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

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

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

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1 Executive summary and recommendations

1.1 Key points and main challenges for Slovenia in 2022

Disability and the labour market

The situation of people with disabilities in the labour market remains stable but structural obstacles remain (long-term unemployment, low work activity, lack of accommodated workplaces for individuals; support at the workplaces in ordinary environment etc.). Also, the disability employment gap by level of activity limitation and sex for Slovenia show that the gap is increasing annually. In October 2020 the share of registered persons with disabilities among all unemployed was 14.7 %. Almost 80 % are long-term unemployed and, among the long-term unemployed age 50+, 26.8 % were persons with disabilities. The RRP addresses employment of persons with disabilities and plans to invest in the adaptation of more flexible work formats (home-office, flexible work schedule, and digitalisation) in disability companies and employment centres. The often-addressed issue of mainstreaming disability employment in the open labour market instead of investment into the parallel labour market remains a challenge for equality of persons with disabilities.

Disability, social policies and healthcare

In June 2021, the Government accepted a new version of long-awaited Long-Term Care Act. The frames a new universal pillar of social protection for individuals with long-term care needs which will integrate health care and social care services for all age groups and increase their accessibility. It aims to create a robust long-term care system and as such under-burden the existent health system. It includes four types of long-term care: institutional care, living in smaller nursing and care homes and other community-based accommodations, home care by relatives and financial allowances. It envisages a new compulsorily insurance scheme for long-term care. The proposal was criticized by disability representatives, academics and general public but with few amendments. The risk of poverty remains one of the most challenging issue for equality of persons with disabilities.

Disability, education and skills

Parallel education and the lack of accessibility during education remain structural barriers. People with intellectual disabilities are kept in schools of parallel education up to the age of 26. Good practice is found in higher education where many universities made regulations about accessibility and enrolment of students with disabilities which will potentially increase their number and contribute to equality. The education reform planned in the RRP, including digitalisation, will impact accessibility for children with disabilities.

Investment priorities for inclusion and accessibility

In relation to people with disabilities RRP mentions investment priorities in flexibilization of the special workplaces for persons with disabilities who work in disability companies and in employment centres; digitalisation; accessibility of build environment and transport; investment in the long-term care system and in education.

1.2 Recommendations for Slovenia

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

Recommendation: Address the structural difficulties in disability and employment not only by parallel employment opportunities but across the open labour market.

Rationale: The individualised accommodated workplaces and supported workplaces for persons with disabilities in mainstream employment has not been yet fully implemented despite legislation which is in action since 2007.

Recommendation: Consider the recommendations and criticism by disability organisations, academics, and professionals of the current version of the Long-Term Care Act before it is put into force.

Rationale: The Act is work in progress since 2002 and several CSRs for Slovenia (e.g. 2019) recommended long-term care sustainability and implementation of this Act. The Resolution on the National Health Care Plan 2016-2025 emphasised that Slovenia lags behind the OECD average for the share of people included in the long-term care and the funds invested in this area.

Recommendation: Address the risk of poverty for people with disabilities in different life circumstances.

Rationale: In 2020 the CSRs for Slovenia noted that the Commission's 2020 Country Report on Slovenia did not make any substantial reference to the situation of persons with disabilities or disability policies (other than pension reforms) despite evidence of inequalities in the labour market, poverty risk and relevant social policies.

Recommendation: Define and ensure minimum accessibility standards in education at all levels according to the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act and end parallel education in institutions and special schools.

Rationale: The Advocate of the Principle of Equality of the Republic of Slovenia made recommendations to ministries to end discrimination in education and ensure equality.

Recommendation: Ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities in digitalisation during the implementation of the RRP Slovenia.

Rationale: The 2020 Report on Implementation of the Action Plan for People with disabilities 2014-2021 mentions the need for increased digitalisation skills of persons with disabilities. Digital knowledge is lacking among older persons with disabilities. There is no on-going accessible programmes for digital skills among persons with disabilities.

Recommendation: Mainstream disability equality in all Semester documents.

Rationale: The Stability Programme 2021, which refers to the RRP, mentions people with disabilities only in relation to receipt of one-off solidarity allowance during the COVID-19 crises of 2020 and 2021. There is no evidence how persons with disabilities benefited from the aid packages or how epidemic impacted social inclusion of persons with disabilities in different life contexts.

2 Mainstreaming disability equality in the Semester documents

Country Reports and Country Specific Recommendation of direct relevance to disability policy were not published in this exceptional policy cycle. For a commentary on the last published documents please see our country fiche for the previous Semester 2020-21.

2.1 Recovery and Resilience Plan for Slovenia (RRP)

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

In the RRP 2021-2026, adopted by the Slovenian Government on 28 April 2021,² people with disabilities were mentioned in the areas of employment, education, accessibility, health, long-term care, social protection, and digitalisation.³

Disability and Labour market

The RRP focuses on the adaptation of more flexible work formats (home-office, flexible work schedule, digitalisation) in disability companies and in employment centres across Slovenia. The aim is to maintain jobs and to open new jobs including those persons with severe disabilities. In focus are employers and employees. The plans are to develop psychosocial support for persons with disabilities and to modernise disability companies and employment centres with the ICT technology (see more details in chapter 3).

In other areas of employment, like full time and long-term employment of young people, inclusion of adults with lower education and skills in employment, and awareness raising among employers, persons with disabilities are not explicitly mentioned. For example, the RRP speaks about 'faster entry of the young into the labour market' which would reduce youth unemployment by providing financial incentives for employers to hire young people up to 25 years of age on open-ended contracts (available funds EUR 28 million). It seems that the RRP does not break with existing practice of prioritizing parallel employment and is not innovative in the area of employment of people with disabilities. The RRP mentions that the main reasons why persons with disabilities cannot get jobs in the open labour market are, first, their impairment, and secondly, their lack of digital skills. The lack of digital and other work skills of workers with disabilities would need to be understood from a structural and the life course perspective as the disadvantage from early age.

² Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, 'Vlada sprejela nacionalni Načrt za okrevanje in odpornost' (Government adopts National Recovery and Resilience Plan), 28 April 2021, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2021-04-28-vlada-sprejela-nacionalni-nacrt-za-okrevanje-in-odpornost/>. Recovery and Resilience Plan for Slovenia 2021- 2026, <https://www.eu-skladi.si/en/post-2020-1/recovery-and-resilience-plan>.

NextGenerationEU: European Commission endorses Slovenia's EUR 2.5 billion recovery and resilience plan. European Commission, Brussels, 1 July 2021. [*com-2021-384-slovenia_press-release_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-room/detail/2021/07/com-2021-384-slovenia-press-release_en).

Education

The planned educational reform aims to approach vulnerable children including children with special needs with usual measures: activation, developing social-protection programmes for vulnerable groups in disadvantaged areas, the development of social competencies, social inclusion, the increase of motivation, building of self-esteem, empowerment, gaining skills and knowledge. Children with special needs are mentioned in the context of digitalisation of education; they shall receive more individualised support during education. The Reform expects to lessen the differences in performances among children from a better social-economic backgrounds and those who do not receive additional support outside of the schools. The CRPD aims in regard to education of children, young people and adults with disabilities are not particularly addressed as the plan is very broad and does not target particular problems.

Social policies and healthcare

The resilience of the healthcare system and the sustainability of health system is targeted with setting-up a long-term care system. The Long-Term Care Act is planned to be a new universal pillar of social protection for individuals with the need of long-term care which will integrate health care and social care services for all age groups and will increase their accessibility across the country. The development of community-based services and ensuring institutional care for those with more complex needs is planned. The long-term care system reform plans to focus on qualified personal who work in the long-term care for elders in old-people's homes as well as those who provide informal care and plans to improve their professional competencies. The RRP speaks about strengthening institutional as well as home care. Nursing homes for severely health-challenged people (*negovalni domovi*) and care homes (*oskrbni domovi*) will be new types of institutions. The deinstitutionalisation is mentioned in relation to the development of smaller care homes and the option that people get home care (by paid relatives) instead of institutional care (available funds EUR 79 million).

Accessibility and digitalisation

Accessible buildings are mentioned in the RRP for all groups including people with disabilities. The investment into infrastructure will consider accessibility for all; the renovation of old buildings will improve accessibility for persons with disabilities; the access to public buildings will get improved; railway stations will be re-build in order to be fully accessible for people with different impairments; the railway system will be digitalised for the consumers with the information system about timetables and the traffic information; ramps, signs for visually impaired and other forms of accessibility will be build. In relation to accessibility of the railway system The Directive of the EC (EU, number 1300/2014, 18 November 2014) about accessibility of the railways system of the European Union for people with disabilities and functional disabilities is mentioned as the aim that needs to be fully implemented. Accessibility will also be improved with the digitalisation of the judicial system and public administration. The RRP plans to reskill and upskill with the digital skills and competences different groups

of people (students, employees, public servants); persons with disabilities are not mentioned explicitly but it seems that they will benefit during the modernisation of the education system and through life-long learning (EUR 114 million). The ANED Digitalisation report 2021 showed the lack of digital skills among people with disabilities, especially those older than 65 years of age, which is a gap that needs to be considered.

The Government's Stability Programme⁴ adopted on 28 April 2021, mentions that the Government has considered the recommendations of the European Commission for Slovenia in 2019 and 2020, which relate to health and long-term care; the pension system; the employability of low-skilled and older workers; and improving digital literacy. The evidence: the newly proposed Long-Term Care Act is in the procedure; pension system has not been addressed, yet; employability is targeted with the ALMPs and with ESS and EFSD projects; digital literacy is expected to be targeted with specific trainings and in general education of people with disabilities.

The RRP addresses that the national document is harmonised with the European Pillar of Social rights in the areas of: accommodation of workplaces of persons with disabilities in disability companies and employment centres; unified entry point for long-term care (the adoption of the new Act, ensuring enough public funds for its implementation; strengthening competencies of the employed and the providers of long-term care, infrastructure and training for new workers in long-term care); social protection and inclusion (integrated treatment of persons with a higher amount of medical needs who will be placed in nursing homes with capacities of 300 beds); safe living environment for people who depend from continuous help of other people and who need basic social and health care (smaller living units with 850 placements which will be built in the frame of long-term care system); increased fund for public flats for rent which will benefit the needs of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities and families with members with disabilities.

2.2 Semester links to CRPD and national disability action plans

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

It is also important that Semester plans align with national disability strategy too. In Slovenia, this refers to the national Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021.⁵ A national action plan, based on UN CRPD implementation, was agreed in 2014 for the period 2014-2021. The new Action Plan for People with Disabilities 2022-2026 is work in progress. The responsible body for it is the Directorate for Persons with Disabilities at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia. The Directorate invited 6 representatives of disability organisations to be included in the working group.⁶

⁴ Draft *Stability Programme 2021*, 6 April 2021.

⁵ Action Plan for People with Disabilities 2014-2021, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MDDSZ/Invalidi/API-2014-2021/API_2014_2021.pdf.

⁶ The Council of People with Disabilities of the Republic of Slovenia. The 10th meeting of the Council of People with Disabilities. 26 May 2021.

