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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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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 the European Semester in 2021

Labour market: The rate of employment of people with disabilities in Romania is very low, by some definitions as low as 17.97 %. Policies and laws have been amended and projects worth over EUR 650 million are being implemented, from the state budget and EU Funds, to stimulate the employment of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities. Their effectiveness has however been, for now, limited, with people with disabilities having to face reduced training opportunities, poor infrastructure, and pervasive stigma and discrimination, with employers often not willing to adapt their working conditions and ignorant in relation to how support can be offered. Moreover, even when they work, most people with disabilities access salaries lower than the EUR 525 necessary to live a basic decent live in Romania.

Social policies and healthcare: About 17,500 people with disabilities still live in institutional settings. Romania initiated the deinstitutionalisation process, prioritizing children, but is still at the stage of needs assessment when it comes to adults. The process has encountered many challenges, with people often transferred to smaller scale institutions, having to deal with discrimination and the lack of community-based services. The state offers meagre allowances, ranging from EUR 12 to EUR 72. There are ongoing reforms of several policies, including the guardianship system, involuntary hospitalisation and the psychiatric system. Most have stalled for a long time. There are also systemic deficiencies not yet addressed, such as the categorisation of disabilities on the basis of medical diagnosis, which impacts on the methods of funding available for social and health services, without reference to individual needs. The most notable measures in 2020 relate to the COVID-19 outbreak and include the creation of crisis cells in certain authorities, the introduction of new working methods to limit direct contact with beneficiaries, the prolongation of certain social benefits and the allocation of special funds (with support from EU Funds) to ensure access to certain hygiene products and the increase in the number of staff.

Education and skills: While Romania has committed to ensure the right to inclusive education, it is facing significant challenges around implementation. More than half of Romania's children with disabilities receive education in segregated settings or are completely excluded from the education system. They all face, together with the children who are attending mainstream schools, a system which fails to offer them adequate support services, such as support teachers, an adapted curriculum and an adapted physical environment. There are few training opportunities after graduation, with most of the available programs focusing on skills needed in sheltered units, segregated settings, where those employed there remain extremely vulnerable on the labour market. The COVID-19 pandemic has also determined an increase in the vulnerabilities of the persons already at risk, including children with disabilities. The schools have re-opened in September 2020, with preventive measures in place, which proved effective in some areas; the schools in Bucharest, the capital city, were closed again on 20 October 2020, given the increase in the number of registered COVID-19 cases.

1.2 Recommendations for Romania

Recommendations in relation to disability and the labour market:

- Ensure the access of people with disabilities to education, training and life-long learning opportunities, to equip them with the skills required in the labour market.
- Raise the awareness of employers over the business benefits of employing people with disabilities, as well as on how needed support can be offered; award them financial incentives and technical advisory services.
- Organise efficient job placement services to support people with disabilities in finding jobs suited to their interests and abilities, and to assist employers in finding suitable candidates with disabilities; monitor temporarily the people accessing the labour market and offer guidance to both the employer and the employee on how to find the best way to collaborate.

Rationale: Romania is at a stage where people with disabilities remain largely excluded from society, including the labour market. Problems such as access to education and training and stigma and discrimination, at the level of all stakeholders, need to be tackled.

Recommendations in relation to disability, social policies and healthcare:

- Review and revise ongoing reforms, setting clear objectives and a timeline for achieving them; the intervention could be led by the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (ANDPDCA).
- Review and revise existing legislation and policies, ensuring the integration of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and particularly of the social model of disability.
- Allocate adequate financial resources for existing social benefits, taking into consideration the costs a person needs to cover to live a decent life; allocate adequate resources to existing publicly funded services.

Rationale: Romania has several ongoing reforms that seemed promising, but have been stalling for too long; there are also some policies where a much needed reform has yet to have been initiated (e.g. establishing types of disability and allocating funding on the basis of group needs). Moreover, while there are several types of social benefits and services technically available for people with disabilities, their quantum is too small to have any impact on their quality of life.

