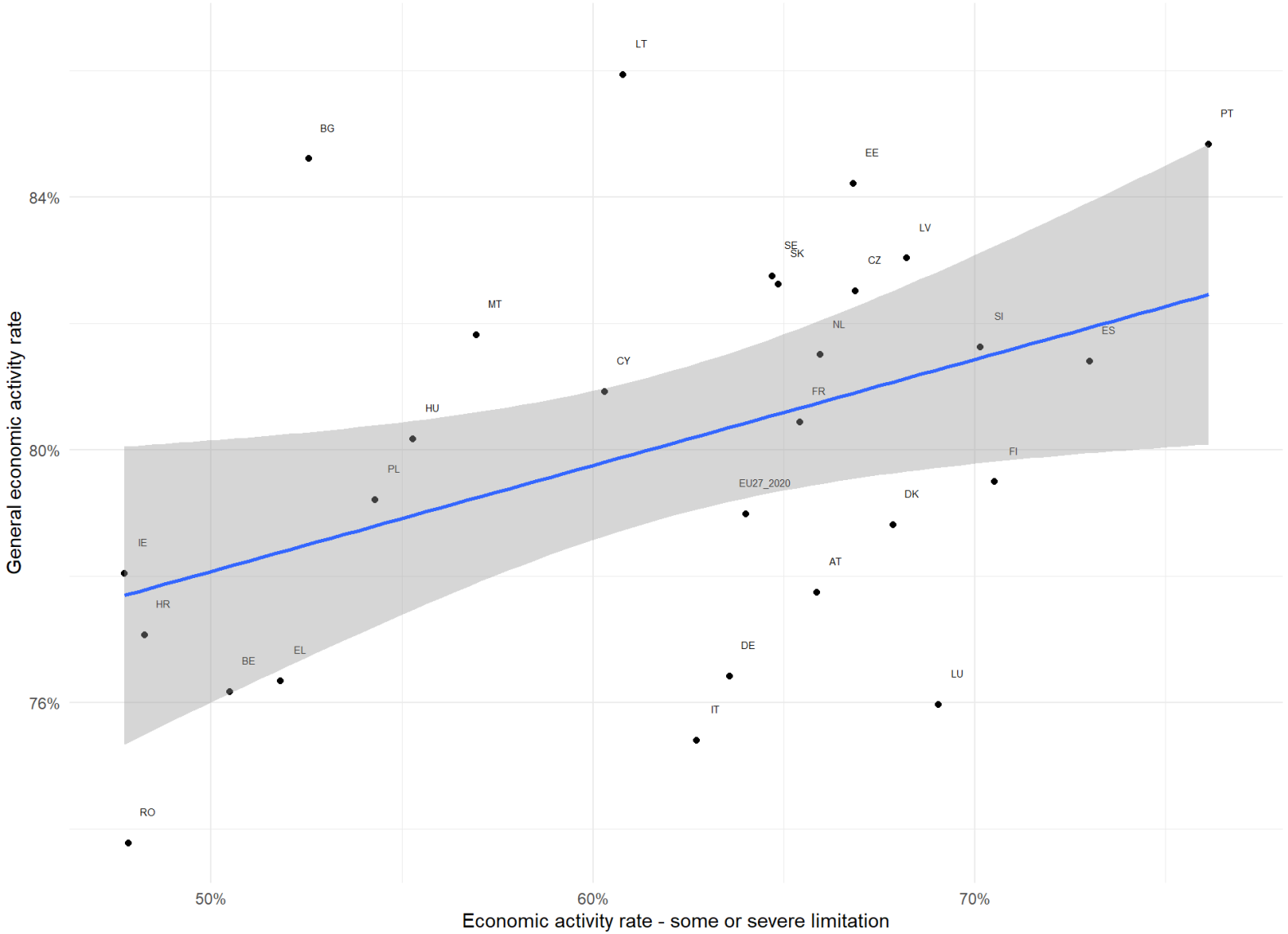


Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

A comparative analysis of economic activity data helps to complete the picture of variation in labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities. We should expect the activity rate of persons with disabilities to vary in proportion to the economic activity rate of the general population but at a lower rate, reflecting a proportion of persons who may be unable to work, temporarily or permanently. As Figure 23 shows, there is a weak association ($r=0.426$; $p=0.027$; $R^2=0.182$). Little of the variation in disability activity rates between EU Member States can be explained by differences in general activity rates for those countries. This means that other factors must be involved (e.g. policy factors).

Romania had both a very low economic activity rate for persons with disabilities and a very low economic activity rate among the entire population, in contrast to Portugal with its high economic activity rate for the population and for persons with disabilities. Luxembourg and Italy had high activity rates for persons with disabilities compared to the entire population. On the other hand, Bulgaria had a high general activity rate paired with a low activity rate for persons with disabilities.

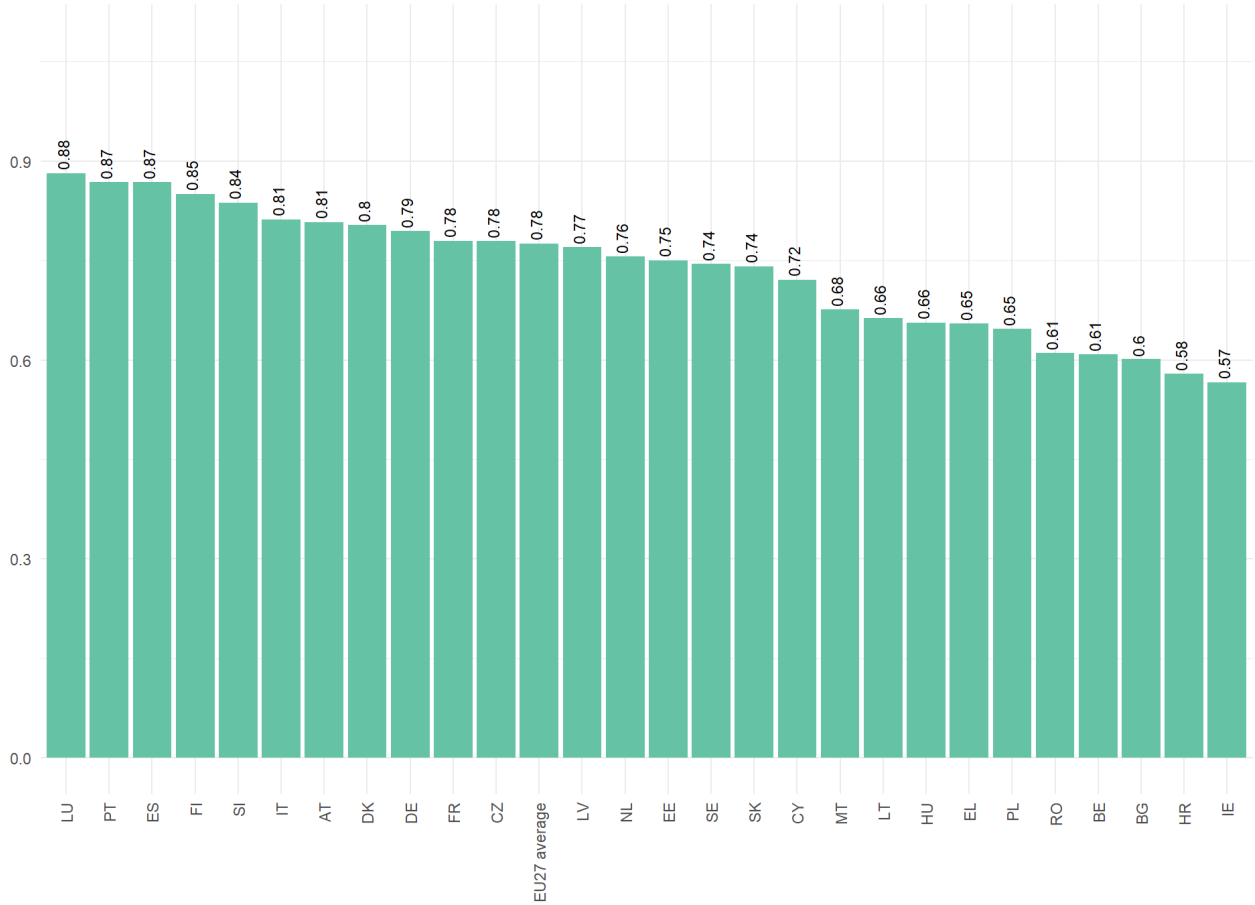
Figure 23: General economic activity rate and economic activity rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 20-64) (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

On average, in 2022, persons with disabilities in the EU had a 0.78 likelihood of being economically active compared to persons without disabilities (Figure 24). Luxembourg had the highest ratio (0.88) and thus the most comparable economic activity rates between persons with and without disabilities. Ireland had the lowest ratio (0.57), indicating that persons with disabilities have slightly more than half the chance of being economically active compared to persons without disabilities in Ireland.

Figure 24: Disability economic activity ratio (age 20-64) by Member State (2022)



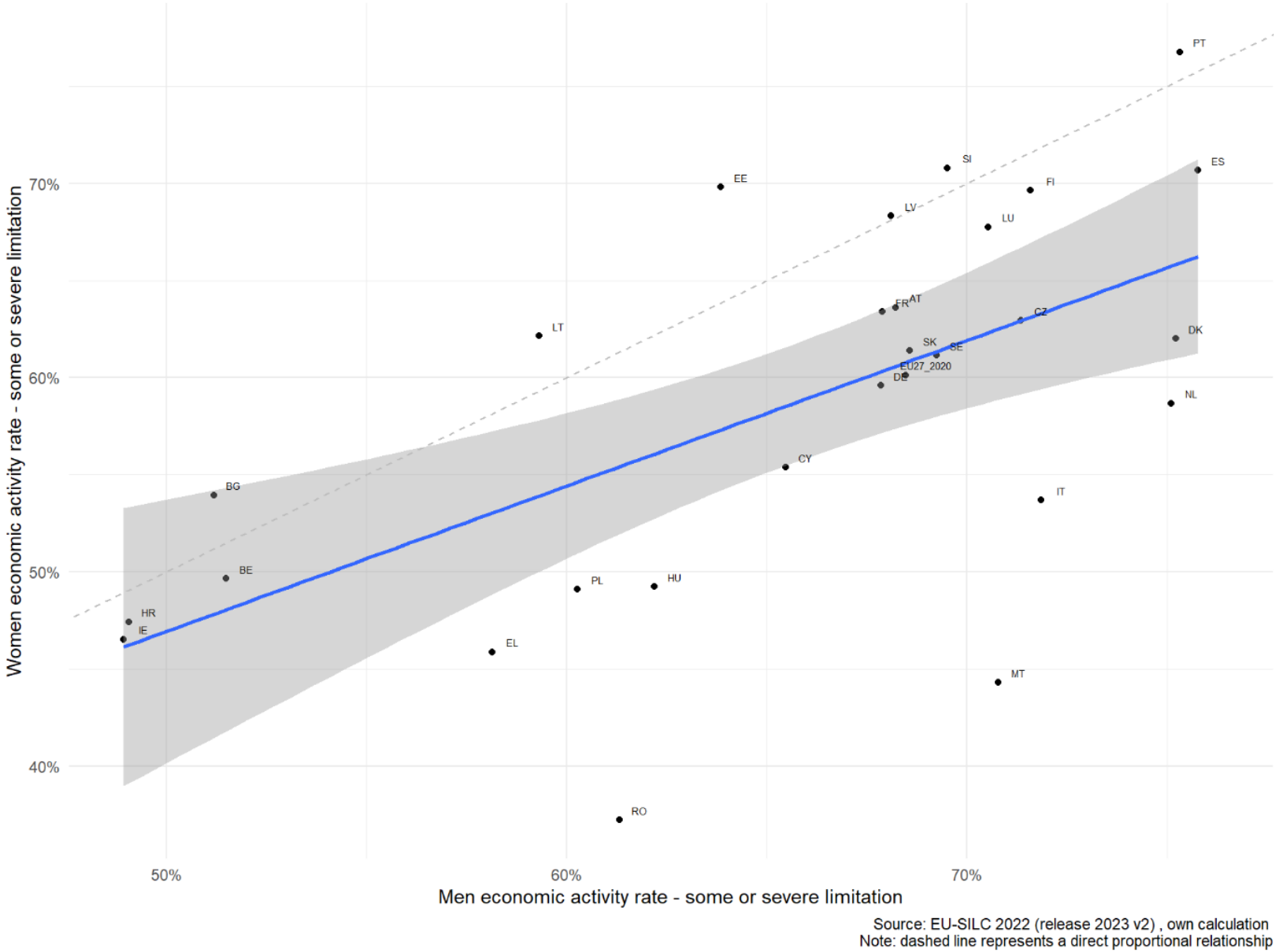
Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

There is some positive association between self-reported prevalence and the disability activity rate ($r=0.615$; $p=0.0006$; $R^2=0.379$). In countries where more people self-report in the disability category the activity rate for this group also tends to be higher (according to the hypothesis outlined earlier, this might suggest that the survey captures more persons with low levels of activity limitation in these countries who are, on average, also closer to the labour market). This observation requires some control and, as with employment outcomes, it is helpful also to look at activity rates for persons declaring a more severe level of activity limitation, for example. This analysis (presented in previous ANED reports) confirms the lack of any clear association between economic activity rates for the general population and those for people with severe activity limitation.

Figure 25 shows the economic activity rates of persons with disabilities by gender. There is a positive association between the economic activity rates of men and women with disabilities. However, it explains only slightly more than a third of the variation

($r=0.614$; $p=0.0005$; $R^2=0.377$). In nearly all Member States, the economic activity rate for women with disabilities is lower than that for men with disabilities. Bulgaria, Lithuania and Estonia had higher activity rates for women with disabilities than for men with disabilities.

Figure 25: Economic activity rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation by gender (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation
Note: dashed line represents a direct proportional relationship

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

Disability employment rates, gaps and ratios are necessary but not sufficient to explain the labour market participation of persons with disabilities. Unemployment is a relatively small but important category for those seeking employment, and often requiring targeted support, but economic activity is particularly important as a large and widely divergent factor among EU Member States.