The 2020 Report on Implementation of the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021⁷ provides an impressive list of activities in different areas of equality and accessibility of persons with disabilities but does not particularly address the structural issues mentioned in the recommendations. The Report recognises that due to disability and aging digital transformation is necessary and mentions digitalisation in some libraries and archives, in the museum of national history, at one university which will start with digital marking of the students.⁸ The Report shows that improvements were made in accessibility of public buildings, especially universities and courts. Also, in January 2021 the draft of the new legislation on the accessibility requirements for products and services was made in accordance with the EU directive.⁹ The working group that consists of the representatives from different ministries met several times by June 2021.¹⁰

The Report¹¹ addresses that less funds are available in Slovenia for community-based services than for institutional long-term care, and that in the line of strategic plans, more funds are needed for new group homes. Although the Directorate for Persons with Disabilities is part of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities the Minister of the same ministry in February 2021 announced that as part of recovery planning the government will ensure EUR 30 million governmental funds for new long-stay institutions for the elderly within the next two years.¹² In addition, the Ministry granted concessions to 11 new institutions for elderly which will have together 1 285 beds (approximately 120 beds in each institution). The institutions will be managed by private enterprises, among them SeneCura, an Austrian transnational enterprise which will build 3 institutions with 450 beds (approx. 150 beds per institution). The commission which decides who gets the concession uses the criteria such as: a.) whether the provider will ensure one-bed rooms to prevent spread of the virus; b.) whether the provider will have closed wards for people with mental health problems; c.) whether services for people with dementia and with similar conditions will be provided. This shows that some money will be allocated for disability-related purposes, but the way how the money will be spent is against the UN CRPD

⁷ The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020, [VG API 2020 P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

⁸ The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020, [VG API 2020 P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

⁹ DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/882 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 April 2019 on the accessibility requirements for products and services, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019L0882>.

¹⁰ The Council of People with Disabilities of the Republic of Slovenia. The 10th meeting of the Council of People with Disabilities. 26 May 2021.

¹¹ The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020, [VG API 2020 P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

¹² The Ministry of Labour has selected 11 homes for the elderly to grant a concession [Za podelitev koncesije je ministrstvo za delo izbralo 11 domov za starejše], MMC RTV SLO, 16th February 2021, <https://www.rtvsllo.si/slovenija/za-podelitev-koncesije-je-ministrstvo-za-delo-izbralo-11-domov-za-starejse/569740>; Janez Cigler Kralj: we are accounting for an additional 2000 accommodation places with the construction of new homes for the elderly. [Janez Cigler Kralj: z gradnjo novih domov za ostarele računamo na dodatnih 2000 mest za nastanitev]. N.SI, 12th January 2021, <https://nsi.si/novica/janez-cigler-kralj-v-kratkem-bomo-imeli-2000-novih-mest-za-nastanitev-starejsih/>.

principles. Since January 2021 the institutions took 745 new residents in the empty beds of those who died from COVID-19.¹³

Among Council Recommendations 2021¹⁴ for Slovenian Stability Programme, the European Commission recommends to the government to give »the priority to fiscal structural reforms that will help provide financing for public policy priorities and contribute to the long-term sustainability of public finances, including by strengthening the coverage, adequacy, and sustainability of health and social protection systems for all«. In the Slovenian version the same sentence adds, »when it is applicable«,¹⁵ which does not exist in the original version.¹⁶

The Directorate for Persons with Disabilities works with different ministries to harmonize¹⁷ the national implementation of the new Strategy of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.¹⁸

The methodology of the annual reports on the implementation of the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities for 2022-2026 needs to be more in line with the UN CRPD Committee recommendations from 2018 and in line with main national goals and visions. In order to evaluate the Action Plan each year (in July) an implementation Report is made by the Directorate of Persons with Disabilities. For these reports each ministry is asked to list projects of their activities. (from names of lectures to published special journals and textbooks, names of the intervision meetings, number of books in Braille, numbers of newly employed persons with disabilities in each governmental institution etc.). The reports of the Action Plan try to present all activities which were done in each ministry and national institutions responsible for the implementation of the Plan but lacks the critical perspective and real evaluation. The fragmentation misses a joint vision and intra- and inter-ministry planning for the future. The National Council of Disability Organisations of Slovenia already suggested to the Directorate a new methodology for writing the implementation reports.¹⁹ The 2020 Report of the Implementation of the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020 lists several

¹³ The Ministry of Labour has selected 11 homes for the elderly to grant a concession [Za podelitev koncesije je ministrstvo za delo izbralo 11 domov za starejše], MMC RTV SLO, 16th February 2021, <https://www.rtvlo.si/slovenija/za-podelitev-koncesije-je-ministrstvo-za-delo-izbralo-11-domov-za-starejse/569740>; Janez Cigler Kralj: we are accounting for an additional 2000 accommodation places with the construction of new homes for the elderly. [Janez Cigler Kralj: z gradnjo novih domov za ostarele računamo na dodatnih 2000 mest za nastanitev]. N.SI, 12th January 2021, <https://nsi.si/novica/janez-cigler-kralj-v-kratkem-bomo-imeli-2000-novih-mest-za-nastanitev-starejsih/>.

¹⁴ European Commission (2021). COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION. Delivering a Council opinion on the 2021 Stability Programme of Slovenia. 2 June 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/economy-finance/com-2021-524-1_en_act_part1_v3.pdf

¹⁵ [EUR-Lex - 32021H0729\(18\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\); C_2021304SL.01011601.xml \(europa.eu\).](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/lexUriCommDir?uri=COM%2F2021%2F304SL%2F01011601%2F1%2FEN%2FHTML&act=COM%2F2021%2F304SL%2F01011601%2F1%2FEN%2FHTML)

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/economy-finance/com-2021-524-1_en_act_part1_v3.pdf.

¹⁷ The Council of People with Disabilities of the Republic of Slovenia. The 10th meeting of the Council of People with Disabilities. 26 May 2021.

¹⁸ Strategy of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, https://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/union-equality-european-commission-presents-strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030_en.

¹⁹ E-mail communication with the National Council of Disability Organisations, September 2021.

activities in all areas of CRPD but does not specifically target the UN CRPD Committee recommendations from 2018.

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

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

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

'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.'

3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Slovenia of 55.0 % in 2019, compared to 76.0 % for other persons against a national employment target of 75 % and approximately 3.7 points above the EU27 average. This results in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 21 percentage points (EU27 average gap 24.2, see Tables 2-4) or an employment chances ratio of 0.7. The same data indicate unemployment rates of 20.5 % and 7.7 %, respectively in 2019 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Slovenia was 69.2 %, compared to 82.3 % for other persons (see Tables 8-10). These indications are broken down by gender and age in the respective tables in annex.

ESTAT figures on the disability employment gap by level of activity limitation and sex (source EU-SILC) for Slovenia show that the gap is increasing annually from 15.8 in 2016 to 21.7 in 2020 (but it is still below the EU average).²⁰

The long-term negative structural trends in the labour market for people with disabilities remain an on-going issue: long-term unemployment; workplaces which do not correspond with the level of received educational degree; receiving the written order of unemployability; low working activity; parallel workplaces system (disability companies, employment centres); lack of supported employment in open labour market. Among the negative structural trends in labour market the RRP²¹ mentions the low work activity among people with disabilities and that in October 2020 the share of unemployed registered persons with disabilities among all unemployed was 14.7 %.²² Almost 80 % unemployed persons with disabilities are long-term

²⁰ ESTAT figures of the disability employment gap, as a new scoreboard indicator ([Statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dlm200/default/table?lang=en).

²¹ Recovery and Resilience Plan for Slovenia 2021- 2026, <https://www.eu-skladi.si/en/post-2020-1/recovery-and-resilience-plan>.

²² Employment Office of the Republic of Slovenia 27/10. October 2020, https://www.ess.gov.si/files/13725/mesecne_informacije_ZRSZ_2020_10.pdf.

unemployed. To challenge this structural problem the RRP plans the improvement of the active labour market employment policy for Slovenia and to strengthen the activities in life-long learning and education. Nevertheless, in the RRP people with disabilities are not explicitly addressed in these plans, except in parallel employment.

The recent EU-SILC data show that unemployment rate of persons with disabilities is higher than the EU27 average. This is the case for women and men and suggests that persons with disabilities enter the labour market but do not find jobs (Table 5). The unemployment gap is widest among the older workers aged 55-64 (31.3 % persons with disabilities compared to 9.7 % without disabilities, Table 6). The activity gap widens from the age group 35-44 on and widens further with older age of workers (Table 9). The disability employment gap also widens especially among older workers, but this widening starts in the age group 35-44 (Table 3). The employment gap appeared to widen before the COVID-19 crises, after narrowing from 2017 to 2019 (Table 4).

The European Pillar of Social Rights, Slovenia 2000-2020²³ mentions that less than 25% of registered persons with disabilities are in paid employment; the rest are receivers of disability pension; have an order of unemployability; or are labelled as incapable for independent life and work. In the last decade the number of working active persons with disabilities increased, but the share of the working active persons with disabilities among all working active people didn't changed a lot and remains a bit below 4 % (30 118 workers with disabilities in 2010 compared to 34 872 workers with disabilities in 2021). In the year 2020 there were 14 % of persons with disabilities among all unemployed; while in 2019 there were more persons with disabilities among unemployed (17.3 %), which suggests that the overall number of unemployed was higher.

Among all registered persons with disabilities in paid employment 19 % of them (6 679 persons) work in parallel employment structures (5 944 persons in disability companies which is 17 %; 735 persons in employment centres which is 2 % of all working active persons with disabilities).²⁴

3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2021 [Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) for Slovenia and the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021.

According to the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act²⁵ an employer who employs a person with disabilities at the accommodated workplace, can ask for the replacement of the costs for the

²³ Gregorčič. M., Kajzer. A. eds. (2021). European Pillar of Social Rights, Slovenia 2000-2020 [Evropski steber socialnih pravic, Slovenija 2000–2020], UMAR, https://www.umar.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/publikacije/ESSP/2021/ESSP_splet.pdf.

²⁴ Gregorčič. M., Kajzer. A. eds. (2021). European Pillar of Social Rights, Slovenia 2000-2020 [Evropski steber socialnih pravic, Slovenija 2000–2020], UMAR, https://www.umar.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/publikacije/ESSP/2021/ESSP_splet.pdf.

²⁵ Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, 16/07 and changes 87/11, 96/12 – ZPIZ-2, 98/14 in 18/21, <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO3841>.

accommodation at the workplace for individual person. This happens extremely rarely. According to the Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund²⁶ the number of employers' requests was only 25 in the year 2019, and in the years since the legislation was in place only slightly increased.²⁷

The Directions for implementation of the ALMPs 2021-2025²⁸ show that among unemployed people age 50+ many people are long-term unemployed (58.3 % in August 2020). Among the long-term unemployed age 50+ there were 26.8 % persons with disabilities. 38.3 % of unemployed over 50+ receive monthly replacement for unemployment and 30 % monthly social protection money.

A positive development is the Catalogue of Provisions for the Active Labour Market Policies from 2021,²⁹ which lists people with disabilities among the main target groups for public work (including Roma people and persons age 58+) which was not the case before. People with disabilities who have a written order of disability have two provisions for the ALMPs to increase their employability. First, unemployed persons with disabilities can re-enter the public work scheme again after one year under certain conditions. When they were enrolled in public work in 2018 and 2019 (or in 2019 and 2020), they can be re-enrolled if they were registered as unemployed without breaks over one year before their first public tender job and were defined as having disabilities already when they first enrolled in public work. The maximum time of employment at the same employer cannot exceed two years. Second, unemployed persons with disabilities (as well as long-term unemployed people) can get employed for shorter working hours, but not less than 20 hours/week while other target groups must have full-time employment (40 hours/week).