Recommendations in relation to disability, education and skills:

- Create and implement a set of minimum standards in relation to the right to inclusive education, including physical access, adaption of curriculum and individualized student supports.
- Prioritize providing access to inclusive education, in mainstream schools, for all children and young people with disabilities; ensure a transition plan where necessary.
- Provide adequate financial and human resources for students with disabilities and establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for ensuring that education is truly inclusive.

Rationale: Many children with disabilities in Romania are still excluded from any form of education, while others study in segregated settings. Together with those technically enrolled in mainstream schools, they face the lack of adequate support. This needs to change.

2 Opportunities to mainstream disability equality in the Semester documents

2.1 [Country Report](#) for Romania (Staff Working Document)

In 2020, the Country Report for Romania included the following direct references to disability issues:

- 'p. 6 Early school leaving is very high, in particular for pupils in rural areas, Roma children and children with disabilities.
- p. 33 There remains significant scope to improve the effectiveness of activation measures, in particular for providing tailor-made services to vulnerable groups, such as low-skilled, old workers and persons with disabilities.
- p. 33 While the employment rate for people with disabilities is below the EU average, the legal framework does not effectively incentivise their employability and public employment support services are limited.
- p. 36 The early school-leaving rate for persons with disabilities is among the highest in the EU and more than double the EU average
- p. 39 One in three Romanians is still at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with families with children, the unemployed, inactive, atypical workers, Roma, elderly women and people with disabilities among the most exposed.
- p. 41 People with disabilities have limited access to support services. The rate of persons with disabilities at risk of poverty or social exclusion ...is among the highest in the EU... there are no licensed community services for adults with disabilities. The deinstitutionalisation of care of adults with disabilities is only being taken up slowly, while significant EU funds are available.
- p. 42 Social benefits have a very limited impact on reducing poverty. Family benefits have the largest effect on the poverty rate, followed by sickness and disability benefits.
- p. 54 High regional and rural-urban disparities in social exclusion and poverty rates are not compensated for by the existing social services. While for the country as a whole 28 % of the existing number of social services infrastructure units are currently provided for, ...The difference is even starker for certain types of social facilities, such as day centres for people with disabilities or addictions, where only 1 % of the required facilities exist in South-West Oltenia.

All the observations are to be commended, touching upon most of the issues identified in this report as problematic. The following is however missing and should, in my opinion, be underlined:

- disability and the labour market: relevant data collection is missing, as is research on the inclusion of people with disabilities on the labour market and their social integration at work; the policies aimed at stimulating employment need to get an inter-sectoral approach, involving the education and health sector as well; moreover, these policies need to focus on and prioritize the inclusion of people with disabilities on the general labour market, rather than in sheltered employment, where people are segregating and remain dependant of social measures;

- disability, social policies and healthcare: move forward in the reforms of policies which have been stalling, particularly that related the guardianship system, involuntary system and the psychiatric system; mainstream the social model of disability among all policies, focusing on providing support according to individual needs and involving the civil society, particularly organisations of and representing people with disabilities, in developing policies and running and monitoring the provision of services;
- disability, education and skills: existing policies and laws fail to portray inclusive education as a fundamental human right and a priority. This needs to be addressed urgently, and the education system needs to become one that accommodates all students whatever their abilities or requirements, and at all levels – pre-school, primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and life-long learning.

2.2 Country Specific Recommendation for Romania (CSR)

In 2020, the Country Specific Recommendation for Romania included the following direct references to disability issues:

- '19. Poverty and social exclusion, including child-poverty, in-work poverty and income inequalities are expected to increase, with vulnerable groups such as non-standard workers, undeclared workers, the self-employed, Roma, people with disabilities, the elderly and the homeless among the most exposed.
- 20. High levels of inactivity are registered, in particular for women, young people, the low-skilled, people with disabilities and older people.'

The CSR should include recommendations in relation to advancing inclusive education at all levels, as the impact of related policies is significant and permanent on all aspects of life and a failure to impose such priority has been observed. Moreover, the recommendations included in this report could also be considered.

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

The UN CRPD Committee has not yet made recommendations to Romania:

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

The National Strategy 'A society without barriers for people with disabilities', 2016-2020 includes Employment as one of its Directions of Action (VII.4).