5.2.5 Comparing indicators of employment, unemployment and activity

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

By disaggregating these three factors and equivalising them, we can represent the relative extent of the disability equality challenges within and between countries. This compares the relative chances of being economically active, employed and not being unemployed in each country (the unemployment ratio is inverted to express all three as a positive chance). A value of 1.0 would mean that the chances of persons with disabilities were equal to those of other persons, on average.[85]

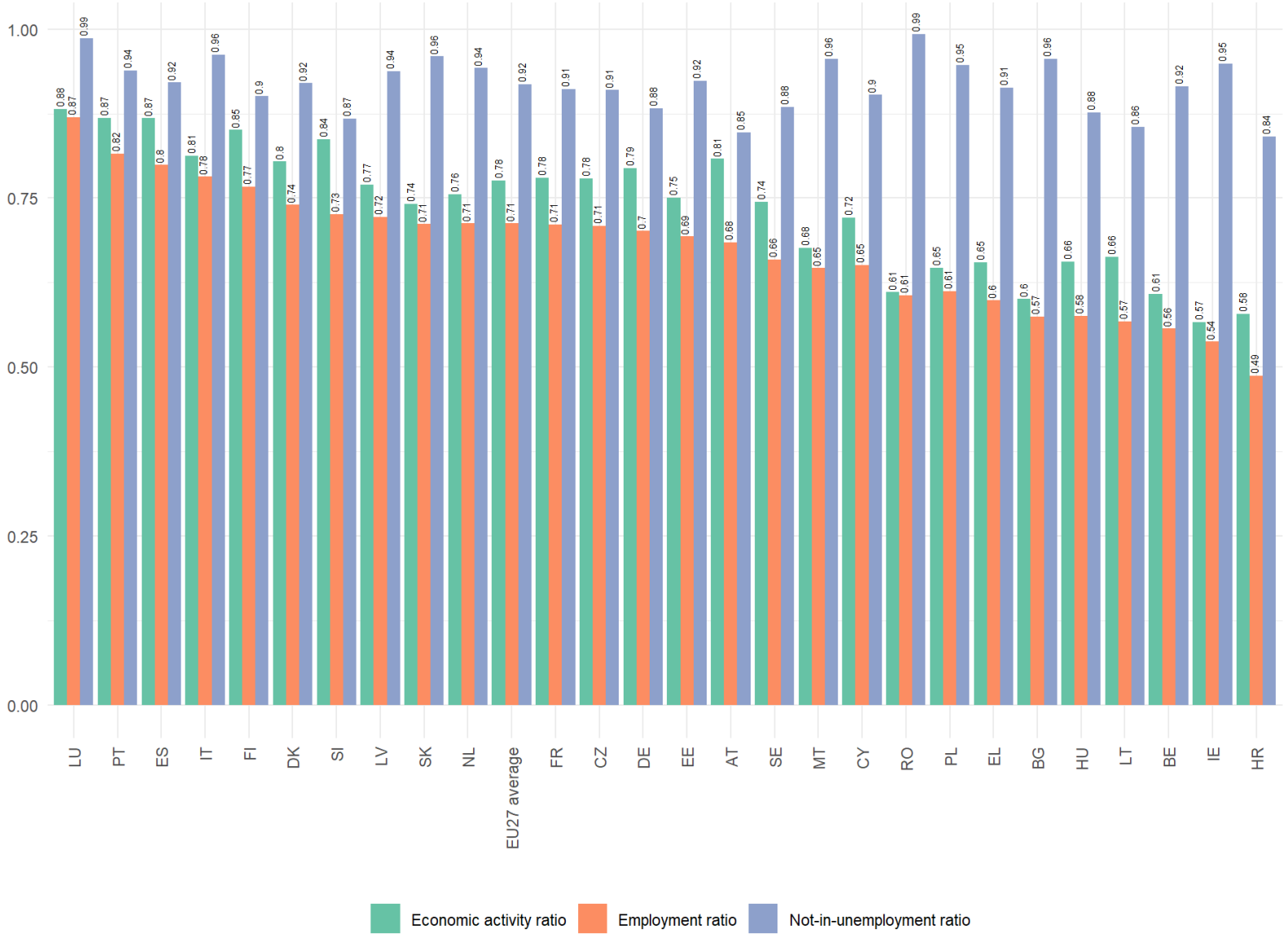
The following summary figure provides an overview of the three different indicators in 2022, expressed as relative chances for all countries (Figure 26). The ranking of the countries is based on the stacked results of three ratio indicators. The combined total suggests a broad synthetic indicator of labour market inclusion, although this would need to be contextualised with an examination of methodological artefacts (such as the prevalence factor).

On average, persons with disabilities in the EU have the relative chance of 0.78 of being economic active, of 0.71 of being employed and of 0.92 of being not unemployed compared to persons without disabilities. Luxembourg had the highest combined ratio score in 2022, while Croatia had the lowest combined ratio score.

It is important to recall that a minority of persons with disabilities cannot be expected to enter the labour market (i.e. it would not be realistic to expect an activity or employment ratio of 1.). However, with appropriate assessment of work potential and accessible jobs then persons with disabilities' chances of being 'not unemployed' in the labour market should not be markedly worse (less than 1.0) compared to other persons.

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

Figure 26: Comparison of disability employment, (not-in-)unemployment and economic activity ratios (age 20-64) by Member State (2022)



Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2) , own calculation

5.3 Disability and poverty reduction

Several of the insights arising from analysis of the labour market situation are also relevant to indicators on poverty and social exclusion. These indicators are more reliably established as they follow the same EU-SILC methodology as the Semester and because the summary tables are already published in the disability and income distribution section of Eurostat's disability database.[86] This affords an opportunity to examine some breakdowns beyond the headline indicators and also to consider the additional dimension of access to healthcare, which was highlighted as a concern during the COVID-19 crisis, along with long-term social care.

5.3.1 Strategic context

Article 28 CRPD refers to 'adequate standard of living and social protection', 'social protection programmes and poverty reduction programmes' as well as 'assistance from the State with disability-related expenses' and 'retirement benefits and programmes', access to 'affordable services, devices and other assistance for disability-related needs' and 'public housing programmes'. Article 19 refers to 'independent living' and 'in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance' schemes.[87]

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

> '…take urgent measures, in cooperation with its Member States and representative organisations of persons with disabilities, to prevent further adverse and retrogressive effect of austerity measures on the adequate standard of living of persons with disabilities, including by the provision of a minimum social protection floor.'[88]

In the second and third combined reports the EU submitted to the UN CRPD Committee on the progress made to implement the CRPD, it outlines specific measures that were put in place to improve the standard of living of persons with disabilities, as per the competence of the EU.[89] In that regard, the Commission (1) promotes accessible social housing through the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI)[90] and EU funds regulations and (2) works with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to develop and maintain the Affordable Housing

86 Eurostat (2024), 'Disability database', https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/disability/database.

87 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, Article 28: https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities#28.

88 UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2015), 'Concluding observations on the initial report of the European Union', https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fEU%2fCO%2f1.

89 UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2024), 'Combined second and third periodic reports submitted by the European Union under article 35 of the Convention', https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4052486?v=pdf.

90 European Commission, 'Affordable Housing Initiative', https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/affordable-housing-initiative_en.

Database[91] and help countries monitor access to good-quality affordable housing. Within the European Semester framework, the Commission monitors trends related to poverty, social exclusion and access to quality housing for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. It also provides recommendations to Member States to address and improve these issues.

As with Article 28, in its concluding observations to the EU, in September 2015, the UN Committee raised concerns regarding Article 19, 'living independently and being included in the community'. The Committee highlighted that many persons with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, still reside in institutions across the EU rather than within their communities. Despite regulatory changes, European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are still being used in some Member States to support residential institutions instead of community-based support services. The Committee recommends that the EU establish a clear framework to promote deinstitutionalisation and enhance monitoring of ESIF use to ensure funds are allocated solely for community support services, not for maintaining or expanding institutions. It further advises the EU to suspend, withdraw or recover payments when fundamental rights are violated.

In this regard, as part of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the European Commission adopted Guidance[92] on independent living for persons with disabilities (as explained in Chapter 5.2.1. above). This document offers guidance that is targeted at EU funds implementing bodies at all levels (e.g. managing authorities and intermediary bodies), as well as those implementing EU-funded projects, related to independent living activities, including civil society, service providers and the academic community, as well as persons with disabilities themselves and their families. EU funds support investments by Member States in developing community-based services and access to mainstream services available to the general population by following an integrated approach combining service provision with infrastructure and equipment to support independent living.

The Commission has recently published two toolkits: (1) providing an overview of all the opportunities for support offered by EU funds in the field of social housing and associated services[93] and (2) providing guidance for Managing Authorities in the Member States and other implementing bodies on how ESF+ should be used for staff

[91] OECD, 'Affordable Housing Database', https://www.oecd.org/content/oecd/en/data/datasets/oecd-affordable-housing-database.html#:%7E:text=The%20OECD%20Affordable%20Housing%20Database,knowledge%20base%20for%20policy%20evaluation.

[92] The Guidance builds on and complements other initiatives, such as the Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care, the Council Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the related Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems, the Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care, and the Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health, European Accessibility Act , the Commission Communication 'A Renovation Wave for Europe', the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2024, the Commission Recommendation on building renovation and the 'New European Bauhaus' initiative, including New European Bauhaus Investment Guidelines , and transport, as highlighted in the Commission Communication on the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy .

[93] European Commission (2024), 'Social housing and beyond – Operational toolkit on the use of EU funds for investment in social housing and associated services', https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/social-housing-and-beyond-operational-toolkit-use-eu-funds-investments-social-housing-and-associated_en.

training[94] to support independent living.[95] Circling back to housing initiatives, the InvestEU[96] programme has supported investments in accessible and affordable social housing to improve accessibility and access to housing for persons with disabilities. Similarly, the UN Committee's General Comment No. 5[97] on independent living and community inclusion, adopted in October 2017 highlights as an obligation for Member States to ensure the provision of accessible and affordable housing to persons with disabilities, as this is also crucial for the deinstitutionalisation process.

Article 25 of the CRPD affirms the right to health, ensuring persons with disabilities access to 'the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care and programmes as provided to other persons', as well as disability-specific health services, as highlighted in the UN Committee's General Comment No. 5. In that regard, among other recommendations, the Committee highlights the lack of training for healthcare professionals and urges the State parties to provide tailored training to these professionals, adopting a human rights-based approach. Recommendations regarding affordability and accessibility of healthcare services were noted in all Member States.

Articles 19, 25 and 28 of the UN CRPD are particularly relevant to reducing poverty among persons with disabilities. These provisions are also critical in addressing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on this group. Rising inflation and the energy crisis have compounded the challenges faced by fragile European welfare states, already strained by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. In response to these crises, EU Member States implemented various ad hoc measures between 2020 and 2023, which benefited persons with disabilities and their families, either directly or indirectly. However, as the cost-of-living and energy crises persist, persons with disabilities and their families remain at an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion[98].

Although social policies are, mostly, within the competence of the Member States, the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also clearly acknowledges that persons with disabilities and their families are at higher risk of financial poverty, due to weaknesses in the labour market and social protection (including disability benefit rules). The Strategy also underlines the need for equal access to healthcare without discrimination. This necessitates enhanced efforts at both EU and national levels to implement targeted policy measures and to continuously monitor the effectiveness of existing measures.

94 For more on this toolkit, see Chapter 5.4.1.

95 European Commission (2024), *Toolkit: Using the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for staff training in independent living support'*, 86d1966b-6ea1-4604-8190-399ac601cf6b_en.

96 Examples of projects in the area of affordable and social housing supported by InvestEU can be found here: InvestEU operations - list - European Union (europa.eu).

97 UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017), General comment No. 5 on living independently and being included in the community, https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g17/328/87/pdf/g1732887.pdf.

98 Birtha, M., Zólyomi, E., Wohlgemuth, F. and Gjylsheni, S. (2023), *Targeted measures for persons with disabilities to cope with the cost-of-living crisis*, European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 754.127.

5.3.2 Disability, poverty and social exclusion

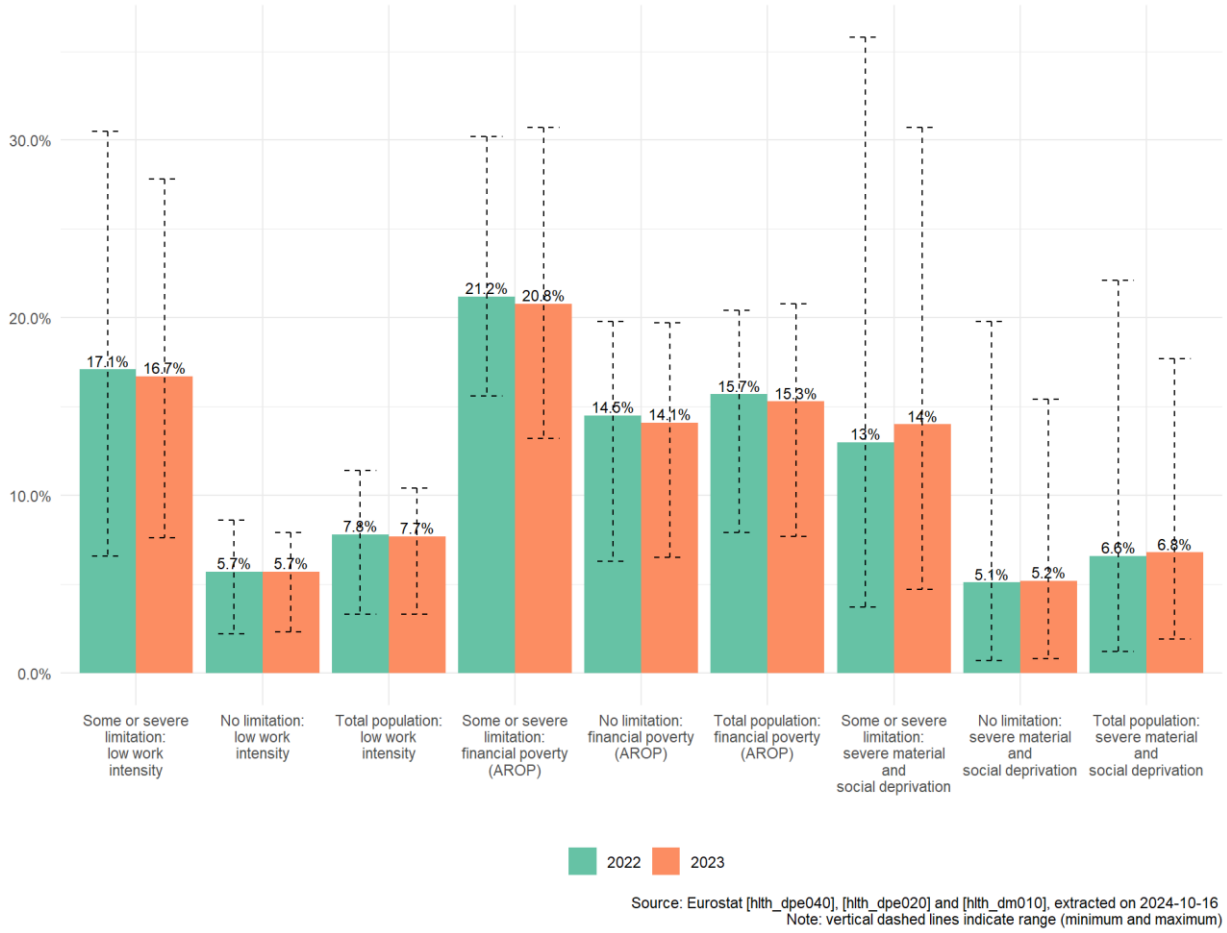
Data on the social situation of persons with disabilities is presented in the EDE statistical review accompanying this synthesis report (using the EU-SILC microdata from 2022) and following the Eurostat methodology. These EU-SILC data provide indicators of the key risks for persons with disabilities, including household risks of low work intensity, low income measured as at-risk-of-poverty after social transfers, and severe material and social deprivation. These three measures are combined in the overall estimate for risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE).[99] Relevant data from national sources is provided in each of the EDE country fiches, where available. These are divided by the main age groups (for all persons aged 16 and over, 16-64, and 65+). The EU-SILC 2022 survey does not distinguish 'activity limitation' for children under the age of 16 so it has not been possible to disaggregate disability estimates of child poverty from this survey. The EU-SILC 2021 contained the rolling module on disability prevalence among children aged under 16 years.

Figure 27 summarises the aggregate data on poverty or social exclusion risks by component for persons with and without disabilities, and for the total population for 2022 and 2023. The EDE country reports contain the same table with comparisons of national averages and the EU27 average. These confirm that, on average and across the EU, persons with disabilities experience relative disadvantage on all three main measures. This is the case in every Member State to varying degrees.

On average in 2023, 16.7 % of persons with disabilities in the EU were affected by low work intensity in their households compared to 5.7 % of persons without disabilities. The rate decreased slightly from 2022 to 2023. 20.8 % of persons with disabilities were considered to be at risk of poverty compared to 14.1 % of persons without disabilities. The at-risk-of-poverty rate also decreased slightly over the two years, while the rate of severe material and social deprivation increased by 1 pp. 14 % of persons with disabilities experienced severe material and social deprivation in 2023, compared to 5.2 % of persons without disabilities. For material and social deprivation rates, we can observe the strongest variation among Member States, that decreased during the two years.