As mentioned in the executive summary and recommendations the RRP for Slovenia plans more flexible work formats for persons with disabilities in the line with 'Principle 17' of the European Pillar of Social Rights.³⁰ Especially mentioned is the adaptation of workplaces for persons with disabilities working in disability companies (as of 2020, there were 151 such companies) and in employment centres (66). Among the flexible work formats home-office, flexible work schedule, and digitalisation are mentioned. The RRP included a project plan with the aim to keep existing workplaces for persons with disabilities and to open new ones including those persons with severe disabilities. The project focuses on employers and employees. It plans to develop psychosocial

²⁶ Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, <https://www.srips-rs.si/>.

²⁷ Gregorčič. M., Kajzer. A. eds. (2021). European Pillar of Social Rights, Slovenia 2000-2020 [Evropski steber socialnih pravic, Slovenija 2000–2020], UMAR, https://www.umar.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/publikacije/ESSP/2021/ESSP_splet.pdf.

²⁸ Directions for implementation of the ALMPs 2021-2025 [Smernice za izvajanje ukrepov aktivne politike zaposlovanja za obdobje 2021-2025], Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. December 2020.

²⁹ The Catalogue of Provisions for the Active Labour Market Policies, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, May 2021.

³⁰ Principle 17: Inclusion of people with disabilities: People with disabilities have the right to income support that ensures living in dignity, services that enable them to participate in the labour market and in society, and a work environment adapted to their needs. European Commission. (2019). The European Pillar of Social Rights in 20 principles, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en.

support for persons with disabilities and to modernise disability companies and employment centres with ICTs. The project will include 53 work organisations, among them 33 disability companies and 20 employment centres, as well as 266 persons with disabilities. The financial cost of the project (EUR 4 million) will cover the cost for the implementation of the flexible models of employment, education and training, psychosocial support, and the development of the system of ICT in the organisations.

The project will include 53 work organisations, among them 33 disability companies and 20 employment centres and include 266 persons with disabilities. The financial cost of the project (EUR 4 million) will cover the costs for the implementation of the flexible models of employment, education and training, psychosocial support, and the development of the system of ICT in these workplaces. The gap that remains is that mainstreaming disability employment; supported workplaces, job-coach, support at the workplace, accommodated workplaces in ordinary environment are not addressed for investment.

ALMPs remain one of the strategies to increase the number of persons with disabilities in the labour market. Compared to 2019 when fewer persons with disabilities were involved in the ALMPs programmes than in 2018, the new document particularly addresses people with disabilities (see the EDE Semester fiche for 2020-21). Nevertheless, in 2020 fewer persons with disabilities were included in the ALMPs than in 2019 (1 877 or 9 % of all unemployed in the ALMPs)³¹ The number of persons with disabilities in governmental institutions slightly increased (from 1 058 in 2019 to 1 087 in 2020).³²

Recommendations

- Strengthen open market labour policy with supported employment and accommodated workplaces for people with disabilities;
- Ensure that young people with disabilities do not end up in parallel employment for persons with disabilities (employment centres and disability companies) outside the mainstream labour market;
- Strengthen digital skills of people with disabilities and long-term training.

³¹ The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020. [VG_API_2020_P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

³² The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020. [VG_API_2020_P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

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

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

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

‘32. With reference to the Committee’s general comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt and implement a strategy and action plan, within a time frame, aimed at deinstitutionalization; (b) Prevent any form of re-institutionalization and provide sufficient funding for developing community-based independent living schemes; (c) Allocate sufficient resources to ensure that services in the community are available, accessible, affordable, acceptable and accommodating of persons with disabilities, so that such persons may exercise their right to live independently and be included in their communities, in both urban and rural areas; (d) Strengthen the national and municipal capacity to implement deinstitutionalization, in close cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities.’

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

‘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.’

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

‘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.’

4.1 Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities

The last data from EU-SILC released in 2021 indicate the poverty risk rate for working age persons with disabilities in Slovenia was 15.6 % in 2019, compared to 9.1 % for other persons of similar age - an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 7 percentage points (see Table 14). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was 10.6 points (23.6 % for older persons with disabilities and 13.0 % for other persons of similar age). The tables in annex also indicate the respective rates of risk of poverty or social exclusion and break these down by gender as well age.

For persons with disabilities of working age in Slovenia (age 16-64) the risk of poverty before social transfers was 44.9 % and 15.6 % after transfers. The in-work poverty rate for persons with disabilities aged under 60 was 3.9 %. The risk of poverty or social exclusion increases with the level of disability and is higher among women (26.0 % for women compared to 21.1 % for men, Table 12). Especially at risk of poverty are older people with disabilities, and women particularly.

Of interest to health policy are the data on self-reported unmet needs for medical examination (too expensive or too far to travel or waiting list). Disability equality gaps are evident here too and, on this basis, the rate for persons with disabilities in Slovenia was 5.5 %, compared to 1.9 % for other persons, which is above the EU27 average of 1.7 %.

The waiting list of people who need integrated rehabilitation due to long-term pain in the main rehabilitation institution SOČA is increasing each year. The last data from 2019 shows that 1,226 persons were on the waiting list for rehabilitation (the pandemic even increased it).³³ People have difficulties with the accessibility to rehabilitation services for people with disabilities and the trends toward privatisation of basic health and rehabilitation services is on increase due to long waiting time.

The recent EU-SILC data show that the self-reported 'activity limitation' is higher across all age groups, gender and limitation levels than is in the average in the EU27 countries (Table 1). This might be linked to the above mentioned self-reported unmet needs for medical examinations and the waiting lists for rehabilitation due to the long-term pain. Unmet need for medical examination is higher than EU27 average in all categories of disability (Table 15).

4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2021 [Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) for Slovenia and the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021.

Cash benefits

³³ University Rehabilitation Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (2020). URI SOČA, Work Programme and Financial Plan for 2020, http://www.ir-rs.si/f/docs/Informacija_javnega_znacaja/PROGRAM_DELA_IN_FINANCNI_NACRT_za_leto_2020.pdf.

Over the last decade the structural issue of the risk of poverty for persons with disabilities was often addressed and remains an issue; it has become even bigger during the pandemic.³⁴ Especially vulnerable are those who are unemployed and long-term unemployed, those who rely on various social transfers and allowances and who have minimal pensions (the smallest pension is EUR 246.45). 38.3 % of unemployed over 50+ receive monthly replacement for unemployment and 30 % monthly social protection payments.³⁵ The amounts are low:

- monthly replacement for unemployment is EUR 513.64/gross;
- social allowance EUR 402.18;
- the lowest disability pension is EUR 388.54; the average disability pension is EUR 541.90;
- the lowest replacement money from the disability insurance for persons who are not compulsorily insured is EUR 246.45.

Consequently, it is important that the State Council of the Republic of Slovenia suggested the increase of the minimal pensions for persons with disabilities.³⁶ The same group is mentioned in the 2019 Report of the Implementation of the Action Plan for Disabled People 2014-2022, when there were 3,700 persons with disabilities whose disability pension was below EUR 300/month.³⁷ The National Council of Disability Organisations emphasised the same problem in October 2020³⁸ and later endorsed the suggested changes.

The CSRs 2020 mentioned that to mitigate the social impact of current economic crisis due to COVID-19, it is essential that Slovenia provides an adequate package of social benefits to those with low income especially for the elderly, and in particular women, for whom the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates were higher than the EU average already before the crisis. During the first and second year of pandemic the government decided that people with disability status (categorised as persons with disabilities under the Social Inclusion of Disabled Persons Act)³⁹ would receive a one-off solidarity allowance in the amount of EUR 150 (in 2020 and 2021). Under this law are categorized mostly people who have disabilities by birth and with severe disabilities who live at home or in institutions (7 200 persons received one-off solidarity allowance). The expenditure was EUR 1.08 million for one year.

In addition, war veterans with disabilities who receive veteran allowance as their only income and those who receive family allowance as the only income were granted one-

³⁴ Cf. The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020. [VG API 2020 P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

³⁵ Directions for implementation of the ALMPs 2021-2025 [Smernice za izvajanje ukrepov aktivne politike zaposlovanja za obdobje 2021-2025], Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. December 2020.

³⁶ The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020. [VG API 2020 P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

³⁷ See ANED Semester Report from 2020.

³⁸ National Council of Disability Organizations' views on the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences for persons with disabilities in the Republic of Slovenia. 27th October 2020. [Stališča NSIOS o upravljanju s pandemijo covid-19 in njenimi posledicami za invalide v RS – NSIOS](#).

³⁹ Social Inclusion of Disabled Persons Act, Official Gazette 30/18 [Zakon o socialnem vključevanju invalidov] <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO7808>.

off solidarity allowance (5 846 persons). The cost was EUR 1.753 million for the first group and EUR 63 300 for the second group.⁴⁰ The allowance was given also to individuals who got replacement money from the disability insurance and who work half-time or are temporarily suspended from a job, under the condition that their monthly income was less than EUR 700.⁴¹ The government data from the Anti-COVID-Package 3 mentions some groups of persons with disabilities who are among the most economically deprived people and includes some persons with disabilities and families with a child with disabilities. They, too received one-off solidarity money (EUR 150):

- 2 600 persons who receive family allowance (in case of disability);
- 7 650 persons who receive the allowance for the care of the child (in case of disability);
- 830 family helpers (these are relatives who support persons with disabilities at home);
- 7 200 persons with disability status;
- 8 400 persons who are eligible for the partial payment for the lost income;
- 4 300 war veterans;
- 50 persons with disabilities as a result of war;
- unemployed persons (no data) who receive the replacement for the income from the disability insurance scheme (in rehabilitation for example).

Long-term care

The CSRs 2020 and some previous years referred to building the 'resilience of the health and long-term care system' and to make investments to target the specific needs and access of persons with disabilities, including the development of personal support services. This is important given that the Resolution on the National Health Care Plan 2016-2025⁴² emphasises that Slovenia lags behind the OECD average in regard of the share of people who are included in long-term care and the funds invested in this area. In 2018 there were 66 179 persons receiving long-term care services. Most were living in institutions (23 782, or 36 %), followed by people living at home (22 734, 34 %). The rest received monthly allowances (19 663, less than 30 %). Due to the aging population in Slovenia costs for long-term care are increasing quicker than the costs for the health system and are expected to double by 2035. The CSRs for 2019 recommended the government to implement the Long-Term Care Act, which RRP 2021-2026 has a detailed description of.

In June 2021 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia accepted the proposed version of the Long-Term-Care Act, which is the fifth proposal of this legislation (the last two were proposed by the Ministry of Health).⁴³ At present, Slovenia has four laws which partially regulate aspects of long-term care but are not sufficient (lack of financial

⁴⁰ The Council of People with Disabilities of the Republic of Slovenia. The 10th meeting of the Council of People with Disabilities. 26 May 2021.

⁴¹ The Report on the Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020.