3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

Data from European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Romania of 45.5 % in 2018, compared to 74.2 % for other persons and approximately -5.3 points below the EU27 average - resulting in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 29 percentage points (EU27 average gap 24.2, see Tables 2-4). The same data indicate unemployment rates of 0.9 % and 0.8 %, respectively in 2018 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Romania was 45.9 %, compared to 74.8 % for other persons (see Tables 8-10). These indications are broken down by gender and age in the respective tables in annex.

The employment rate of people with disabilities is clearly lower than that of people without disabilities, much lower than the EU average and with a wider gap. The data provided on the matter by different national actors varies from 17.97 %² to 52.9 % (see Table 2) for recent years. Part-time employees with disabilities are more frequent than full-time employees with disabilities.³

Once employed, the level of payment for people with disabilities is technically the same as that for the general population, in the sense that they will not receive smaller salaries than other people working on similar positions. At the same time, they do access mainly the lowest paid jobs. The minimum gross wage in Romania, from 1 January 2020, is RON 2.230 (EUR 458) for a full-time job.⁴ In addition, people with disabilities will still receive their monthly disability allowances and a personal complementary budget when they have the right to such benefits. However, their quantum is so small, that their lack of impact over the overall standard of life of the people receiving them is evident. Monthly disability allowances are only available for people with accentuated or severe disabilities, their quantum being of RON 265

² 7.255 in 2013, 7.39 in 2014, 7.71 in 2015, 8.02 in 2016 and 8.30 in 2017 (see Bungau S. G. and others, (2019), [Practices and attitudes regarding the employment of people with disabilities in Romania](#), Quality - Access to Success 20(170):154, May 2019.

³ Birau, R and others, (2019), [Social Exclusion and Labour Market Integration of People with Disabilities. A Case Study for Romania](#), Sustainability, September 2019.

⁴ Having increased from RON 1900 in 2018 and RON 2083 in 2019 through Romania. Romanian Government (Guvernul României), (2019), Decision no. 935 of 13 December 2019, for setting the guaranteed minimum gross basic salary ([Hotărâre nr. 935 din 13 decembrie 2019 pentru stabilirea salariului de bază minim brut pe țară garantat în plată](#)).

(EUR 54.4), respectively RON 350 (EUR 72).⁵ The personal complementary budget varies from RON 60 (EUR 12.3) to RON 150 (EUR 30).⁶

3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Romania.

Law no. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities to employment and to benefit of reasonable accommodation at their workplace, of career guidance and of professional retraining, where necessary.⁷

While the legislation is aligned to international requirements, its practical implementation is deficient, with support being difficult to access and discrimination remaining pervasive. For example, people with intellectual disabilities have the lowest chances of employment – representing just 2.5 % of the people with disabilities employed in Romania, although they represent 16 % of total number.⁸ They face difficulties in accessing the labour market on the one hand due to their lack of training and reduced training opportunities and, on the other hand, due to the prejudices of employers. Employers have been found not to be willing to adapt their working conditions to the needs of particular individuals, remaining unable to understand how this can benefit all those involved. Moreover, employers remain scared and sceptical in relation to hiring such people and remain rather ignorant in relation to how support can be offered.⁹

These latter observations apply to people with disabilities in general, with other difficulties they encounter being the lack of flexible working hours; the lack of available support, where such support is necessary;¹⁰ the lack of adaptation of the working environment, including its physical accessibility;¹¹ poor infrastructure that makes going and coming back from work challenging; and social stigma and discrimination.¹²

⁵ Directorate General of Social Assistance and Child Protection Bucharest- Sector 6 (Direcția Generală de Asistență Socială și Protecția Copilului București-Sector 6), (2020), *The Department for Social Benefits and Facilities (Serviciul Prestații Sociale și Facilități)*.

⁶ Directorate General of Social Assistance and Child Protection Bucharest- Sector 6, The Department for Social Benefits and Facilities.