[99] The risks for older people do not include work intensity (Eurostat refers to the under 65 age group for this measure).

Figure 27: Activity limitation and main types of poverty risk (age 16-64) – EU27 average (2022 & 2023)

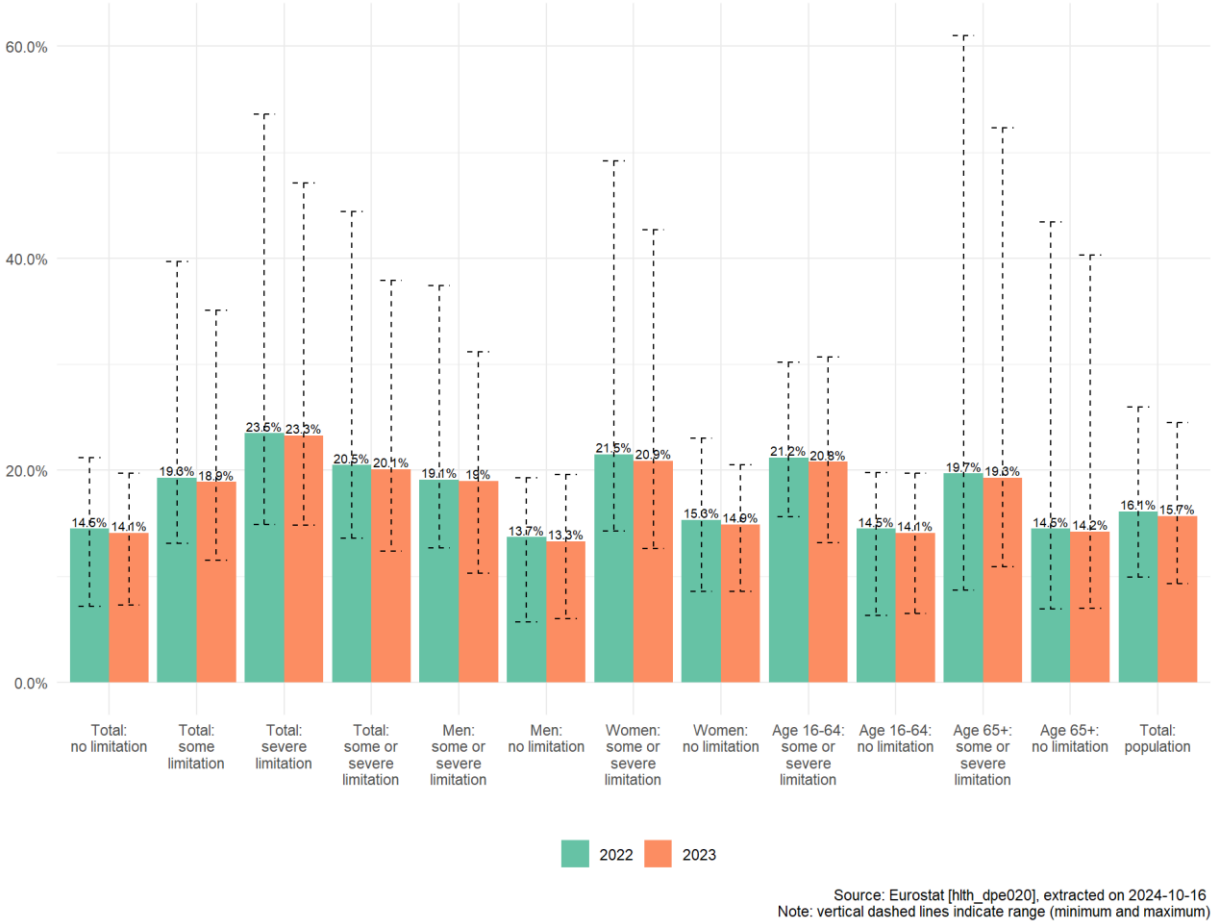


Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe040], [hlth_dpe020] and [hlth_dm010], extracted on 2024-10-16
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

There is a clear association of at-risk-of-poverty status with severity of reported activity limitation and with gender equality (shown in Figure 28). Persons reporting more severe levels of activity limitation face higher risks of poverty, as do women when compared to men. Importantly, there are large differences in the average risks for adults of working age and for older adults (aged 65+). The elevated risks for adults of working age are mainly linked to the importance of employment income. EU member states had the most considerable variation in at-risk-of-poverty (AROP) rates for the group of persons with disabilities aged 65 years and over. Employment and the adequacy of working age disability benefits remain key factors when predicting poverty risk for persons with disabilities in the EU (as reported in the past by ANED).[100] The at-risk-of-poverty rates generally decreased slightly from 2022 to 2023.

[100] See: http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/social-protection; http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators.

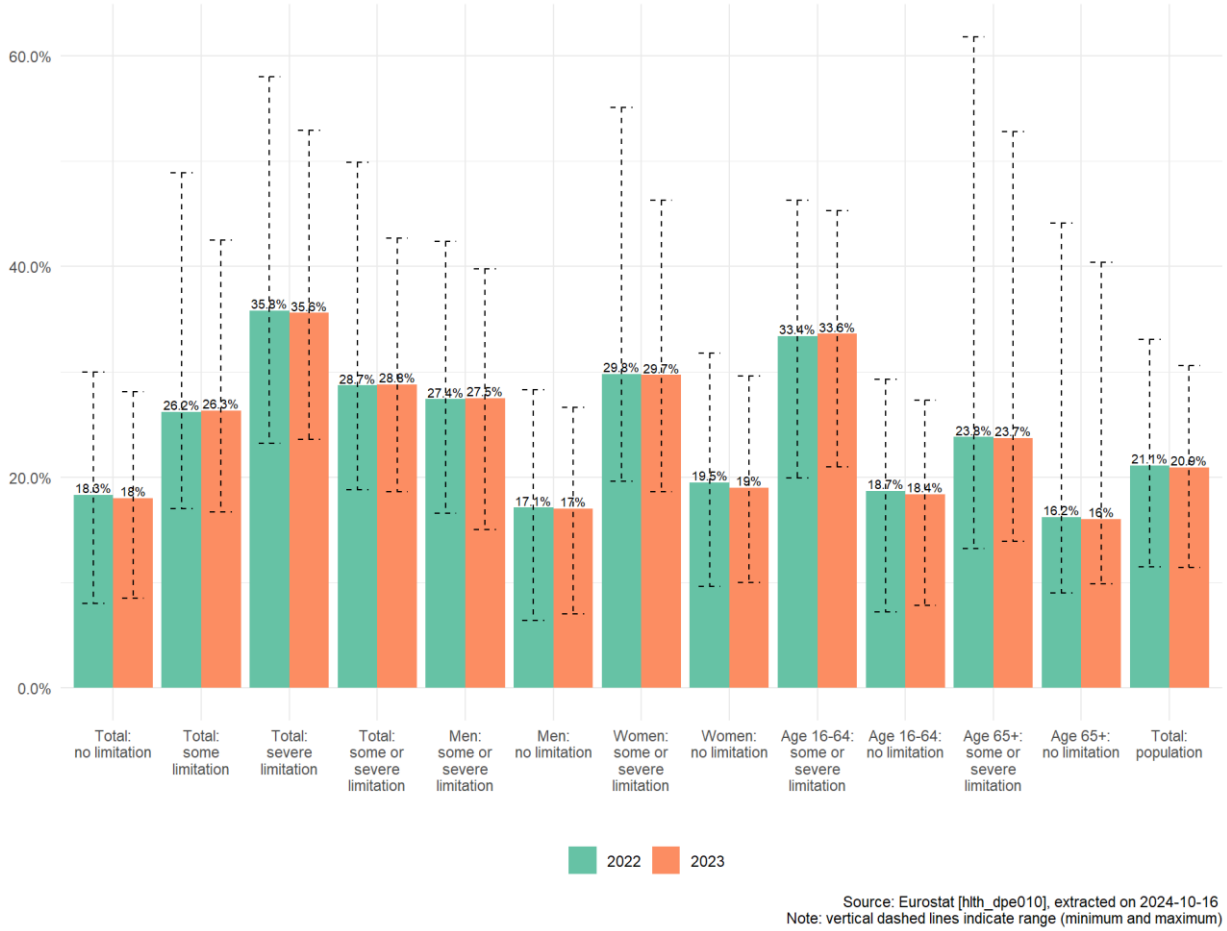
Figure 28: At risk of poverty (AROP) rate (age 16+) by activity limitation, gender and age group – EU27 average (2022 & 2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe020], extracted on 2024-10-16
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

Taking the other components of the at risk of poverty and social exclusion indicator into account increases the prevalence rates and the slight decrease vanishes in most groups (Figure 29). On average, 28.8 % of persons with disabilities were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared to 18 % of persons without disabilities. The AROPE rate increases severely by level of activity limitation and remains higher for women than men. Persons with disabilities in the working age group (16-64 years) are more affected than persons with disabilities in the 65+ age group. The disability gap is also wider for the working age group. The strong variation in AROPE rates between EU Member States for persons with disabilities aged at least 65 years remains.

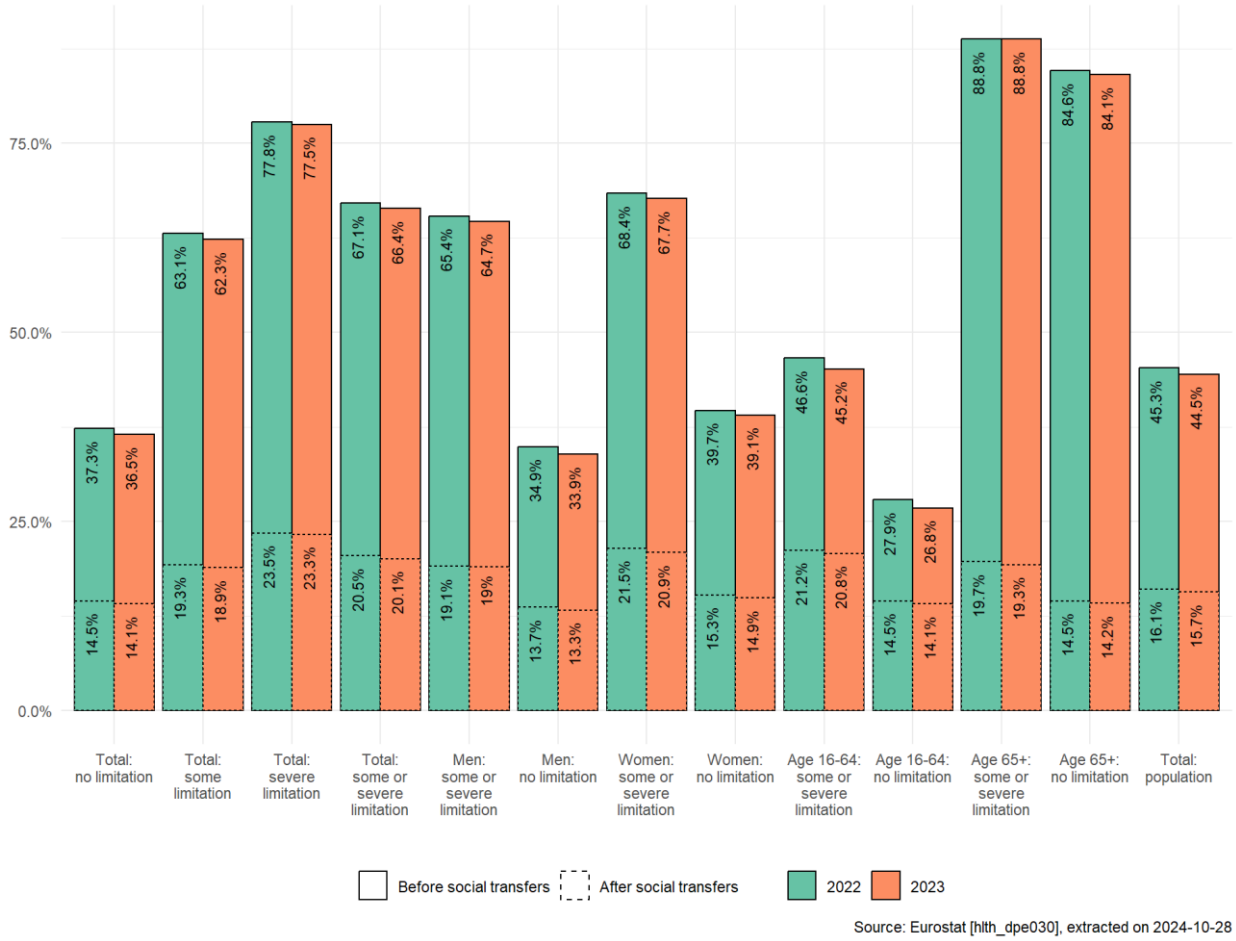
Figure 29: At risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) rate (age 16+) by activity limitation, gender and age group – EU27 average (2022 & 2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe010], extracted on 2024-10-16
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

Figure 30 illustrates the important role of social transfers for reducing financial poverty prevalence (AROP). Especially persons with severe activity limitations and persons aged 65 years or older, independent of activity limitation, benefit strongly from social transfers. Without social transfers, 88.8 % of persons with disabilities aged 65 years and over would be considered to be at risk of poverty. Pensions are counted as social transfers which explains the strong poverty reduction effect independent of the activity limitation.

Figure 30: At risk of poverty (AROP) rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 16+) before and after social transfers by activity limitation, gender and age group – EU27 average (2022 & 2023)

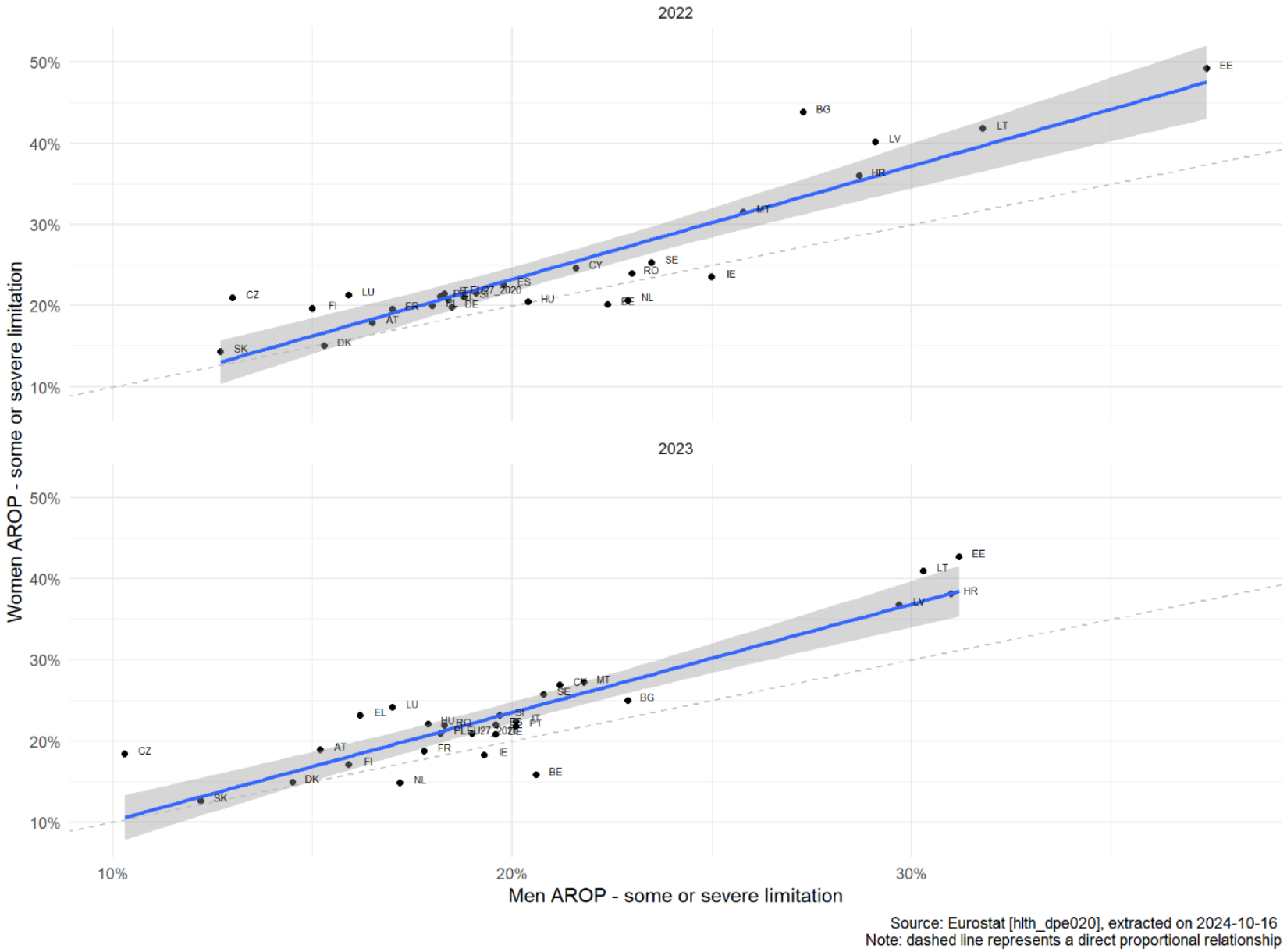


Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe030], extracted on 2024-10-28