⁴² Resolution on the National Health Care Plan 2016-2025 [Resolucija o nacionalnem planu zdravstvenega varstva 2016–2025 »Skupaj za družbo zdravja« (ReNPZV16–25)] <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO102>.

⁴³ The proposed legislation of the Long-Term-Care Act was accepted by the Government of Slovenia. [Predlog-Zakona-o-dolgotrajni-oskrbi.pdf \(gov.si\)](#).

transparency related to health and social sectors; different entry points for individuals to obtain rights; some service users are excluded from the system). The proposed Long-Term Care Act gives a common definition of the long-term care and promises to universalise the rights; provides a unified score-system for the receivers of the rights; plans to improve the management and the effectiveness of the services and regulates the public control of the implementation of the long-term care system.⁴⁴

Long-term care will be provided in different ways: in long-term institutions; in community-based smaller units belonging to institutions; at home where the family member will do care work for the relative (which also includes a 21-day placement in an institution as a form of respite care); the person in need will receive monthly social allowance money. The Act envisages two new types of institutions. One is a nursing home, used for persons with severe disabilities after severe medical treatment - at present people sometimes stay in hospitals due to the lack of other housing options. The second type is a care home for about 20 long-term residents. The persons eligible for long-term care are individuals aged 18+ who need long-term basic and supportive care of another person for not less than three months due to illnesses, old age, injuries, disability, lack or loss of intellectual abilities within a longer period of time. Eligible also are those who are continuously dependent on long-term support from another person when this person provides basic and supportive daily activities.⁴⁵ The Long-Term Care Act envisages five types of services: for the basic daily activities; for supportive daily activities; health care services linked to basic daily activities; for strengthening and keeping the level of independency and long-distance e-services. The financing of the proposed Act is by compulsory long-term care insurance (the government plans to prepare the legislation for this by June 2024); compulsory health and social insurance; state budget; money from the Demographic Fund (which does not exist, yet),⁴⁶ European Union funds; donations, and other sources.⁴⁷

The proposed Act was subject to much criticism and might not be implemented in the current and next European Semester. The National Council of Disability Organisations addressed some of the issues which need to be addressed before the adoption of the legislation, as follows.⁴⁸

- The proposed legislation does not universalise rights for long-term care but takes some rights away from persons with disabilities (for example, the law grants lower amount of money for monthly allowance for long-term care than people with visual impairments already have via supplement money for help and care).
- The medical model prevails and does not address the social needs of persons with disabilities.

⁴⁴ The proposed legislation of the Long-Term-Care Act was accepted by the Government of Slovenia. [Predlog-Zakona-o-dolgotrajni-oskrbi.pdf \(gov.si\)](#).

⁴⁵ The proposed legislation of the Long-Term-Care Act was accepted by the Government of Slovenia. [Predlog-Zakona-o-dolgotrajni-oskrbi.pdf \(gov.si\)](#).

⁴⁶ When and if at all, will the Demographic Fund be established? RTV4, 15 sept 2021. <https://4d.rtv4.si/arhiv/moje-mnenje/174805641>.

⁴⁷ The proposed legislation of the Long-Term-Care Act was accepted by the Government of Slovenia. [Predlog-Zakona-o-dolgotrajni-oskrbi.pdf \(gov.si\)](#).

⁴⁸ National Council of Disability Organisations. Recommendations to the Ministry of Health during the Public Debate on the Long-Term Care Act. 4 October 2020.

- The criteria of basic and supported daily activities are not clearly defined (some fear that the criteria will be defined narrowly, and people will not get proper support as is already happening under the existing Pension and Disability Insurance Act).
- The legislation envisages compulsory and voluntary insurance without defining which rights are included in the compulsory insurance.
- People with different disabilities do not have the right to choose among different types of long-term care (for example people with deaf-blindness would not be able to get long-term care at home but only in an institution).
- People who will not be insured for 24 months continuously will not be eligible for long-term care so the question remains what will happen with those who will not pay into compulsory insurance payment scheme before they will need it.
- Although the law defines that the person will be able to receive the monthly allowance to live at home, the amount does not cover the needs of long-term care; it is only 35 % of the costs for institutional care or home care provided by a relative.
- No community support care services are envisaged in the legislation and no employment for new professional workers for these services are planned.
- Receivers of disability pension have no right to become home carer which means that persons with disabilities are excluded from this type of workplace; also, home carers do not have the same working rights than the workers in other spheres of paid employment.
- The legislation defines that those individuals who use personal assistance according to the Personal Assistance Act, will be obliged to become receivers of long-term care after the age of 65 which is criticized.
- Many people with disabilities will not meet the entry point requirements to become long-term care recipients.

These serious concerns were supplemented by comments of academics and professionals who made further recommendations (for example, the criticism that 25 % of all beds in institutions will be two-beds rooms).

Recommendations

- Follow the EC Council Recommendations on the 2021 Stability Programme on Slovenia which emphasise strengthening the coverage, adequacy, and sustainability of health and social protection systems for all.⁴⁹
- Monitor the effects of the COVID-19 crisis in regard of risk of poverty among persons with disabilities according to age, education, employment, gender differences.
- Take into account recommendations, concerns and criticism made by The National Council of Disability Organisations, other stakeholders and public to the proposed Long-Term Care Act and improving it in line with CRPD.

⁴⁹ EC Council Recommendation on the 2021 Stability Programme on Slovenia. 2 June 2021, [com-2021-524-1_en_act_part1_v3.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/act/?uri=CELEX:32021R0524-1_en_act_part1_v3.pdf).

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

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

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

'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.'

5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

The EU-SILC 2019 estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with additional caution due to relatively wide confidence intervals, but they consistently indicate disability equality gaps (an average of 2-3 years provides a more stable indication). Table 16 indicates early school leaving rates disaggregated by disability status in Slovenia. Youth with disabilities (aged 18-24) tend to leave school significantly more than peers without disabilities of the same age groups (and this is reinforced by widening the sample size to age 18-29). Table 17 shows completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (age 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider age range 30-39).

The system of parallel education is still in place and has not changed. The same is true for long-stay institutions for children and young people with special needs or intellectual disabilities or emotional and behavioural disorders/problems. At present there exist 29 special schools and 19 institutions for children and young people which provide a level of schooling.⁵⁰ In 2020, new legislation regulates this field, called Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in Education⁵¹ (see the analysis in 5.2.).

⁵⁰ The Report on the Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020.

⁵¹ Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in Education, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 200/20 [Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju, [200/20](#)], [Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju \(ZOOMTVI\) \(pisrs.si\)](#).

The EU-SILC data show that the risk of early school leaving rates is comparatively low in Slovenia compared to EU27 average but follows the expected pattern of disability gaps (Table 24). The same is true for completion of tertiary education, which is higher for persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities compared to the EU27 average (Table 25).

The 2020 Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 emphasises that people with disabilities face various obstacles during education, architectural and information-technical barriers. People with visual impairments have accessibility problems with the study literature. People with hearing impairments have difficulties to get interpreters and an induction loop, etc.⁵²

It is worth to mention that one of the members of the Council of People with Disabilities of the Republic of Slovenia at the regular meeting of the Council in 2021 addressed two long-term problems of education of children and young people with disabilities: a.) inclusive education and b.) the competencies children and young people gain during education process to enter the labour market and to live independently.⁵³

The Advocate of the Principle of Equality of the Republic of Slovenia⁵⁴ published a Special Report about the situation of children and young people with hearing impairments during all levels of educational system.⁵⁵ The Report shows that the right to accessible education and the right to Slovenian sign language are not yet fully fulfilled. The Advocate made several recommendations to different ministries on how to end discrimination which are summarised below.

The Report mentions past research about the situation of children and young people with hearing impairment at schools from 2011, by the Institute for deaf and partially hearing impaired of Slovenia (ZGNS). The research (N=800) showed that the educational achievement of hearing impaired persons was poor compared to other persons in the population. Among 800 hearing impaired only 10 % completed at most secondary education and only 1 % higher education (the completion in the whole population was 17 %). At that time not all hearing impaired had the right to learn Slovenian sign language.

The Report showed discrimination during educational process, as follows. Each child has the right to have only up to five hours of assistance/week, which is not enough for pupils with hearing disabilities. They do not have full access to education in sign language and have limited access to sign language interpreters. They have a limited amount of accessible literature. Teachers lack language competences when they teach children with hearing disabilities and children and young people cannot choose whether to use sign language or speech. Those who are educated in institutions for hearing impaired have lower level of knowledge as the educational programmes in institutions (meaning parallel education) have lower standards than ordinary schools.

⁵² The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020, [VG API 2020 P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

⁵³ The Council of People with Disabilities of the Republic of Slovenia. The 10th meeting of the Council of People with Disabilities. 26 May 2021.

⁵⁴ <http://www.zagovornik.si/en/>.

⁵⁵ The Advocate of the Principle of Equality of the Republic of Slovenia (2021). Special Report on the Status of Hearing Impaired in Educational System. Ljubljana.

Hearing impaired students have limited access to information and are isolated during educational process. The consequences are that people with hearing impairments have one of the lowest educational levels among different social groups which is caused by long-term discrimination and by the lack of accommodated educational system. Young people do not get financial support and scholarships and can therefore hardly enter tertiary education.

5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2021 [Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) for Slovenia and the Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021.

In July 2021, the Minister responsible for education adopted Rules amending the Rule on additional professional and physical assistance for children with special needs.⁵⁶ This relates to the Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Need. The new law does not foresee that preschool children would get a written order and placement,⁵⁷ anymore.

The RRP speaks about educational reform regarding vulnerable children including children with special needs. This includes activation, developing social-protection programmes for vulnerable groups in disadvantaged areas, the development of social competencies, social inclusion, the increase of motivation, building of self-esteem, empowerment, gaining skills and knowledge. Children with special needs are mentioned in the context of digitalisation of education; they shall receive more individualised support during education. Reform expects to lessen the differences in performances among children from a better social-economic backgrounds and those who do not receive additional support outside of the schools. Digitalisation will lessen the differences among rural and urban areas and differences among children from different social backgrounds.

The Special Report of the Advocate, mentioned earlier, made the following recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

- change the legislation, so that hearing impaired pupils would get more than five hours support in schools per week;
- establish the right to learn in sign language, especially at younger ages;
- that parents of the children with hearing impairment should have the right to learn sign language free-of-charge;
- access to ordinary education in ordinary schools with accommodations;
- better access to the sign language interpreters;
- training about the rights of hearing impaired people;
- enough certified teachers and interpreters of Slovenian sign languages in pre-school, elementary and secondary schools, high schools and in all tertiary programmes of education;

⁵⁶ Rules on additional professional and physical assistance for children with special needs, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 88/13, 108/21 [Pravilnik o dodatni strokovni in fizični pomoči za otroke s posebnimi potrebami] [Pravilnik o dodatni strokovni in fizični pomoči za otroke s posebnimi potrebami \(pisrs.si\)](#).

⁵⁷ [Reforme predšolske vzgoje in varstva | Eurydice \(europa.eu\)](#).

- fund books and textbooks;
- ensure that sign language interpreters are available to all students at the higher educational level;
- access to life-long education;
- ensure that Slovenian sign language is more included in educational process.

The Advocate recommended to the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities to define and ensure minimal standards of accessibility of goods and services in educational process for people with hearing impairments according to the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act,⁵⁸ Article 8.