⁷ Article 6(c) of the Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities ([Legea nr. 448 din 6 decembrie 2006 privind protecția și promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap](#)).

⁸ Bursa, (2020), *Project designed to help people with disabilities enter the labour market (Proiect menit să ajute persoanele cu dizabilități să intre pe piața muncii)*, 8 January 2020.

⁹ See Bursa, (2020), *Project designed to help people with disabilities enter the labour market (Proiect menit să ajute persoanele cu dizabilități să intre pe piața muncii)*, 8 January 2020; Bungau S. G. and others, (2019), *Practices and attitudes regarding the employment of people with disabilities in Romania*, Quality - Access to Success 20(170):154, May 2019 and Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, (2019), [Report following her visit to Romania from 12 to 16 November 2018](#), 28 February 2019.

¹⁰ Bursa, (2019), *Only 6 % of people with disabilities are integrated into the labour market (Doar 6% din persoanele cu dizabilități sunt integrate pe piața muncii)*, 17 July 2019.

¹¹ See Bungau S. G. and others, (2019), *Practices and attitudes regarding the employment of people with disabilities in Romania*, Quality - Access to Success, 20(170):154, May 2019.

¹² Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, (2019), [Report following her visit to Romania from 12 to 16 November 2018](#), 28 February 2019.

Moreover, age, education and economic status have a significant influence on the probability of (re)employment of individuals with disabilities.¹³ This all leads to people with disabilities having difficulties in finding or keeping a job, and sometimes leads to them quitting to try to obtain a job. At the same time, the inclusion of people with disabilities on the labour market and their social integration at work remains a poorly investigated subject.

Subsidies and compensation

As a vulnerable group facing challenges on the labour market integration or maintenance, people with disabilities benefit by measures funded through the 2020 Law on the Unemployment Insurance budget¹⁴ and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The benefits available include:

- exemption from tax on wages for people with severe and accentuated disabilities;
- for people working from home, state-funded subsidies, where necessary, for the transportation of materials used in the activity and the delivery of finished products;
- additional annual leave of at least 3 days;
- financial benefits for employers hiring people with disabilities, including: special benefits for employing people with disabilities who are freshly graduates or unemployed; for example, the employer would receive from the state budget one minimum wage for employing a person with disabilities who recently graduated the first two grades of high school; 1.2 minimum wages for those who freshly graduated from high school and 1.5 minimum wages for those who recently graduated from higher education; in the January-August 2020 period, it was reported such benefits were awarded in 57 cases;¹⁵ moreover, any employer offering people with disabilities indefinite contracts receives, for 12 months, a RON 2.250 monthly benefit.

The existing incentives are therefore of small values and are given for a limited amount of time, having little impact in addressing the difficulties people have in integrating on the labour market.

Operation of the quota

According to the Law no. 448/2006, employers with more than 50 employees have the obligation to hire a certain number of people with disabilities (4 % of their total number of employees); if they fail to do so, they are obliged to pay monthly to the state budget an amount representing the minimum gross monthly wage, multiplied by the number of persons with disabilities they failed to employ. Moreover, while companies with less than 50 employees do not have an obligation to hire people with disabilities, if they do offer them indefinite programs, they do receive the monthly benefit referred to above, for a year. The companies not respecting these rules risk fines of up to RON 25.000

¹³ Birau, R and others, (2019), [Social Exclusion and Labour Market Integration of People with Disabilities. A Case Study for Romania](#), Sustainability, September 2019.

¹⁴ Parliament (*Parliament*), 2020, Law no. 6/2020 of the state social insurance budget for 2020 (*Legea nr. 6/2020 a bugetului asigurărilor sociale de stat pe anul 2020*), 6 January 2020.

¹⁵ National Employment Agency, (2020), Note on the stage of implementation of the measures to stimulate the labour force, in the period 01.01 - 31.08.2020 ([Notă privind stadiul realizării aplicării măsurilor de stimulare a forței de muncă, în perioada 01.01 – 31.08.2020](#)).

(approx. EUR 10.260), the quantum of the fine having been significantly increased in 2020.