5.3.3 Gender factor in poverty risks

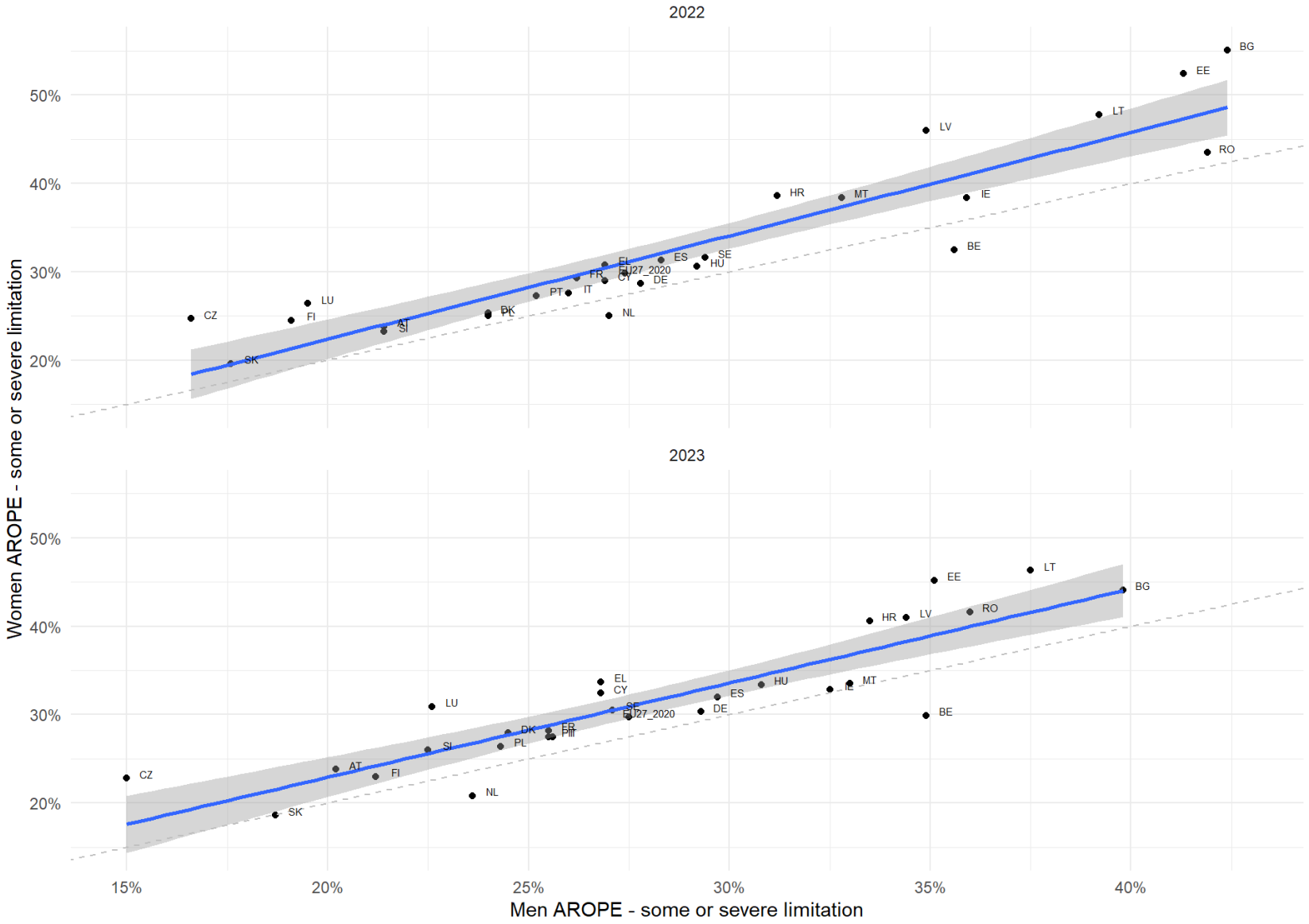
In most EU Member States, women with disabilities face higher at-risk-of-poverty rates than men with disabilities. The strong positive association between AROP rates of men and women with disabilities is statistically significant and explains more than 80 % of the variations (2022: r=0.906; $p=7.829e^{-11}$; $R^2=0.821$; 2023: r=0.905; $p=8.703e^{-11}$; $R^2=0.82$). Countries with low AROP rates for women with disabilities often have comparable AROP rates for men with disabilities and vice versa. The association increases towards higher AROP rates for women with increasing AROP rates for men. Estonia had high at-risk-of-poverty rates for men with disabilities in 2022 and even higher AROP rates for women. Both rates decreased in 2023. Comparing the two years, the reduction in average at-risk-of-poverty rates can be observed. Most countries clustered closer to the EU average in 2023, including a decrease in the standard deviation of the women's AROP rate. However, a cluster of countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Croatia) with high AROP rates for men with disabilities and even higher rates for women with disabilities remained. The Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium are the only countries with lower women's AROP rates compared to the men's AROP rate.

Figure 31: AROP rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 16+) by gender (2022 & 2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe020], extracted on 2024-10-16
Note: dashed line represents a direct proportional relationship

Figure 32: AROPE rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 16+) by gender (2022 & 2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe010], extracted on 2024-10-16
Note: dashed line represents a direct proportional relationship

Figure 32 repeats the analysis of the association between gender and poverty risk for the AROPE indicator. The positive association between the AROPE rate for men and women with disabilities remains strong, statistically significant and explains more than three quarters of the variations (2022: r=0.92; $p=1.181e^{-11}$; $R^2=0.846$; 2023: r=0.886; $p=8.391e^{-10}$; $R^2=0.784$). The general tendency remains that men's AROPE rates are associated with higher women's AROPE rates. The Netherlands and Belgium are the only countries with lower women's AROPE rates compared to the men's AROPE rate in the country.

5.3.4 Age factor in poverty risks

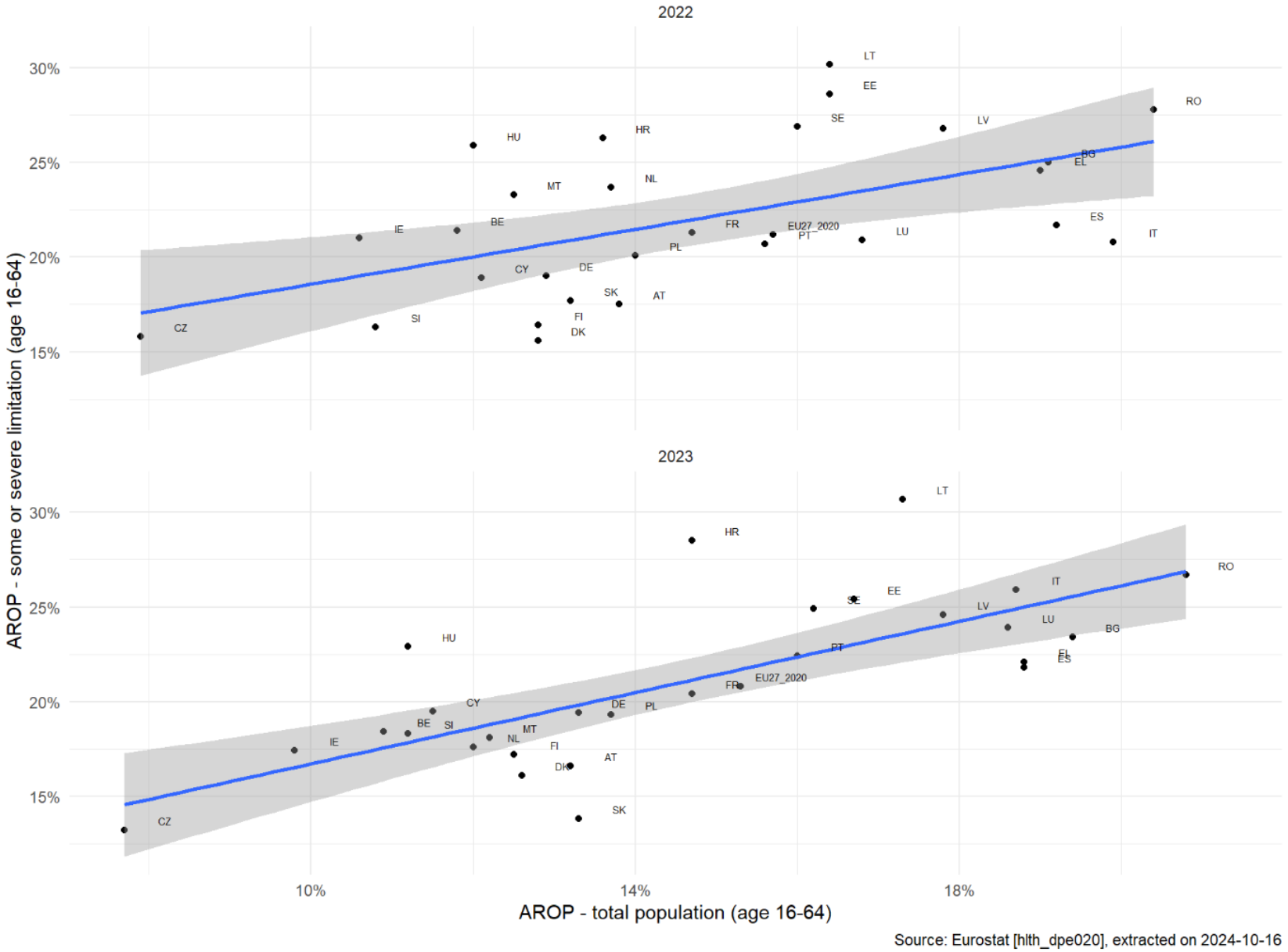
As mentioned earlier, age plays a significant part in explaining average risks of poverty among persons with disabilities in European countries. The prevalence of activity limitation increases rapidly with age, from mid-adulthood onwards. Persons with disabilities in old age are at higher risk of poverty than other persons of similar age. They include two groups that cannot be easily disaggregated from the SILC data. Some experienced disability during their younger years and have grown old with disabilities, but many older persons acquire disabilities later in life. In terms of poverty risk, the latter group might benefit from the protective influence of occupational or public pension rights accumulated previously as adults without disabilities (with less risk of exclusion from employment).

To understand the differences in poverty risk for older and younger adults with disabilities, it is helpful to examine the comparison with other persons in the same age group in more detail. Figure 33 plots the general risk of poverty among 16-64-year-olds in each Member State with the risk for persons with disabilities in that age group (using a similar method to the graphs above summarising the labour market situation). Figure 34 shows a similar comparison for those aged 65 and over. This suggests that the average risk of poverty after social transfers, among older people in general, very strongly predicts poverty risk among older persons with disabilities (2022: r=0.993; $p< 2.2e^{-16}$; $R^2=0.986$; 2023: r=0.99; $p<2.2e^{-16}$; $R^2=0.979$). This positive association predicts around 98 % of the variation between countries in disability poverty risk rates for this age group but around half in 2023 and a third in 2022 of the risk among the working age group (2022: r=0.554; p=0.00273; $R^2=0.307$; 2023: r=0.73; $p=1.55e^{-05}$; $R^2=0.533$).[101]

In 2023, the disability poverty rates after social transfers were higher than predicted from the general trend for working aged people in Croatia, Hungary and Lithuania. They were lower than predicted in Finland, Denmark, Austria and Slovakia. In 2022, of the variation of the general AROP rate and the AROP rates for persons with disabilities was greater, with several countries having higher or lower rates than predicted. This might reflect differences in social protection levels but should be contextualised for methodological artefacts, and for the exceptional circumstances emerging from the COVID-19 crisis.

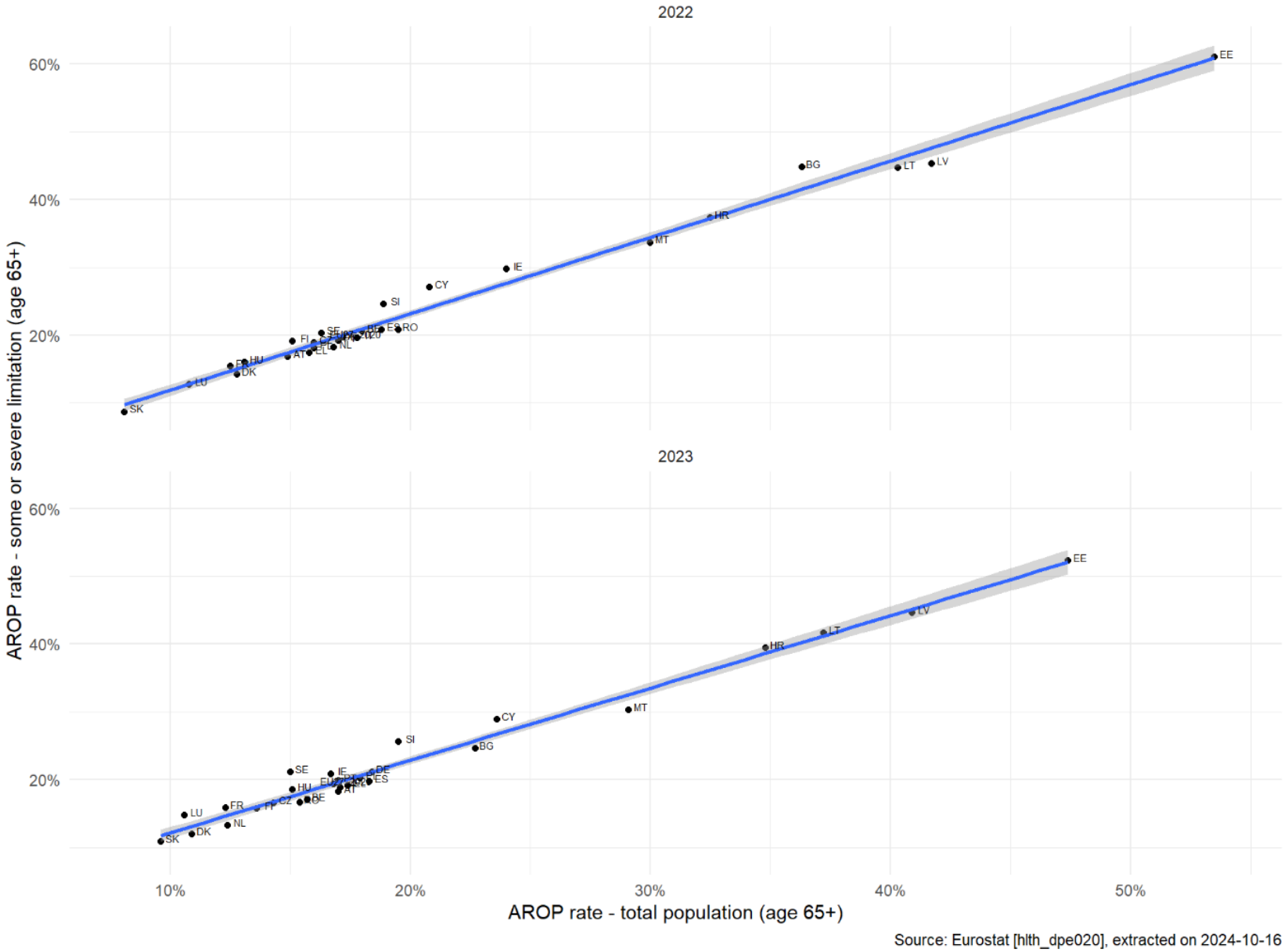
[101] This is partly accounted for by the fact that an increased proportion of the general population contains the comparator group of persons with disabilities, but the general comparison helps to dilute the prevalence effect discussed earlier.