The 2020 Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021⁵⁹ shows that at most universities some activities about improving accessibility and giving greater support for students with disabilities took place (tutors for students with disabilities). In 2020, the University of Ljubljana divided EUR 34 469 among its member faculties to improve the accessibility of students with disabilities, especially targeted were communication and architectural barriers. In the academic year 2019/2020 the University had 483 students with special needs across all three levels of higher education. In 2020/2021 the University enrolled about 330 students with the status of special needs in the first year of the university study,⁶⁰ which was a slight increase from previous years and their number grows slowly.⁶¹

Analysis of the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in Education⁶² shows that the name of long-stay welfare and educational institutions for children with disabilities and youth has been formally changed into 'specialist centres' (*strokovni centri*). The Act defines that: 'The specialist centre is an institution for the education of children and adolescents with special needs, established for the education of children with emotional and behavioural disorders and problems' (Art. 2). These centres are in charge of children and young people with emotional and behavioural problems, psychosocial problems or learning difficulties who have not a written order of being children or young people with special needs or have not any other disability categorisation; children who experience psychosocial problems which occur as behavioural, emotional, learning or other difficulties in their growing up and are treated according to the legislation on early treatment of children

⁵⁸ Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act, 94/10, 50/14 in 32/17) [Zakon o izenačevanju možnosti invalidov], <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4342>.

⁵⁹ The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020.

⁶⁰ The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020, p. 77. [VG_API_2020_P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](#).

⁶¹ See ANED country reports 2013-2019.

⁶² Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in Education, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 200/20 [Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju, 200/20]. [Zakon o obravnavi otrok in mladostnikov s čustvenimi in vedenjskimi težavami in motnjami v vzgoji in izobraževanju \(ZOOMTVI\) \(pisrs.si\)](#).

with special needs;⁶³ children and young people who get a written order of the removal from the family under the Family Act; and juvenile offenders (Art. 1).

Under this Act young people with the legal right as minors, are those between 15 and 21 years of age but can be up to 26 years of age when categorised as having intellectual disabilities (Slovenian legislation defines that a person/minor with disabilities can be up to 26 years of age and in educational process). The reason for this is that they could be kept in schools or long-stay welfare-educational facilities up to this age, which was often criticised by parents and some disability organisations. It might be a point for discussion whether defining a person aged 26 as a minor is in line with the UN CRPD.

The Act defines that the specialist centre has full authority to assess the child/young person; to provide continuous support; to decide upon mobile teams and about written orders for incarceration. The specialist centres can order the removal of the child/young person from the family on basis of a written order and force institutionalisation into educational-welfare or correction institutions. The 'centres' also give support to other preschool and school institutions in the local communities for children with special needs. In effect, the existing long-stay institutions, as emphasised on several occasions, changed their names but kept their authority over the treatment of children and young people with disabilities.⁶⁴

The Act includes a peculiar article on temporary residence and identity documents and defines that specialist centres have to obtain all personal documents of the child/young person and that the child/young person has his/her temporary residence in the specialist centre, meaning long-stay institution: 'A specialist centre for a child or adolescent registers temporary residence in accordance with the law governing the application of residence; parents shall hand over the identity documents of the child or adolescent, health and banking card if the child or adolescent has it.' (Art. 14). The same Article defines that an expert group can assess whether the child/young person can keep his/her documents or must hand them to the specialist centre, depending on the age and maturity of the child/young person. Such legislation gives full authority to the long-stay institutions and the fact that children and young people (up to the age of 26) has to be registered as temporary residents of these institutions seems to be in contradiction with the principles of the CRPD.

⁶³ Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 41/17; in use from 1st September 2019 [Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami].

[Zakon o celostni zgodnji obravnavi predšolskih otrok s posebnimi potrebami \(ZOPOPP\) \(pisrs.si\)](#).

⁶⁴ This development was addressed in a study from 2017 and in several ANED Reports (2017-2019).

6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

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

In 2020 Slovenia got EUR 485 million for different investments from the EU which was the largest amount of funding to date.⁶⁵

The following projects are most often mentioned in disability documents:

Seeking Employment Project, 2019 and 2020. Employment Office of the Republic of Slovenia as provider of the ALMPs has projects funded from ESIF for employment and training of people with disabilities in public jobs (see chapter 3.2).

Learning Workshops 2020: practice training for unemployed who work in social enterprises (2020-2021), ESS.⁶⁶ For employers, particularly for disability companies and employment centres as well as for the social enterprises which employ only persons with disabilities, the ESIF in 2020 and 2021 covers training and learning workshops for their workers with disabilities.⁶⁷

The Transition of Young People with Special Needs 2019-2020, ESS.⁶⁸ In 2020 there were 481 young people with disabilities included in the project. Successful exits from the project were 393; 344 young people got enrolled in education and training or got qualification; 5 got employed; 44 went to the Employment Office to seek a job. In 2019 and 2020 there were 1 576 young people with special needs included into the project.⁶⁹ The project ends in 2021 and expects to include 2 100 young people with special needs. The main partner in the project activities is University Rehabilitation Institute of Slovenia (URI SOČA) which focuses on employment rehabilitation.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Editors (2021). Franc Bogovič: Slovenia sped up the pumping of the EU Funds, [Franc Bogovič: Slovenija pospešila črpanje sredstev EU], *Slovenec*, 15 February 2021, <https://www.slovenec.org/2021/02/15/franc-bogovic-slovenija-pospesila-crpanje-sredstev-eu-usklajuje-nacionalni-nacrt-za-okrevanje-in-odpornost-ki-ga-bo-zdaj-treba-uskladiti-z-najsirso-javnostjo/>.

⁶⁶ https://www.ess.gov.si/delodajalci/financne_spodbude/razpisi/ucne-delavnice-2020-prakticno-usposabljanje-1.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia. Employment Office of the Republic of Slovenia as the Provider of the ALMPs: Learning Workshops 2020 [Učne delavnice 2020]. 20 February 2020.

⁶⁸ University Rehabilitation Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (2020). URI SOČA, Work Programme and Financial Plan for 2020, http://www.ir-rs.si/f/docs/Informacija_javnega_znacaja/PROGRAM_DELA_IN_FINANCNI_NACRT_za_let_2020.pdf.

⁶⁹ The Report on Implementation of the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2021 for the year 2020, [VG_API_2020_P.pdf \(vlada.si\)](http://www.vlada.si/vlada.si/mednarodna_in_slovenska_informacija/2020/VG_API_2020_P.pdf).

⁷⁰ University Rehabilitation Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (2020). URI SOČA, Work Programme and Financial Plan for 2020, http://www.ir-rs.si/f/docs/Informacija_javnega_znacaja/PROGRAM_DELA_IN_FINANCNI_NACRT_za_let_2020.pdf.

Other projects:

Funded by ESS: Encouragement of social inclusion of children and young people with special needs in local environment 2017 - 2022; Main project partner Center IRIS (available EUR 463 000).⁷¹

Funded by ERDF: Art project for children with special needs, 2014-2020. Main project partner Association AZUM.⁷²

6.2 Priorities for future investment (after 2021)

The RRP identified the following investment priorities particularly related to persons with disabilities:

- Flexibilisation of workplaces for persons with disabilities who work in disability companies and in employment centres (EUR 4 million).
- Health and social protection with total amount of EUR 244.90 million (sub-areas of health, social protection, and long-term care with EUR 79million and housing policy). The RRP mentions that ESS will be used for education and training of the health professionals.
- Investment in infrastructure and accessibility of build environment especially public buildings and railway stations.
- Slovenia requested funds from the framework REACT EU to improve the living standards of people in institutions. They planned to replace multi-bed rooms with one-bed rooms (to improve the living standards in 1 000 placements).⁷³ In addition, the fund will be used for national and regional data collection software and equipment for collecting data about the needs of people in institutions and those eligible to institutional care; the needs of people living at home and in community care. The aim is more effective use of services.
- Education: activation, developing social-protection programmes for vulnerable groups in disadvantaged areas, developing social competencies, social inclusion, increase of motivation, building of self-esteem, empowerment, gaining skills and knowledge). RRP mentions European Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 and the European social cohesion plan to fund special measurements for vulnerable groups including children with special needs (EUR 66.73million).
- Digital transformation (total EUR 330.53 million): improving the digital business sector (EUR 39 million) and public sector and public administration (EUR 274.03 million).
- Build environment for people with disabilities to increase the accessibility in public buildings; the increase of the number of flats for rent (480 flats are planned for vulnerable groups).

The following funding calls are particularly relevant:

⁷¹ [Evropska sredstva za spodbujanje socialne vključenosti otrok in mladih s posebnimi potrebami v lokalno okolje — Slovenščina \(eu-skladi.si\)](#); [Spodbujanje socialne vključenosti – Spodbujanje socialne vključenosti otrok in mladih s posebnimi potrebami v lokalno okolje \(arnes.si\)](#).

⁷² [Slovenija se zavzema za pomoč otrokom s posebnimi potrebami - Regionalna politika - Evropska komisija \(europa.eu\)](#).

⁷³ It is not clear if the number means rooms or beds.

- Funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Infrastructure for development of 25 group homes (4-6 persons) for persons younger than 65 years of age 2021-2023.⁷⁴
- Funded by ESS, Strengthening collaboration among employers and social partners with secondary vocational schools and schools of higher education in the school year 2020/2021 (available funds EUR 4.5 million), 2020-2022.⁷⁵
- Employment Office of Republic of Slovenia is the main partner in few ESS projects for vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities. For example: Employ Me 2020⁷⁶ (from 2020- May 2022); monthly subventions for employers who employ people from east Slovenia age 50+ year of people who are at least 30 years of age; subventions EUR 416-666 for one year.

⁷⁴ [Javni razpis za sofinanciranje vlaganj v infrastrukturo za vzpostavitev stanovanjskih skupin za osebe mlajše od 65 let.pdf \(gov.si\)](#).

⁷⁵ [Javni razpis PUD za šolsko/študijsko leto 2020/2021 | Javni štipendijski, razvojni, invalidski in preživninski sklad RS \(srips-rs.si\)](#).

⁷⁶ [Zaposli.me 2020 \(gov.si\)](#).

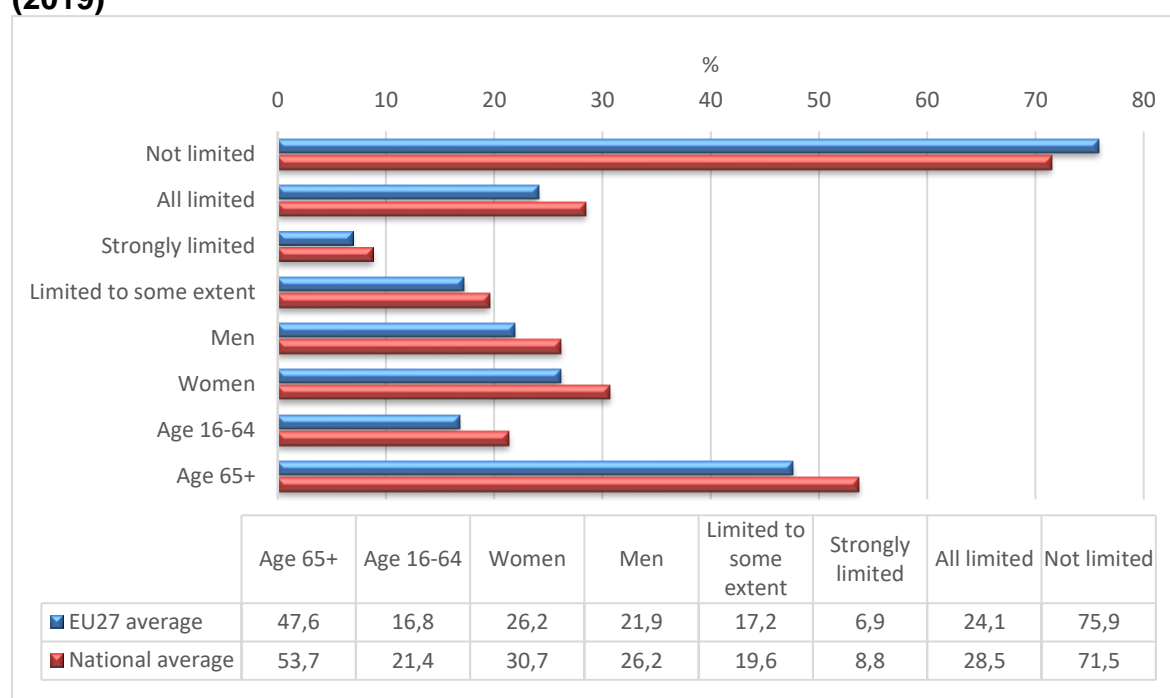
7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database⁷⁷ and statistical reports.⁷⁸

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

The proxy used to identify people with disabilities (impairments) is whether ‘for at least the past 6 months’ the respondent reports that they have been ‘limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do’.⁷⁹

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



Source: EU-SILC 2019 Release 2021 version 1.

In subsequent tables, these data are used to indicate ‘disability’ equality gaps and trends relevant to the analytical chapters – for the labour market, social policies and healthcare, and education – by comparing outcomes for persons who report and do not report ‘activity limitations’.⁸⁰ National estimates for Slovenia are compared with

⁷⁷ Eurostat health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁷⁸ Eurostat (2019) *Disability Statistics* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics.

⁷⁹ The SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM), [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_\(MEHM\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_(MEHM)).

⁸⁰ This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.⁸¹ More people reported limitations in Slovenia than the EU average.

7.1 Data relevant to disability and the labour market

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

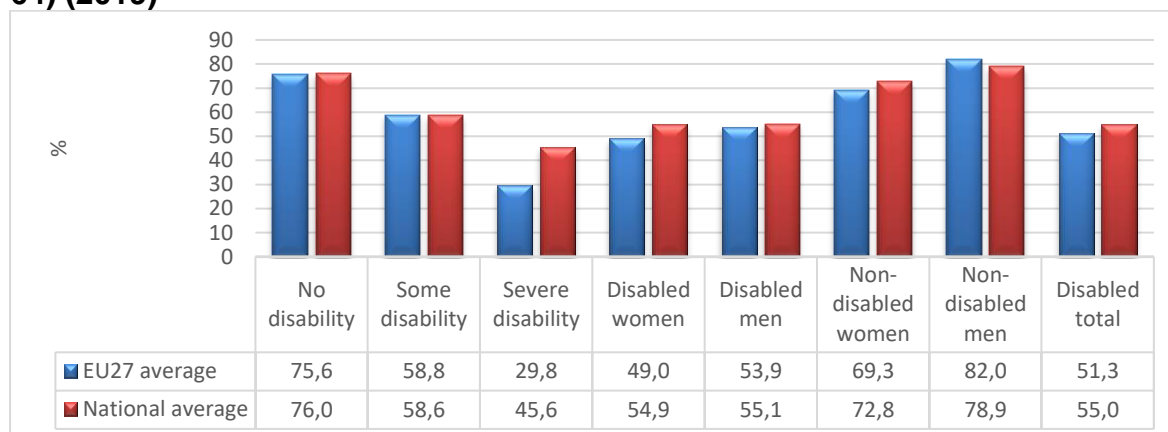
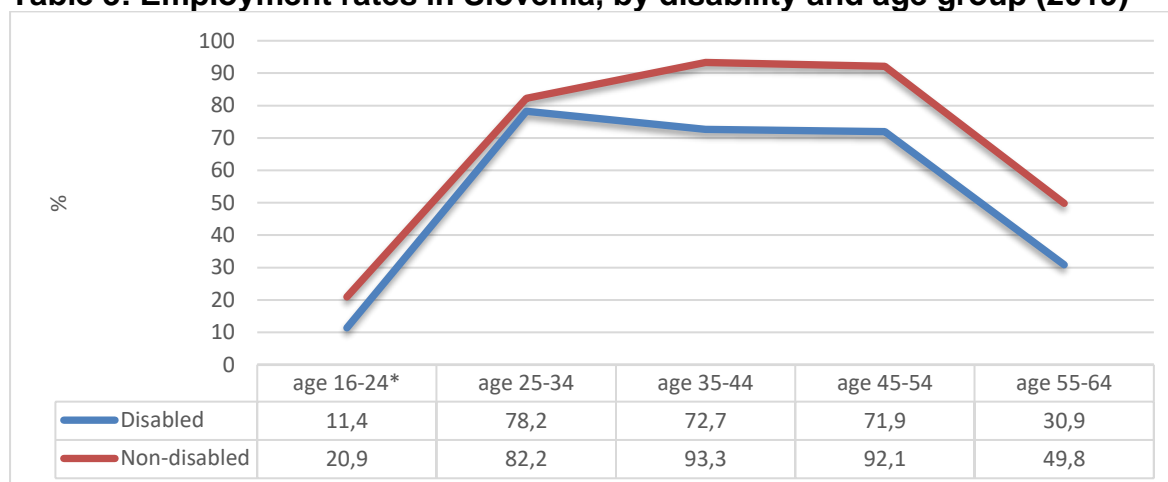
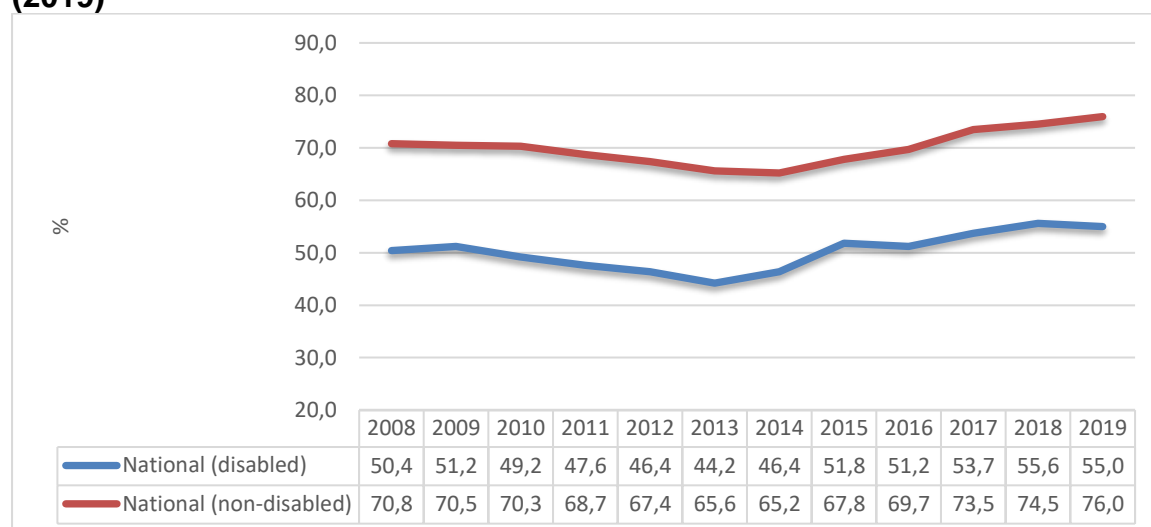


Table 3: Employment rates in Slovenia, by disability and age group (2019)



⁸¹ The exit of the United Kingdom from the EU changes the EU average. Averages were also affected in 2015 by a discontinuity in the German disability data due to a definitional change.

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

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

7.1.1 Unemployment

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

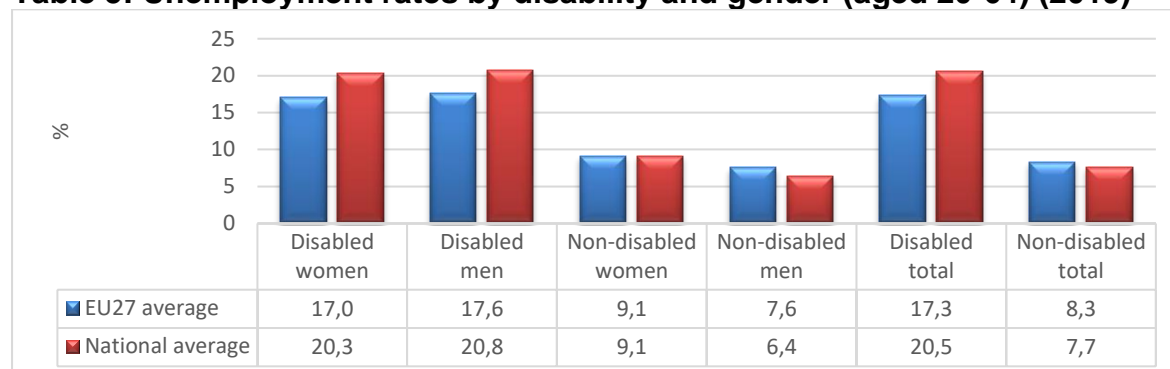


Table 6: Unemployment rates in Slovenia, by disability and age group (2019)