Figure 33: General AROP rate and AROP rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 16-64) (2022 & 2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe020], extracted on 2024-10-16

Figure 34: General AROP rate and AROP rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation (age 65+) (2022 & 2023)



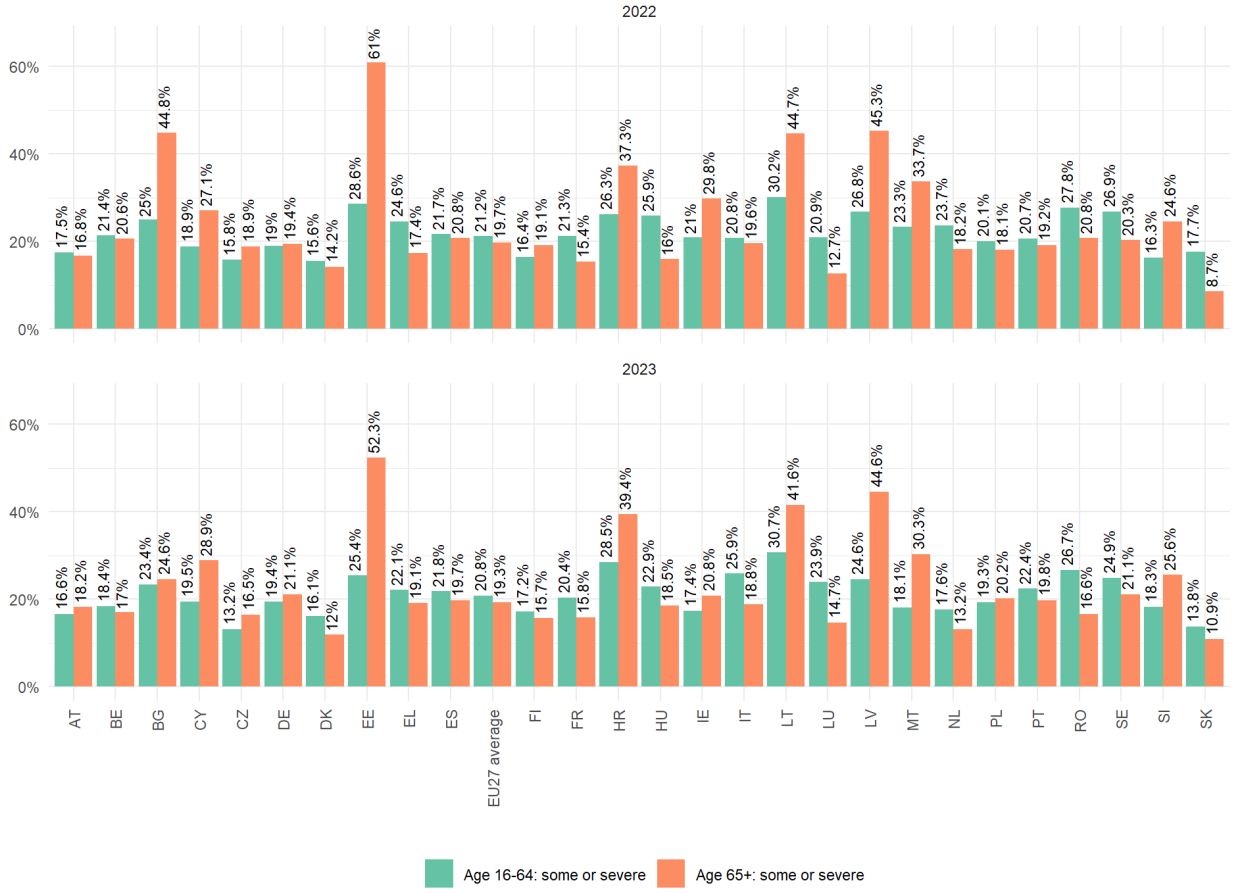
This is relevant from a policy perspective because it suggests that general poverty alleviation measures targeting older people, including old age pensions, might benefit a significant proportion of persons with disabilities. It is also relevant that many in this age group will have accumulated occupational pension protection during their working lives prior to developing disabilities. However, the use of an average indicator can mask the hidden costs of living with disability in old age and the accumulated disadvantage faced by the minority who have long-standing or more severe activity limiting conditions. Targeted disability policies are still needed to close the disability poverty gap in old age.

By comparison, general levels of working age adults' poverty risk do not predict the variation of risk for working age adults with disabilities (16-64 years) as clearly. Countries with lower poverty risks in this age group do tend to have lower risks for persons with disabilities (2022: $r=0.554$; $p=0.00273$; $R^2=0.307$; 2023: $r=0.73$; $p=1.55e^{-05}$; $R^2=0.533$) but the explanatory power of this positive association is weaker. This is due to the variable influences of employment chances (discussed earlier) and the adequacy of social protection benefits (including disability benefits) in different countries.[102]

Examining the differences between the main age groups reveals several anomalies of policy interest. While the average risk of poverty after social transfers is higher for working age persons with disabilities in some Member States, the reverse is observed in others. For example, in 2022 and 2023 the poverty rate for older people in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Croatia was at least ten percentage points higher than for working age adults. Luxembourg, on the other hand, had higher poverty rates of at least eight percentage points in both years for working age adults than for older people with disabilities. This is shown in Figure 35 and might be explained by a combination of differences in labour market opportunities, social protection policies, or sampling/response factors in national surveys. It is important to underline that these are measures of financial poverty relative to a national relative threshold (60 % of median disposable income).

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

Figure 35: AROP rate of persons with some or severe activity limitation by main age group and EU Member State (2022 & 2023)

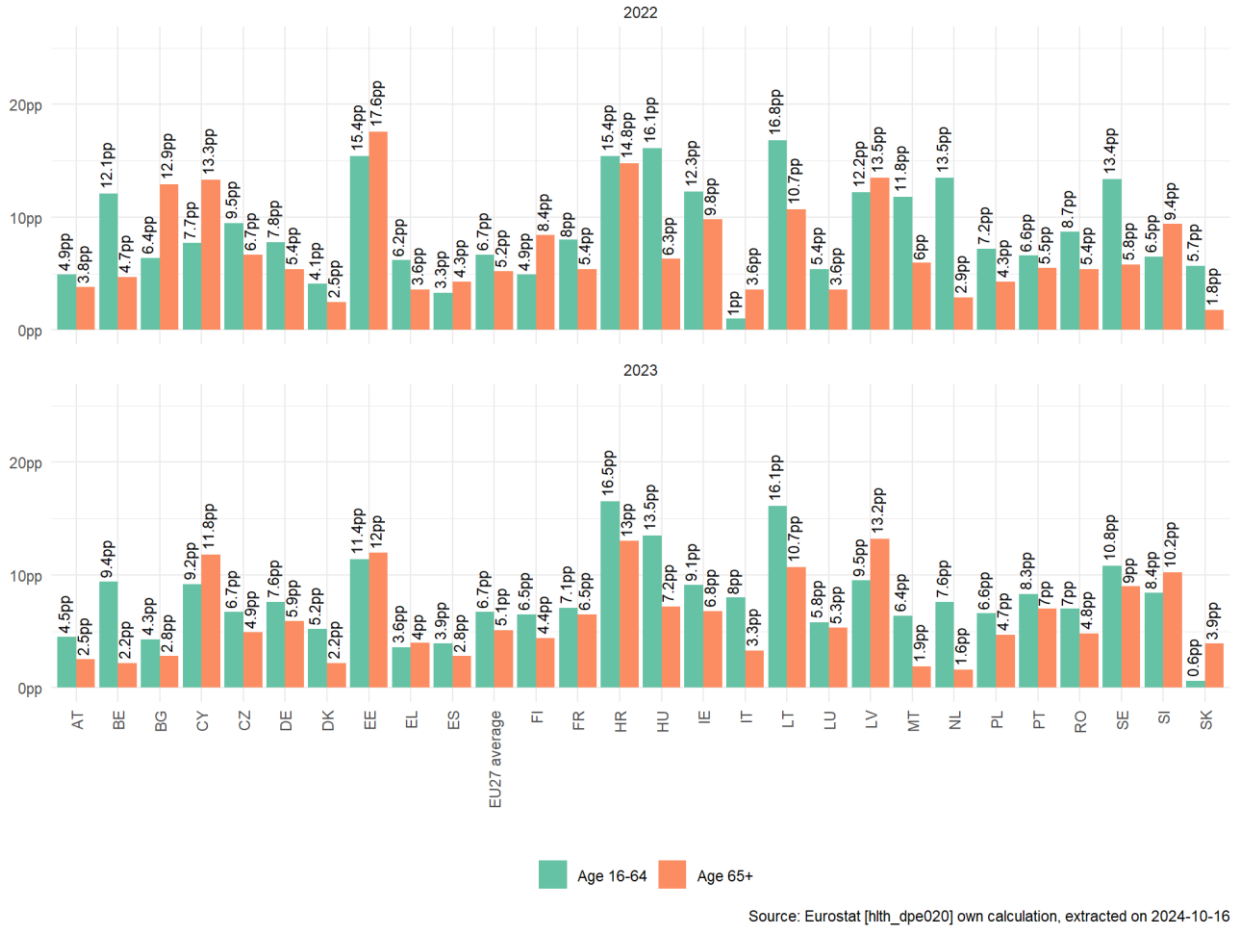


Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe020], extracted on 2024-10-14

These anomalies are further evident when we look at disability equality gaps in the risk of poverty. On average, the gaps are wider for persons with disabilities aged 16 to 64 years than aged 65 years or older. The average gap for working age persons with disabilities in the EU was 6.7 pp in 2022 and 2023, while the gap for older persons with disabilities was 5.2 pp in 2022 and 5.1 pp in 2023. In most countries these gaps are wider among working age adults, but in some countries this pattern is reversed (notably in 2022 in Bulgaria and Cyprus, as well as in Latvia and Slovakia in 2023).

The poverty gaps between the rate of risk for persons with and without disabilities in each age group are shown in Figure 36. Some of these risk gaps are substantial, for example, in the working age group it exceeded ten percentage points in ten Member States in 2022 (and was above 15 points in Croatia, Estonia, Hungary and Lithuania) and in 2023 in five Member States (above 15 points in Croatia and Lithuania). For the older group, in 2022 it was above ten points in six Member States (nearly 15 points in Croatia and higher in Estonia) and in 2023 the figure was also over ten points in six Member States (around 13 points in Latvia and Croatia).

Figure 36: Disability poverty gap (AROP) by main age group and EU Member State (2022 & 2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe020] own calculation, extracted on 2024-10-16

5.3.5 A summary indicator of poverty risk

Based on this review, it is useful to distinguish indicators of poverty risk for the two main age groups in policy discussions (and to ensure that child poverty can be added in the future). It is also useful to compare relative disability risks within countries (using inverted relative chances may be helpful here, as shown in Figure 37 and Figure 38). For example, where the risk of living in poverty is 2 times greater for persons with disabilities than other persons, the inverted ratio (0.5) represents the chances of not living in poverty. Using these ratios has the effect of standardising the poverty rate indicators to represent the relative chances of persons with disabilities in each age group, compared to other persons in the same groups.[103] In practice, these risks arise from the interaction of labour market inclusion and social protection policies over a lifetime. Relative poverty risk provides a good, and well tested, method to compare within and between countries, but it is interesting to look also at the relative chances of being in poverty across countries.

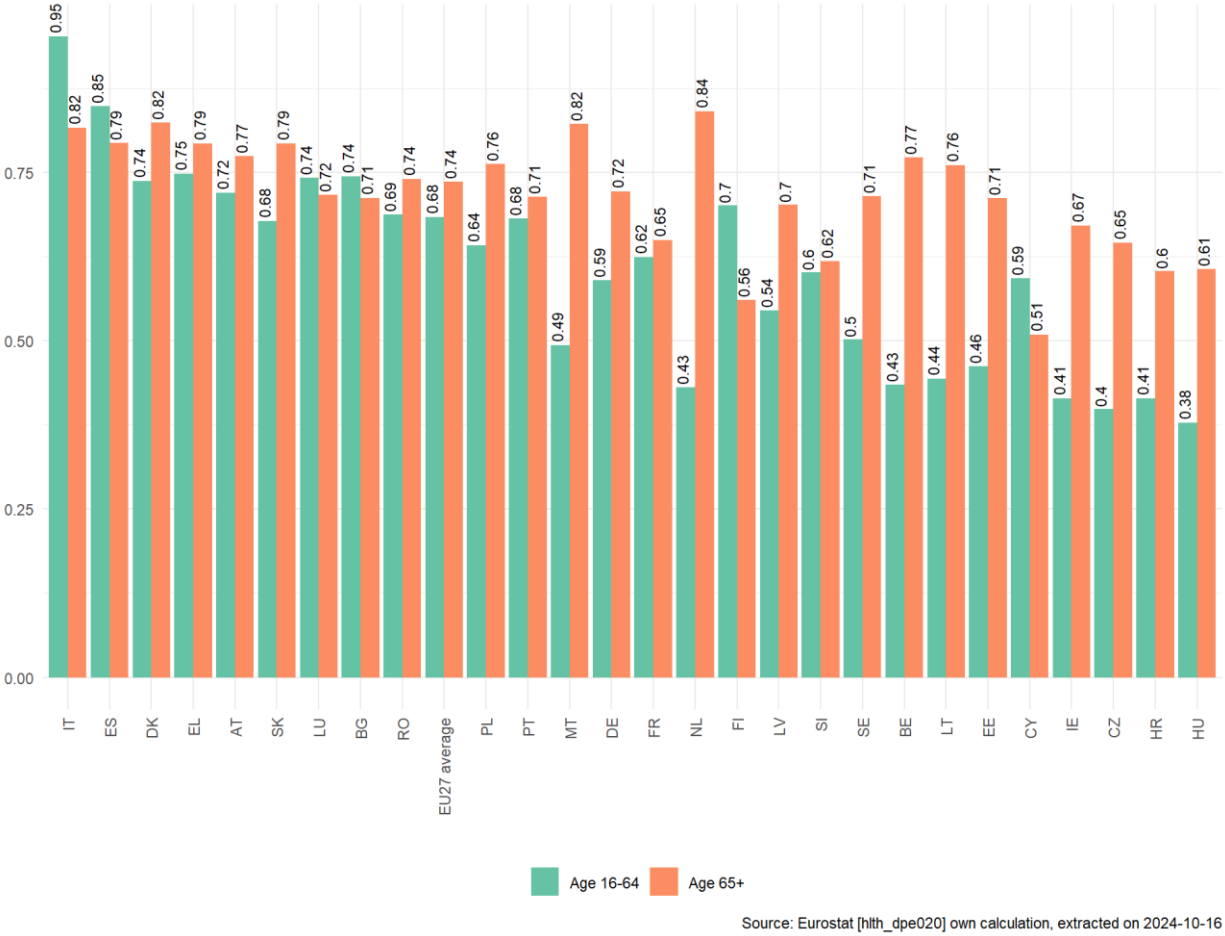
The countries in Figure 37 and Figure 38 are arranged according to their ranking of the combined values of inverted poverty risks for both age groups. In 2022, Italy had a close to equal poverty risk for persons with and without disabilities in the 16-64 age

[103] i.e. the risk estimation is reversed as a ratio of the poverty risk for persons without disabilities to persons with disabilities (so that 1 rather than 0 equates to parity between groups).

group, while Hungary had an at-risk-of-poverty rate for persons with disabilities in this age group which was more than twice as high. In 2023, Bulgaria had the highest combined score with an inverted risk ratio of 0.82 for the 16-64 age group and 0.89 for the 65 or older age group. Hungary also had the lowest combined score in 2023 with 0.41 for 16-to-64-year-olds and 0.61 for those aged 65 and over.