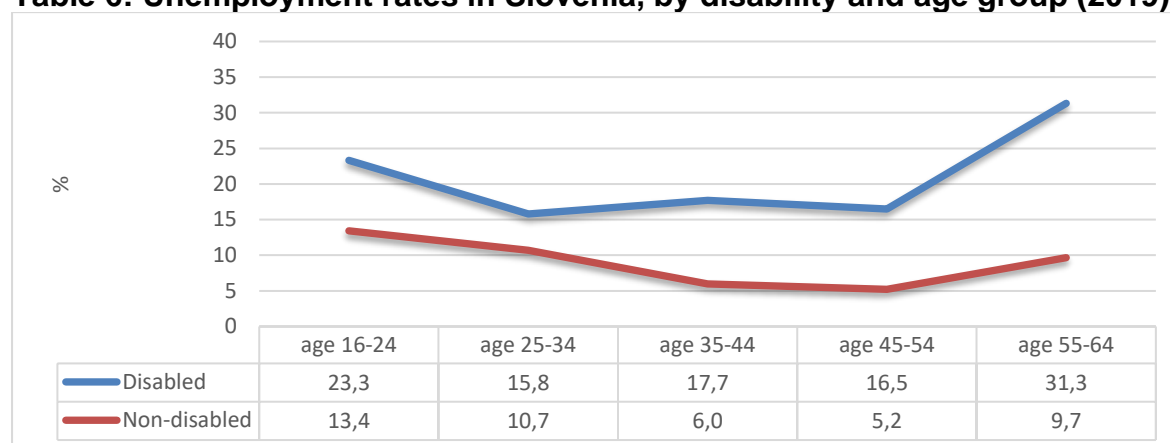
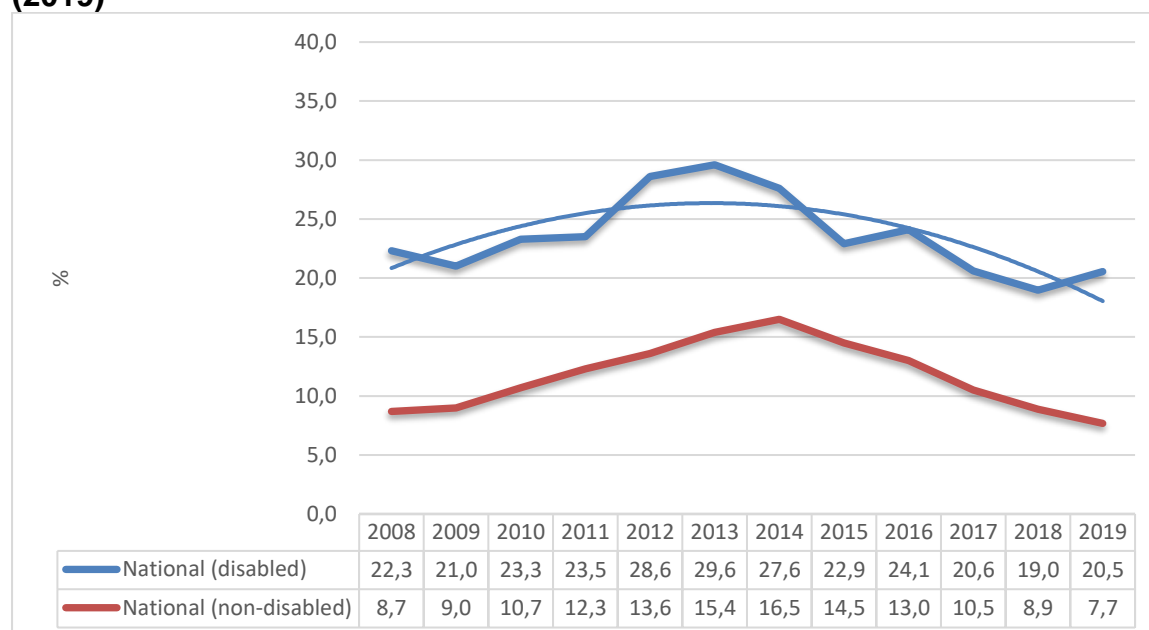


Table 7: National trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64) (2019)



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

7.1.2 Economic activity

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

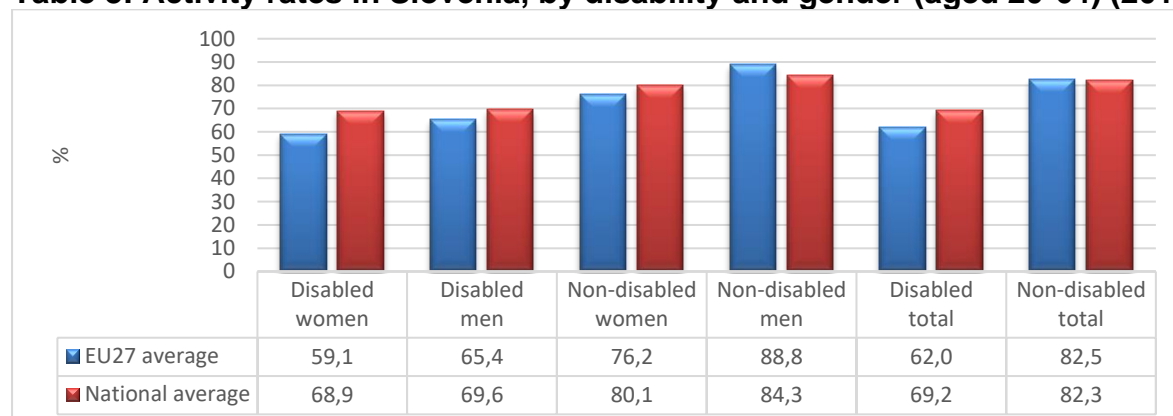


Table 9: Activity rates in Slovenia, by age group (2019)

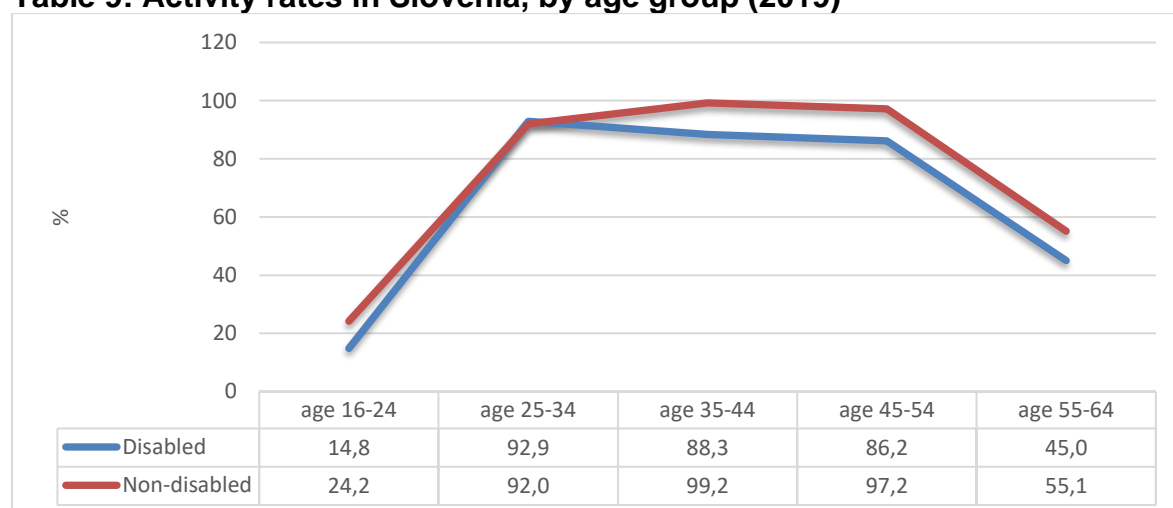
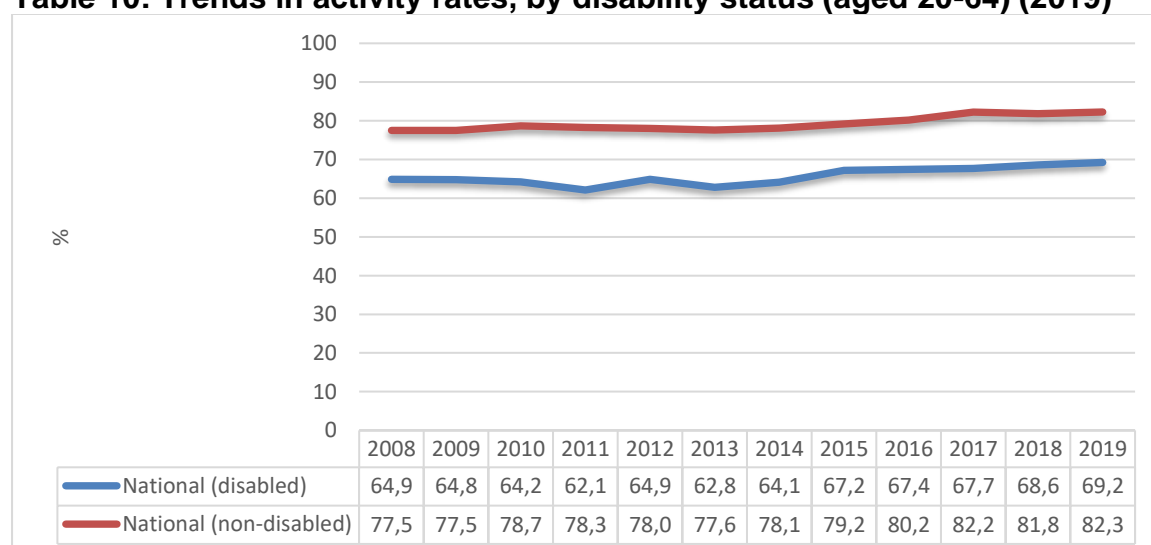


Table 10: Trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64) (2019)



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

7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Slovenia

Disability data is not yet available from the core European Labour Force Survey but labour market indicators for Slovenia were disaggregated from ad modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.⁸²

The following data from the national Statistical Office are for registered persons with disabilities.

Table A: Paid employment and self-employed persons with disabilities (2020)⁸³

Year 2018	All	People with disabilities	All Men	Men with disabilities	All Women	Women with disabilities
Work active (without farmers)	864,381	34 349 4 %	471 756	16 950	392 625	17 183
People in paid employment	780 203 (With farmers)	32 165 (Without farmers)	416 421 (With farmers)	15 562 (Without farmers)	363 782 (With farmers)	16 603 (Without farmers)
Self-employed	71 443 (Without farmers)	2 184 (Without farmers)	61 727 (With farmers)	1 388 (Without farmers)	30 842 (With farmers)	796 (Without farmers)

Year 2019	All	People with disabilities	Men	Men with disabilities	Women	Women with disabilities
Work active (Without farmers)	881 861	35 036 4 %	483 303	17 183	398 558	17 853
People in paid employment	801 909 (With farmers)	32 698 (Without farmers)	430 996 (With farmers)	15 708 (Without farmers)	370 913 (With farmers)	16 990 (Without farmers)
Self-employed	72 712 (Without farmers)	2 338 (Without farmers)	61 479 (With farmers)	1 388 (Without farmers)	30 841 (With farmers)	863 (Without farmers)

⁸² Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁸³ Table extracted from: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Inhabitants according to activities (self-employed) <https://pxweb.stat.si/SiStatData/pxweb/sl/Data/-/0762101S.px/table/tableViewLayout2/>; working active persons with disabilities; <https://pxweb.stat.si/SiStatData/pxweb/sl/Data/-/0765504S.px/table/tableViewLayout1/>; 10 September 2021. Self-employed without farmers: <https://pxweb.stat.si/SiStatData/pxweb/sl/Data/-/0775331S.px/table/tableViewLayout2/>; Number of work active inhabitants and gender, <https://pxweb.stat.si/SiStatData/pxweb/sl/Data/-/0775315S.px/table/tableViewLayout2/>.

Year 2020	All	People with disabilities	Men	Men with disabilities	Women	Women with disabilities
Work active (Without farmers)	869 877	34 872 4 %	477 104	16 959	392 773	17 913
People in paid employment	794 623 (With farmers)	32 373 (Without farmers)	426 371 (With farmers)	15 380 (Without farmers)	368 252 (With farmers)	16 993 (Without farmers)
Self-employed	73 051 (Without farmer)	2 499 (Without farmers)	62 067 (With farmers)	1 579 (Without farmers)	32 229 (With farmers)	920 (Without farmers)

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

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

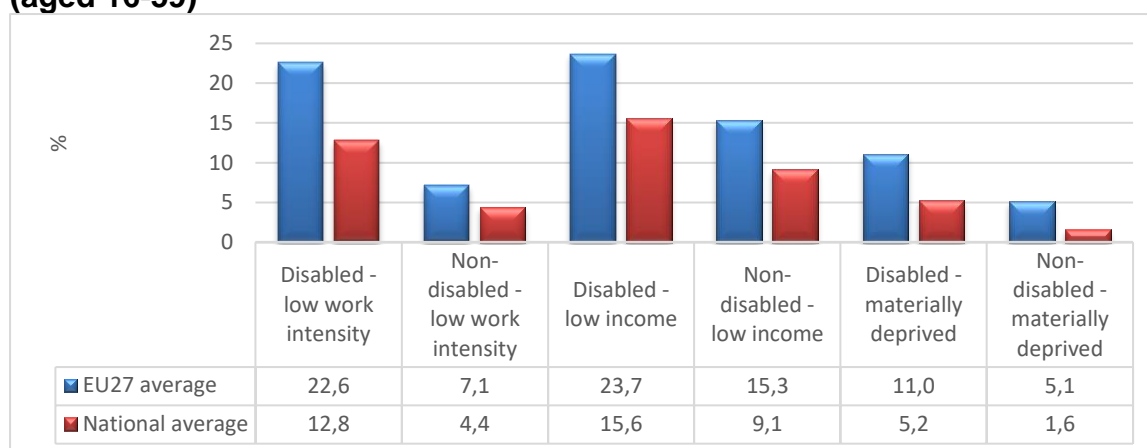
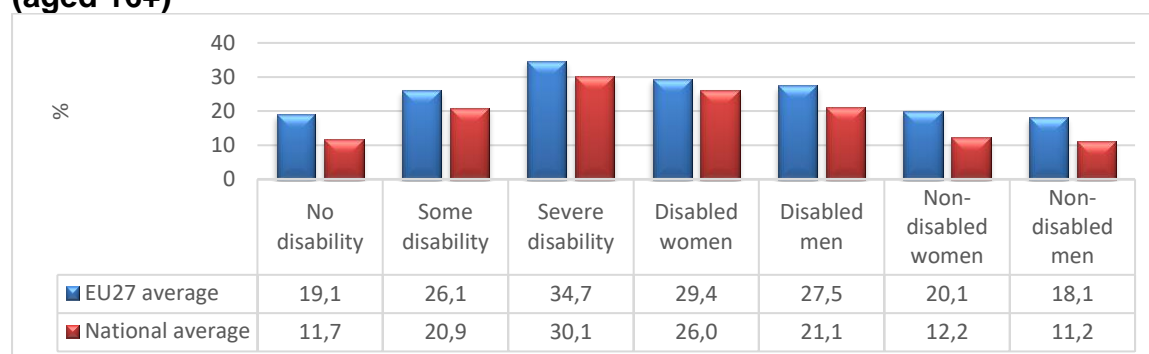
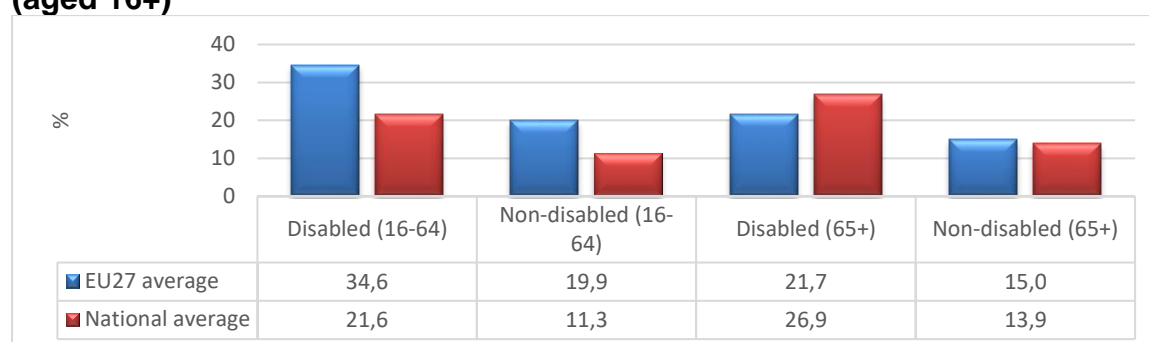
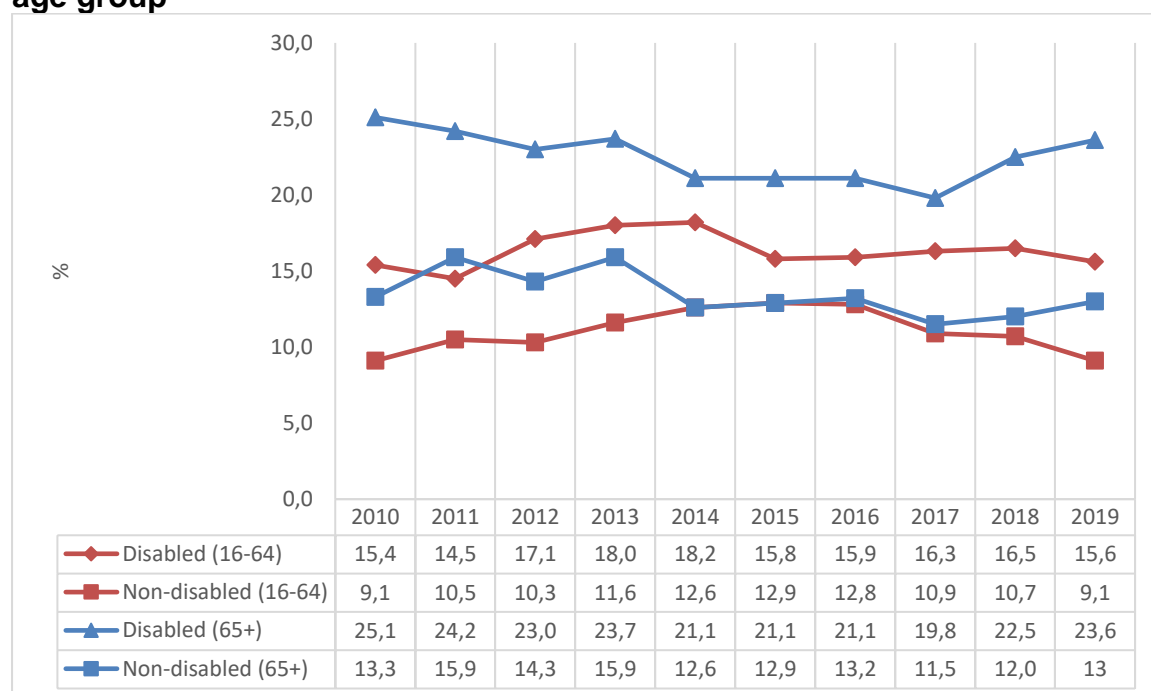


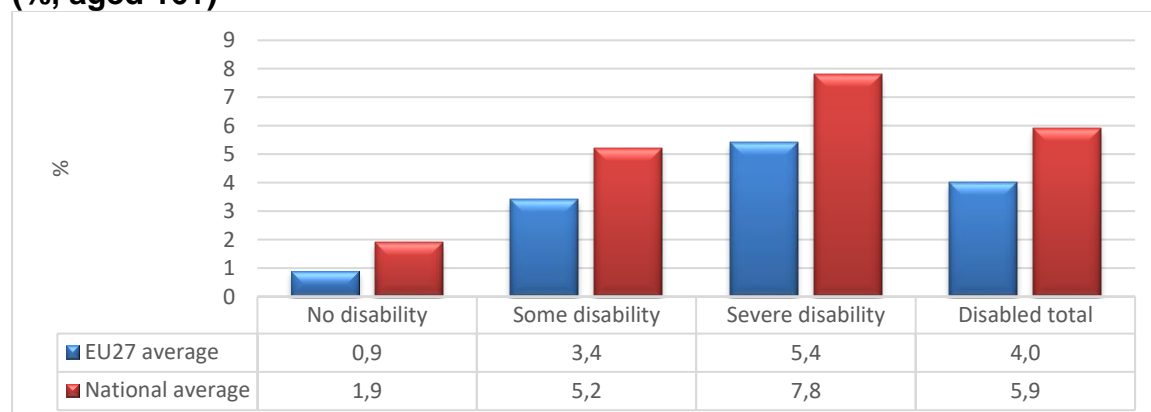
Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or health care data in Slovenia

The EU-SILC data provides a comprehensive and reliable source concerning poverty or social exclusion rates. In addition to the summary tables presented so far, the

Eurostat disability database also contains breakdowns concerning disability and poverty before and after social transfers, as well as in-work-poverty.⁸⁴

7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

Table 24: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)⁸⁵

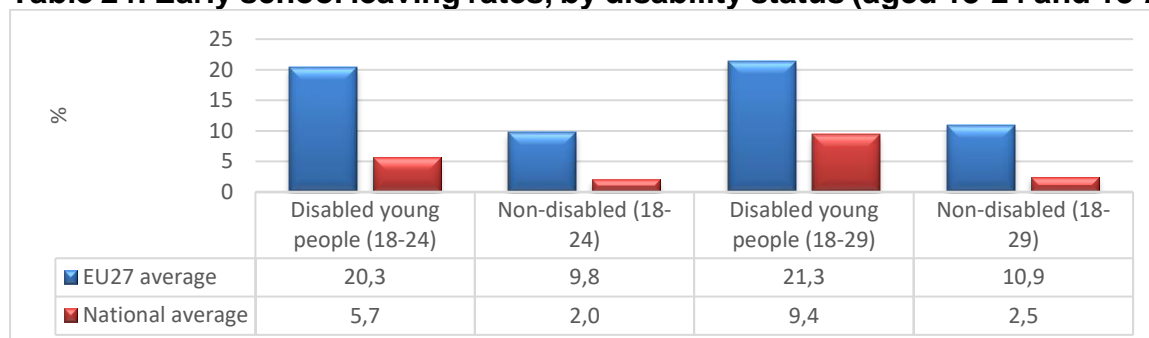
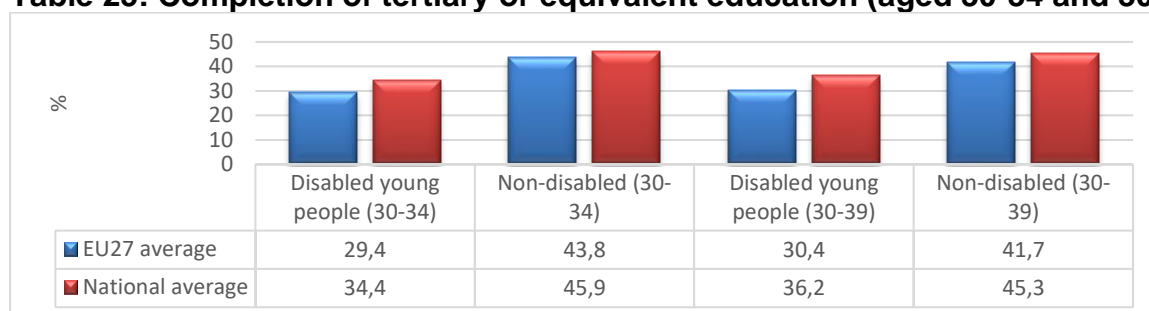


Table 25: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)



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

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

7.3.1 Alternative sources of education data in Slovenia

See chapter 5 for key findings from recent reports on the educational situation of children and young people.

⁸⁴ Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁸⁵ There was a change from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011 qualification definitions in 2014 although some Member States continued to use the older definition after this time.

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