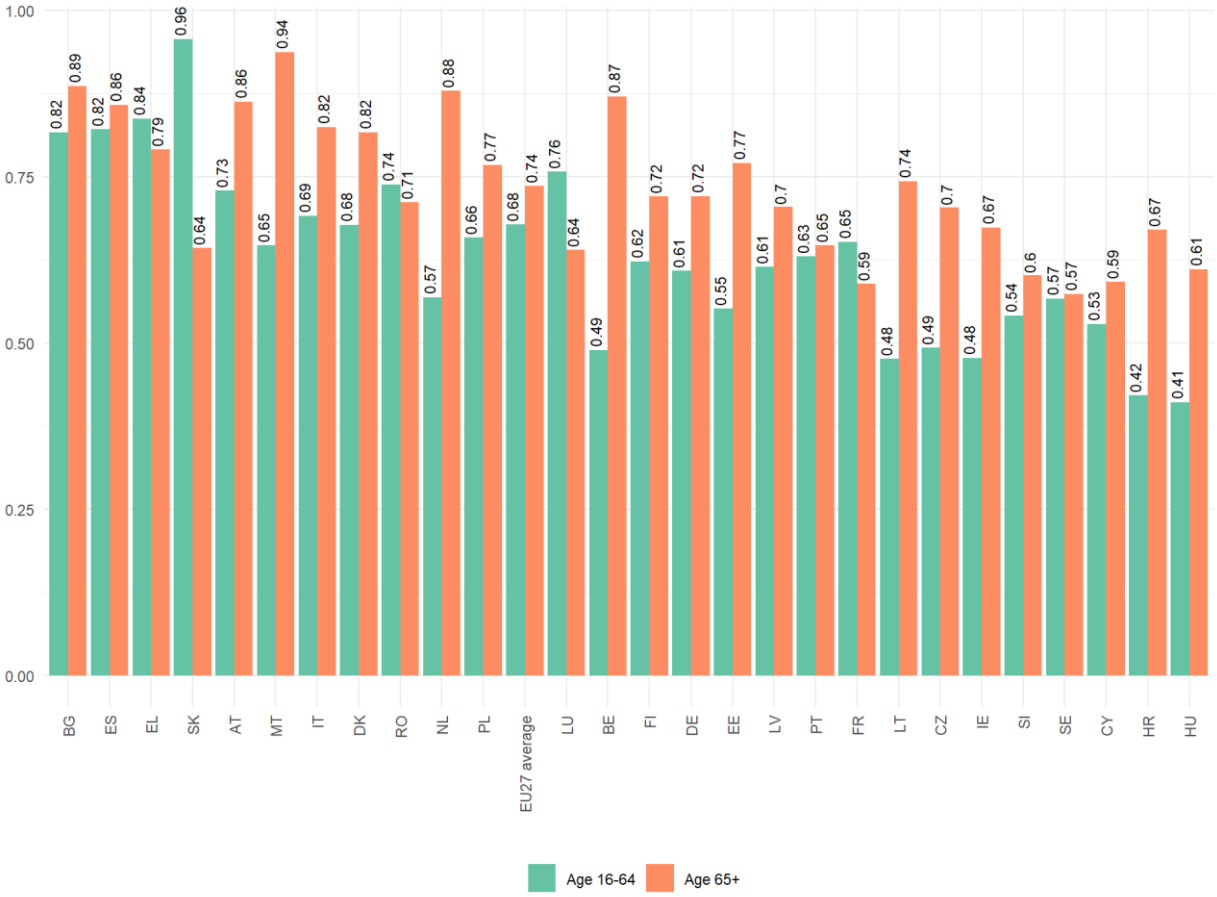
On average, persons with disabilities in the EU of working age had an inverted poverty risk of 0.68 in 2022 and 2023 and thus a one-and-a-half times higher chance of being at risk of poverty than persons without disabilities in the same age group. For persons with disabilities aged 65 years or older, the inverted poverty risk was 0.74 in 2022 and 2023 and thus they had a below one-and-a-half times higher chance of being at risk of poverty than their counterparts without disabilities.

Figure 37: Disability AROP risk ratios (1 / risk, chances of not being in poverty) (2022)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe020] own calculation, extracted on 2024-10-16

Figure 38: Disability AROP risk ratios (1 / risk, chances of not being in poverty) (2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dpe020] own calculation, extracted on 2024-10-16

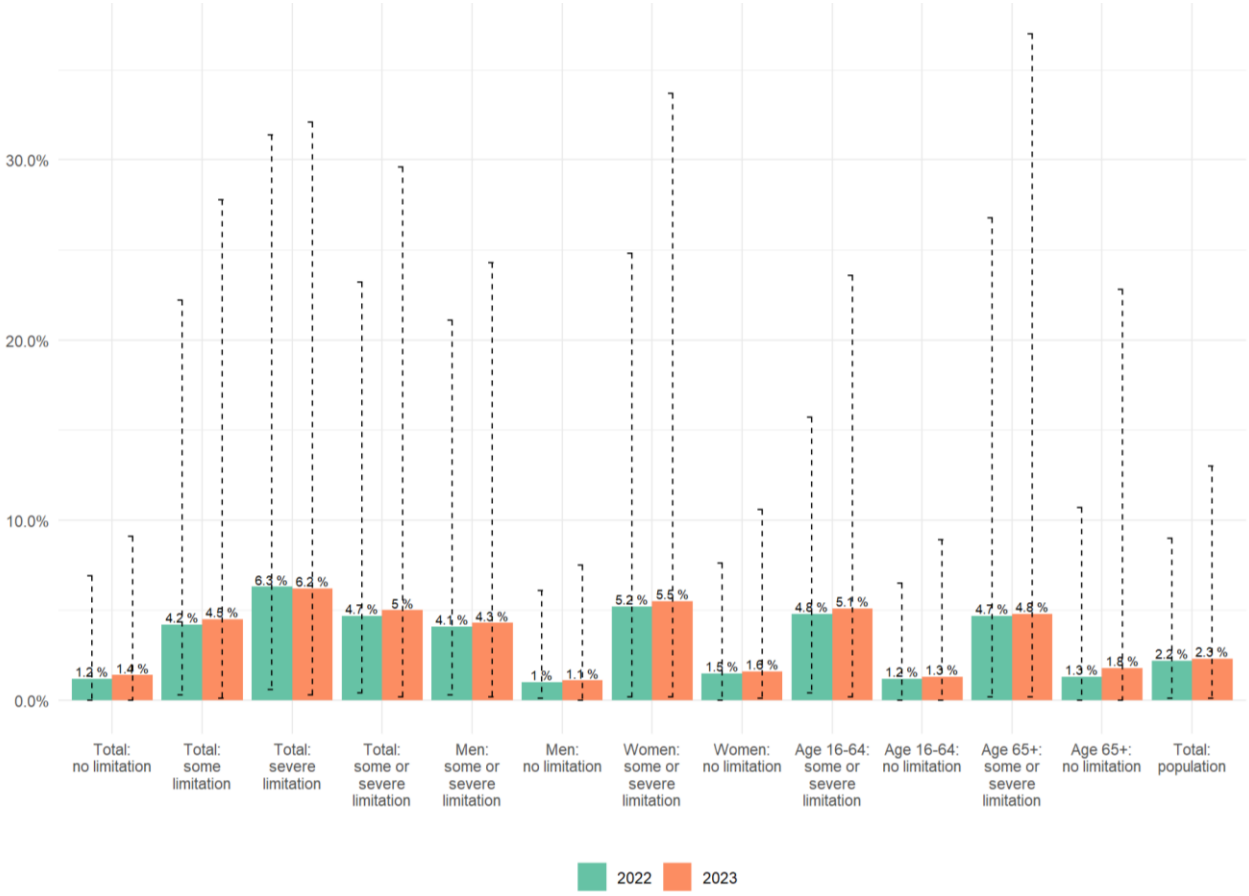
5.3.6 Healthcare – unmet healthcare needs

The 27 EDE country reports contain separate tables for the share of unmet healthcare needs of persons with and without disabilities in the country compared to the EU average. They are based on the EU-SILC variable of unmet needs for healthcare services due to financial reasons (too expensive), distance/transport (too far to travel) or timeliness (waiting lists).[104] Figure 39 illustrates the EU averages for unmet healthcare needs in 2022 and 2023 by level of activity limitation, gender and age group. The results need to be interpreted with caution due to the wide variation in Member States' estimates, especially for persons with disabilities. On average, 4.7 % of persons with disabilities reported unmet healthcare needs in 2022 and 5 % in 2023, compared to 1.2 % and 1.4 % of persons without disabilities. Independent of gender and age group, persons with disabilities are more affected by unmet healthcare needs than persons without disabilities. The national averages for persons with disabilities range in 2022 from 0.4 % in Cyprus to 23.2 % in Greece and in 2023 from 0.2 % in Cyprus to 29.6 % in Greece. The rate of unmet healthcare needs generally increases with the level of activity limitation, and is higher among women with disabilities than among men with disabilities. The average rate for persons with disabilities of working age with unmet healthcare needs was 4.8 % in 2022 and 5.1 % in 2023. Among older

[104] For further explanation of the indicator, see https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Unmet_health_care_needs_statistics.

persons with disabilities, the rate was 4.7 % in 2022 and 4.8 % in 2023. A wider disability equality gap than the gender or age gap can be observed regarding unmet healthcare needs.

Figure 39: Unmet healthcare needs (age 16+) by activity limitation, gender and age group – EU27 average (2022 & 2023)

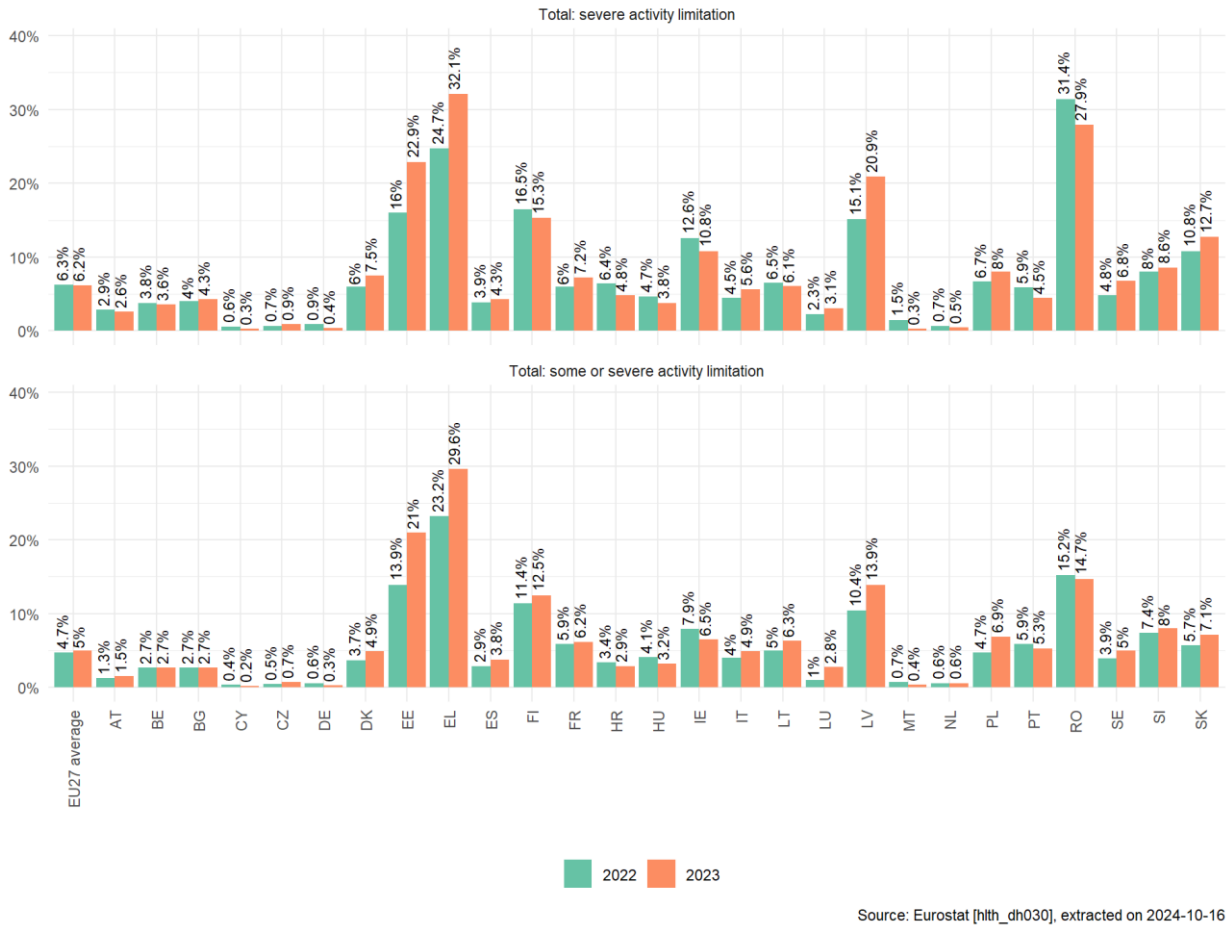


Source: Eurostat [hlth_dh030], extracted on 2024-10-16
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

Estonia, Greece, Finland, Latvia and Romania reported unmet healthcare needs above the 10 % level for persons with disabilities in 2022 and 2023 (Figure 39). The rate increased in all these countries, except for Romania. Persons with disabilities in Greece in 2023 had the highest prevalence of unmet healthcare needs in the EU (29.6 %). The same five countries and additionally Ireland and Slovakia also have unmet healthcare needs above 10 % for persons with severe activity limitation (

Figure 40). In Estonia, Greece and Latvia the rate increased by at least 5 pp in 2023. In Greece and Estonia, the increase was accompanied by a rise in reported unmet needs for persons without disabilities. However, countries with high rates of persons with disabilities with unmet healthcare needs do not always report high prevalences among persons without disabilities. This indicates that unmet healthcare needs are predominantly associated with activity limitation and are thus a concern for better disability equality in Europe.

Figure 40: Unmet healthcare needs (age 16+) by activity limitation and EU Member State (2022 & 2023)



Source: Eurostat [hlth_dh030], extracted on 2024-10-16

5.4 Disability and skill development

5.4.1 Strategic context

Article 24 CRPD refers to education and as a general recommendation in the UN CRPD Concluding Observations to all Member States, the Committee recommends that the States Parties review their national education strategies and put emphasis on increasing awareness-raising initiatives, including making training on inclusive education and its implementation mandatory for teachers, support teachers and non-teaching education personnel.

General Comment No. 4[105] on Article 24, issued in 2016, addresses the right to inclusive education. While notable progress has been made, the Committee remains deeply concerned about ongoing challenges. Millions of persons with disabilities continue to be denied access to education and many more only have access to segregated educational settings where the quality of education is substandard. The barriers to inclusive education for persons with disabilities stem from various factors, such as a lack of understanding and implementation of the human rights model of disability, persistent discrimination, inadequate and poorly designed funding

[105] Un CRPD General Comment No. 4. See here: https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g16/263/00/pdf/g1626300.pdf.

mechanisms that fail to support reasonable accommodations, and insufficient knowledge about inclusive and quality education and diversity. Emphasising inclusive education and training/upskilling, the Committee highlights:

> '42. States parties must adopt and implement a national educational strategy that includes the provision of education at all levels for all learners, on a basis of inclusion and equality of opportunity.'
>
> '12(d)… all teachers and other staff receive the education and training they need to give them the core values and competencies to accommodate inclusive learning environments, which include teachers with disabilities.'
>
> '36. …Having an adequate number of qualified and committed school staff is key to the introduction and sustainability of inclusive education. Lack of understanding and capacity remain significant barriers to inclusion. States parties must ensure that all teachers are trained in inclusive education and that that training is based on the human rights model of disability.'

In its 2023 Recommendation to Austria, the Committee advised it to 'Redevelop and expand teacher training for inclusive education', similar to the 2024 Recommendation to Belgium and the 2018 Recommendation to Bulgaria, where the Committee also recommended the country to 'Raise awareness of the advantages of quality inclusive education for society, in particular for teachers and other education staff'.

Awareness-raising was also an important point for Germany in the Committee's 2023 Recommendation: 'Implement awareness-raising and educational campaigns to promote inclusive education at the community level and among the relevant authorities', alongside the recommendation to 'Guarantee ongoing training for teachers and non-teaching staff on inclusive education at all levels, including training in sign language and other accessible formats of communication, and develop a monitoring system to eliminate all forms of direct and indirect discrimination against children with disabilities and their families.' Similar Recommendations were given to Cyprus, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden.

The EU supports Member States' efforts to foster inclusivity and accessibility in education for persons with disabilities through several targeted initiatives. Under the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, the Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training (VET)[106] encourages Member States to design inclusive and accessible vocational programmes for vulnerable groups, including individuals with disabilities. The renewed European Alliance for Apprenticeships[107] supports knowledge-sharing on the role of apprenticeships in social inclusion and promotes quality apprenticeships tailored to learners with disabilities, while the reinforced Youth Guarantee[108] facilitates outreach and activation of young persons with disabilities. The European Skills Agenda[109] highlights the importance of public employment services and guidance counsellors in bridging skills gaps and

[106] Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020/C 417/01): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202(01).
[107] European Commission, 'European Alliance for Apprenticeships'.
[108] European Commission, 'The reinforced Youth Guarantee'.
[109] European Commission, 'European Skills Agenda'.

improving market inclusion, particularly by enhancing digital skills and collaborating with social enterprises. The Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027[110] further commits to providing accessible digital learning environments, content and assistive technologies for equitable participation in education.

Reskilling, upskilling and training of educational professionals is a priority for the Disability Strategy, as it is in the UN Committee Recommendations to the Member States and the EU and in General Comment No. 5. To address specific professional needs, the Commission's Training Strategy for justice professionals[111] includes upskilling on EU disability legislation and the protection of individuals' rights in digital spaces, aligned with the UN CRPD.

Internally, the Commission fosters a respectful workplace by mandating training for managers and HR professionals[112] to combat bias and discrimination against persons with disabilities. Efforts to enhance accessibility extend to the Commission's infrastructure, digital platforms and communications, incorporating innovative projects, accessible publications and training in International Sign Language to improve inclusivity across all areas of operation.

In a recent publication, the Commission presented a toolkit[113] on the use of ESF+ funds focusing on staff training to support independent living. Measures eligible for funding under the ESF+ include continuous and lifelong training, re-skilling and the adaptation of personal assistants and support staff to the changing contexts in which they operate. These efforts aim to enhance their effectiveness and ensure they are well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of those they support. Additionally, ESF+ funding can be directed toward strengthening the role of personal assistants within communities, promoting their career development and ensuring their integration into the broader care and support sector. Furthermore, the ESF+ also supports targeted interventions, including social innovation measures and initiatives aimed at improving the livelihoods of precarious workers.

While education policies remain the responsibility of Member States, they have become increasingly important indicators for the EU, particularly when addressing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The EU has placed greater emphasis on education as a cornerstone for addressing systemic barriers faced by persons with disabilities, aiming to enhance their access to quality education, vocational training and employment opportunities.

5.4.2 Early school leavers and tertiary education

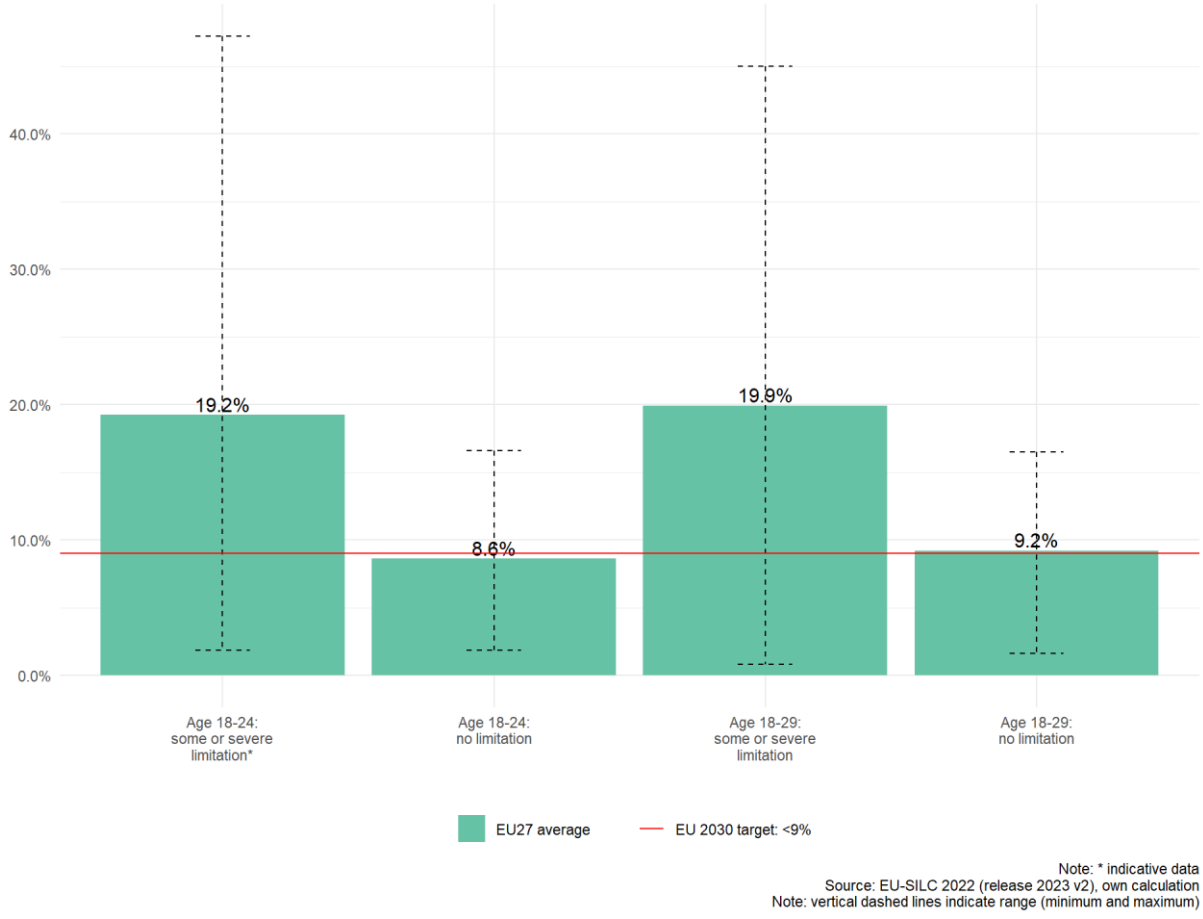
Data on education and skills development for persons with disabilities at the EU level are limited. The 27 EDE country fiches report more detailed national data on the situation of students and young adults with disabilities in 2022. The following figures

[110] European Commission, European Education Area, 'Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)'.
[111] European judicial training strategy (2021–2024): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/european-judicial-training-strategy-2021-2024.html.
[112] European Commission (2022), 'A new Human Resources Strategy for the Commission': 3d1dc4df-7995-44b8-bf08-396930fb8c9d_en.
[113] European Commission (2024), *Toolkit: Using the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for staff training in independent living support*, 86d1966b-6ea1-4604-8190-399ac601cf6b_en.

use EU-SILC data on the rate of early school leavers and on completed tertiary education for different age groups.

In 2022, the rate of early school leavers among persons with disabilities was 19.2 % for the 18-24 age group and 19.9 % for the 18-29 age group. Independent of age group, the rate among persons with disabilities is significantly higher than among persons without disabilities. The EU 2030 target of less than 9 % of early school leaving has not been reached for persons with disabilities. The EU-SILC data estimate a rate of early school leaving slightly below 9 % among persons without disabilities (age 18-24). The national rates for early school leaving among persons with disabilities vary substantially among EU Member States, but there is less variation for persons without disabilities.

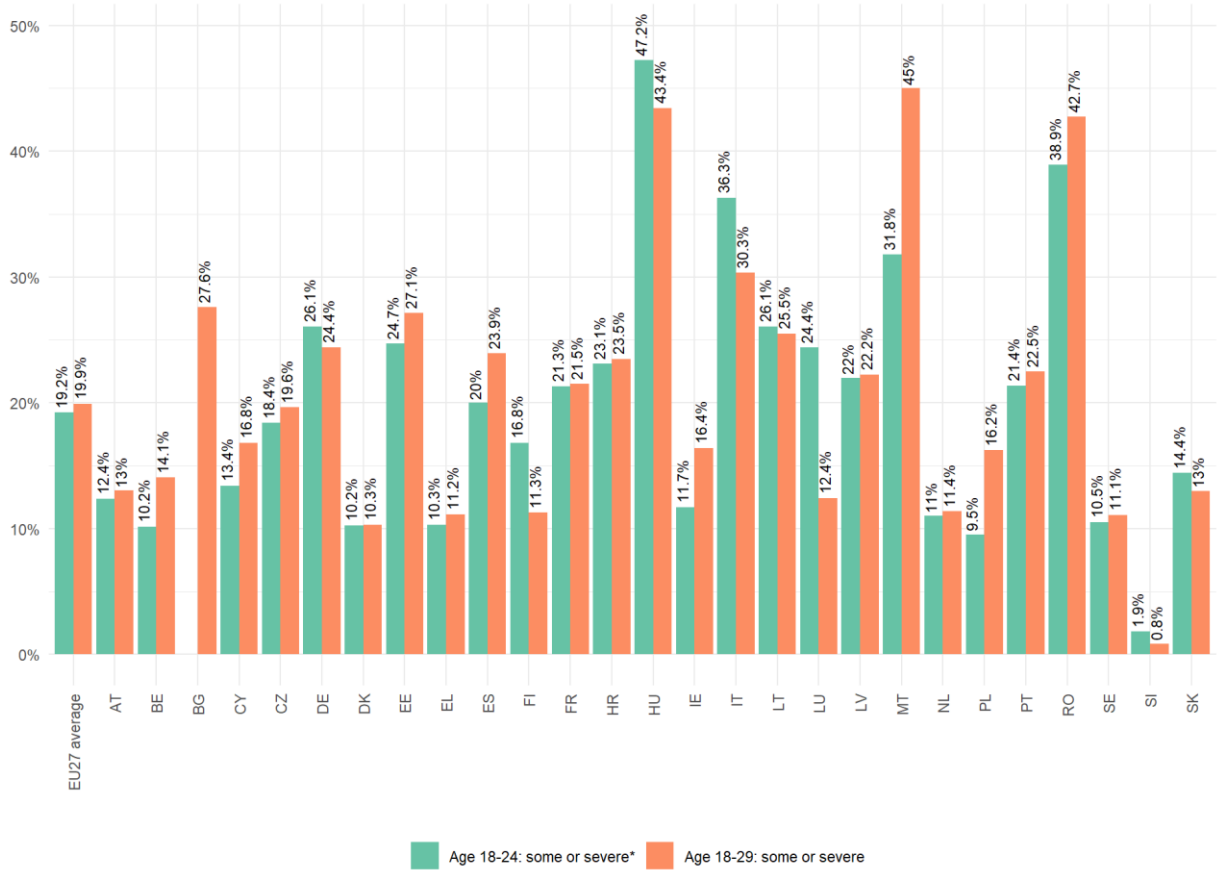
Figure 41: Early school leavers (age 18-24 & 18-29) by activity limitation – EU27 average (2022)



Note: * indicative data
Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

The highest rate of 47.22 % of early school leavers among persons with disabilities (18-24 years) was recorded in Hungary and among the 18-29 age group in Malta (45 %) (Figure 42). Slovenia, on the other hand, had the lowest early school leaver rates among persons with disabilities in both age groups (1.85 % and 0.83 %).

Figure 42: Early school leavers (age 18-24 & 18-29) with some or severe activity limitation by EU Member State (2022)

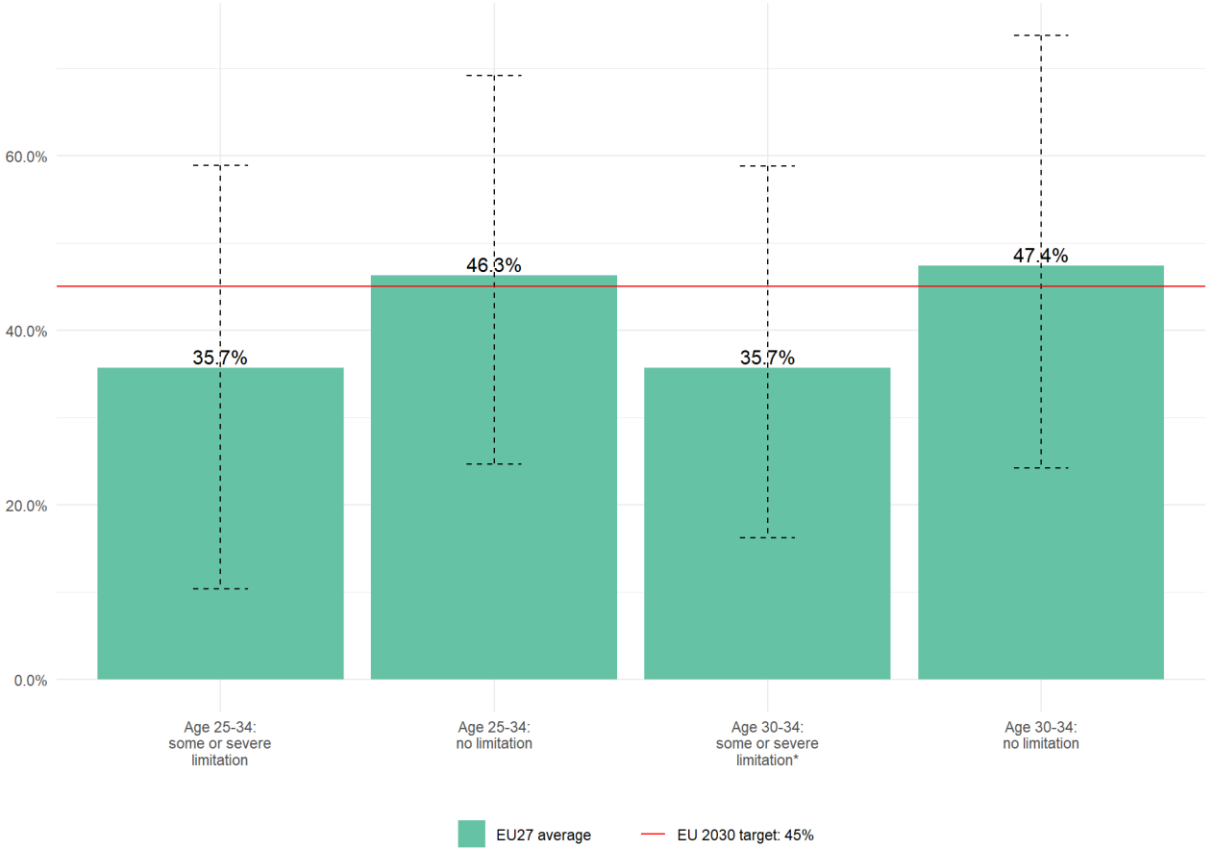


Note: * indicative data
Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation

Persons with disabilities in the EU also have on average lower rates of completed tertiary education (Figure 43). Of persons with disabilities aged 25-34 years, 35.7 % have on average completed tertiary education, with 35.7 % in the narrower age group of 30-34 years. The average tertiary education completion rate of persons without disabilities is on average higher (46.6 % and 47.4 % for the two age groups). The tertiary education rate of persons with disabilities is therefore below the EU 2030 target of a 45 % completion rate, while the average for persons without disabilities is estimated to be above this target level.

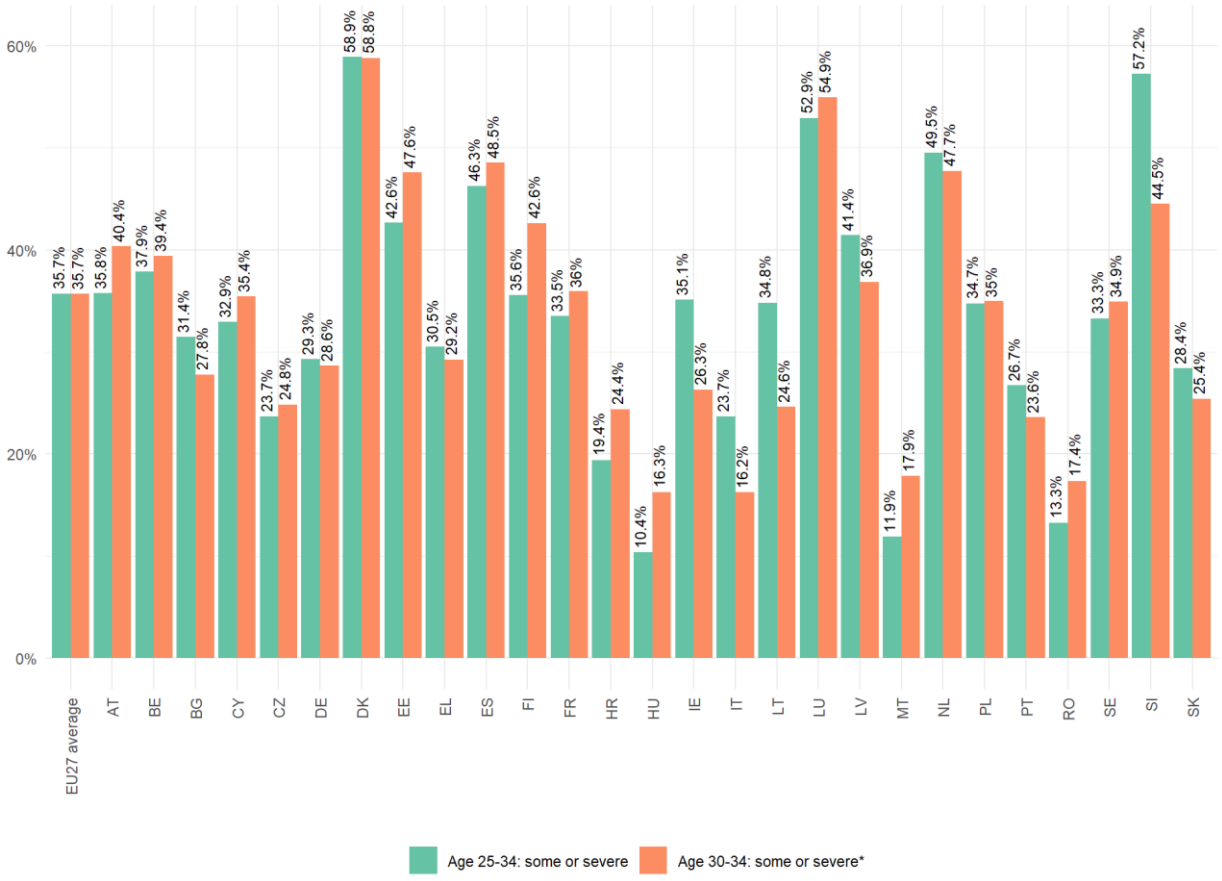
The estimates for completed tertiary education vary significantly among EU Member States. In the 25-34 age group, the tertiary education rate for persons with disabilities ranges from 10.4 % in Hungary to 58.9 % in Denmark. In the narrower age group of 30-34 years, the rate ranges from 16.3 % in Italy to 58.8 % in Denmark.

Figure 43: Tertiary education (age 30-34 & 25-34) by activity limitation



Note: * indicative data
Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation
Note: vertical dashed lines indicate range (minimum and maximum)

Figure 44: Tertiary education (age 30-34 & 25-34) with some or severe activity limitation by EU Member State (2022)



Note: * indicative data
Source: EU-SILC 2022 (release 2023 v2), own calculation

Countries with higher rates of early school leavers with disabilities also have on average lower rates of completed tertiary education among persons with disabilities. Countries with low early school leaving rates, on the other hand, have on average higher tertiary education rates. The negative association is statistically significant and explains around 43 % of the variation (r=-0.653; p=0.0002184; R^2=0.427). This indicates that countries which approach the issue of higher rates of early school leaving among persons with disabilities are more successful in increasing the tertiary education rate among persons with disabilities.

6 Summary and conclusions

This synthesis report provides an overview of the 2024 Semester cycle, from a disability perspective, and in preparation for input to the 2025 cycle. It draws on evidence of disability mainstreaming in the Semester documentation (the Autumn and Spring Packages), as well as relevant themes from the Recovery and Resilience Plans, from dialogues with the UN CRPD Committee, from the current disability strategies and action plans of the EU and its Member States, and from the most recent EU data indications (for 2022 and, conditional on data availability, for 2023). In general, the visibility of disability issues across Semester documents (mostly concerning the labour market situation of persons with disabilities), similarly to previous years, has improved. This is mostly thanks to the inclusion of the disability employment gap indicator in the Social Scoreboard. For example, disability is explicitly mentioned in nine Country Specific Recommendations fiches, amid the pressing challenges faced by the EU (such as the energy crisis and the unstable geopolitical situation).

In recent years, social welfare states across Europe have been dealing with several interlinking crises (including the COVID-19 pandemic, the energy crisis and the inflation crisis) while trying to respond to global megatrends (such as ageing, climate change, digital transition and migration). Until 2020, unemployment levels had decreased in the EU to those seen prior to the 2008 financial crisis.[114] However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the inflation crisis, with job losses, income reductions and price increases, put a tremendous strain on European economies, with a disproportionate impact on groups that were already in a vulnerable situation, like persons with disabilities.[115]

EU data reveals a persistent disability employment gap, despite several Member States having implemented various policies in recent years to improve the labour market participation of persons with disabilities. These include quotas for both public and private employers, tax benefits, wage subsidies, financial support to make the workplace accessible, and potential penalties. Several EDE country experts noted the lack of interest from employers in hiring persons with disabilities and providing them with reasonable accommodation. The recently published Disability Employment Package provides useful information on specific key aspects of employing persons with disabilities, however, more qualitative work needs to be done at national and local levels to understand the reasons behind the low impact of ongoing policy efforts. A main question for policy makers remains: how can the disability employment gap effectively be reduced and which (interlinking) policy reforms and initiatives make a real difference to ensure persons with disabilities are hired and retain their jobs on the open labour market? The prevalence of sheltered workshops is still high in some Member States (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Lithuania and the Netherlands) where decent wages and working conditions for persons with disabilities are often not guaranteed.[116] EU Semester documents in 2023/2024 (Joint Employment

[114] European Commission (2022), Proposal for a Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion. COM 490 final.

[115] Birtha, M., Groß-Wohlgemuth, F., Fuchs, M., Zólyomi, E., Gjylsheni, S. (2025), *Building resilient social protection systems for all*. Discussion Paper, Number 3. Vienna: European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research.

[116] For more information see: Gyulavári, T. (2025), *Employment of persons with disabilities: an assessment of the effectiveness of national policies*, (forthcoming) and Zólyomi, E. & Birtha, M. (2020), *Towards inclusive employment of persons with disabilities: A comparative study of six social economy organisations and companies in Europe*, Vienna: European Centre.

Report, Country Reports, Country Specific Recommendations) identify as a policy priority filling labour shortages through the activation of persons with disabilities and other underrepresented, long-term unemployed groups (e.g. Roma, women, young people in not in employment, education or training (NEETs)). Efforts to provide them with adult education, training and skill development (upskilling and reskilling) play an important role here.

However, in the case of persons with disabilities, there are other structural barriers that should be addressed in the Member States, such as the lack of inclusive education, starting from early childhood, that leads to early school leaving and lower educational attainments, as shown by EU data. While education is mostly a competence of the Member States, investments in inclusive education settings, accessible school buildings, training of specialised teaching assistants, among others, should be made a priority under RRF and be more articulated in the priorities of the Semester. The lack of resources of employers (especially SMEs) to provide reasonable accommodation in the workplace represents another barrier to the hiring of persons with disabilities – yet this link has not so far been made clear in the Semester documents.

EU funds, like ESF+, were allocated to dedicated programmes in the Member States that foster the employment of persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups. ESF+ funds may also contribute to the training of the social care workforce to enable them to provide person-centred support to persons with disabilities.[117] However, there is no special earmarking to address the needs of persons with disabilities under ESF+. Looking at the previous MFF (2014-2020 period), there are no data publicly available that would present the amount of funds spent under ESF disaggregated by disability.

The effectiveness of EU-funded measures on employment and social inclusion (i.e. housing and the transition to community-based care) should be closely monitored. EDE country experts from several Member States reported little or no progress on deinstitutionalisation in recent years, despite data showing that over 3 million children and persons with disabilities[118] are still living in segregating residential institutional care settings in Europe.[119] Recent policy trends in the EU that consider disability services (i.e. residential care) under the broader umbrella of long-term care, raise concerns with regard to the effective implementation of the UN CRPD by the EU and this risks allocating funding to investments that do not respect the human rights of persons with disabilities.

It is a positive development that some Member States (e.g. Slovenia, Latvia and Slovakia.) are making significant investments under their RRP to support persons with disabilities. This is done, for example, by implementing education reforms for children with special needs, including investments in digitalisation, more individualised support or into community-based services and accessible housing. Given the high rate of social

[117] European Commission (2024), *Toolkit: Using the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for staff training in independent living support, 86d1966b-6ea1-4604-8190-399ac601cf6b_en*.

[118] Estimates suggest that there are more than 1 million persons with disabilities aged under 65 and more than 2 million aged 65+ living in institutions in the EU 27. Source: Grammenos, S. (2021), *COVID-19 and persons with disabilities – Statistics on health, care, isolation and networking*, Publications Office of the European Union, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/25503.

[119] European Commission (2024). Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community, Publications Office of the European Union, https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-adopts-guidance-independent-living-persons-disabilities-2024-11-20_en.

exclusion among persons with disabilities, along with persistent institutionalisation, such investments are crucial as there is no independent living without access to adequate housing.

Yet evidence on how investments under the Recovery and Resilience Plan support persons with disabilities is scattered, as reported in the EDE country reports. In general, the funding guidelines of the RRF and ESF+ and the calls do not consistently highlight as a cross-cutting issue the specific situation of persons with disabilities. This should be improved, building on the exchange of some promising attempts by Member States. Therefore, as part of the implementation of the EU Disability Strategy, in the post-2027 MFF regulation, better disability targeting should be considered, along with maintaining the horizontal enabling condition on the implementation of the UN CRPD.

At both the EU and national levels more effort is required to identify and monitor the situation of persons with disabilities who are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the cost-of-living and energy crises.[120] There is a need for more systemic collection of disability-inclusive disaggregated data when measuring poverty, including energy poverty and policy outcomes. As reported by EDE national experts, there is little information available on the impact of national policies on reducing the poverty rate of persons with disabilities. A recent European Parliament briefing called for a roadmap on energy poverty among persons with disabilities that could be implemented under the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, linked to the upcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy.[121] In order to meet the 2030 target to successfully lift persons with disabilities out of poverty across the EU, there is a need to shift towards the individualisation of social protection rights (including the right to benefits) in the Member States.[122] This requires making disability assessments compliant with the UN CRPD and introducing an approach of enhanced individualisation of rights and provisions (e.g. personal budgets) that would allow persons with disabilities greater choice and control in the Member States.

It is clear that persons with disabilities experience many different extra costs due to their disability which can place a significant financial burden on them and their families, leading to increased risk of living in poverty.[123] These extra costs can be direct (e.g. assistive devices, home adaptations), indirect and opportunity costs and relate to general items, such as food or healthcare, or to disability-specific goods and

[120] Eurofound (2022), *The cost-of-living crisis and energy poverty in the EU: Social impact and policy responses – Background paper*, Dublin: Eurofound. Retrieved from: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/2022/cost-living-crisis-and-energy-poverty-eu-social-impact-and-policy-responses.

[121] European Parliament Briefing, Requested by the PETI committee, Birtha, M. (2024), *The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 - Achievements and perspectives*, European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 767.095.

[122] European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Baptista, I. and Marlier, E., *Social protection for people with disabilities – An analysis of policies in 35 countries*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/323350.

[123] The type and level of extra costs depend on the individual's specific circumstances as well as the environmental and policy context including the extent of public support provided (both monetary and in-kind).

services.[124] As mentioned above, access to affordable and barrier-free housing is a key component in achieving independent living and inclusion in the community for persons with disabilities. The needs of persons with disabilities should therefore be addressed in EU initiatives like the future European Affordable Housing Plan and corresponding funding schemes. In practical terms this would mean including accessibility and inclusion provisions as a key requirement for funded projects.

As a response to the climate crisis, the EU put forward ambitious climate and energy goals, as well as a series of legislation and policies, as part of the European Green Deal and the Fitfor55 package. Within the theme of green transition, several Member States have committed new investments in sustainable transport, home heating schemes, and the renovation of both public and private buildings, which have relevance to persons with disabilities. However, disability mainstreaming in climate-change-related actions should be enhanced, as was already mentioned, for example, in the Country Report 2024 for Italy. This could be done through the 2025 Semester cycle, by strengthening the link between policies linked to the green transition, poverty reduction and social inclusion. The European Commission is expected to propose new actions for the remaining period of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 and flagship initiatives could address the disproportionately negative impact of climate change on the rights of persons with disabilities and the need for disability-inclusive adaptations.

[124] Birtha, M., Zólyomi, E., Wohlgemuth, F. and Gjylsheni, S. (2023), *Targeted measures for persons with disabilities to cope with the cost-of-living crisis*, European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 754.127.

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