Up until 2017, employers could also choose to use 50 % of the money they would have to pay to the state budget to buy products from protected units, a form of sheltered employment. The provision was abolished in 2017. The reasoning behind such a decision was, arguably, intended to help Romania move away from sheltered employment, a form of employment which does not respect the principles enshrined in Article 27 of the CRPD, constituting a form of discrimination. A sheltered unit can be established, according to Law no. 448/2006, if at least 30 % of the employees are people with disabilities; sheltered units enjoy certain financial benefits.

The sheltered units can activate in the area of production, commerce, service, etc. It is clear from Article 27 that State Parties to the Convention should be aiming to ensure access to work environments which do not segregate people with disabilities and that a transition from sheltered work towards inclusive work in the open labour market is needed, particularly in a time where practices of successfully offering support are becoming more and more widely spread. At the same time, the impact of the Government's decision, taken without offering alternatives, was tremendous, with some arguing that the rate of employment of people with disabilities had dropped to an astonishing 6 % following the decision,¹⁶ with most such units closing down, as nobody would buy their products. This also revealed the vulnerability of people with disabilities and how significant the ratio of those working in segregated settings was. In 2020 the provision was re-introduced, with companies being again allowed to choose between hiring people with disabilities, paying the fine and paying a sanction or partially buying products from sheltered units.¹⁷

In any case the legal provisions obliging large companies to hire people with disabilities were not very effective; most of them preferred to pay the sanctions to the state budget, rather than to employ people with disabilities.¹⁸ The situation appears to be similar for public institutions, with, for example, several ministries having been reported not to have employed any person with disabilities.¹⁹ Moreover, it was reported that people with disabilities are often hired only formally, without being provided with an actual job.²⁰

Public employment service projects

The National Employment Agency reports that it is currently carrying out 13 projects aimed at stimulating employment for vulnerable groups, with a total value of over 650

¹⁶ Bursa, (2019), Only 6 % of people with disabilities are integrated into the labour market ([Doar 6% din persoanele cu dizabilități sunt integrate pe piața muncii](#)), 17 July 2019.

¹⁷ Parliament (*Parliament*), (2020), Law no. 145/2020 for the amendment and completion of Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities (*Legea nr. 145/2020 pentru modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 448/2006 privind protecția și promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap*), 22 July 2020.

¹⁸ See Bungau S. G. and others, (2019), [Practices and attitudes regarding the employment of people with disabilities in Romania](#), Quality - Access to Success, 20(170):154, May 2019.

¹⁹ Libertatea, (2018), State institutions do not employ people with disabilities, although they are required to do so by law ([Instituțiile de stat nu angajează persoane cu handicap, deși sunt obligate prin lege](#)), 26 April 2018.

²⁰ Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, (2019), [Report following her visit to Romania from 12 to 16 November 2018](#), 28 February 2019.

million euros, supported through the European Social Fund (ESF).²¹ Relevant projects are also being carried out by private funders. Such a project is 'Employed, not living out of social benefits' (*Angajați, nu asistați!*), which targets people with Down Syndrome and the problem they face in accessing the labour market. This project is funded by ING Tech Romania, started in 2020 and is supposed to be carried out over 12 months, aiming at offering support for 120 individuals. The support will consist of getting knowledge on how to search for a job, learning how to communicate with potential employers, to attend a job interview, to integrate in the working environment and to interact with colleagues and managers. On the other hand, an awareness campaign will be carried out among employers, to help them understand that people with Down Syndrome can be hired if the work environment is adapted to their specific abilities. An online platform will be launched, including useful information for beneficiaries, relatives and employers. The project also aims to launch, in 2021, the first Guide for the employment of People with Down Syndrome in Romania. Official data shows that in Romania there are 4.420 people with Down syndrome, other actors estimating this number at 20.000.²²

The impact of all these programs remains for now limited. The employment rates are low, and a recent study reported that only 26 % of parents of young people with disabilities were aware of the professional support services offered by employment authorities, while only 10 % of these people were actually employed.²³

Law no. 145/2020,²⁴ and Law no. 193/2020, which amended Law no. 448/2006, tried to address some of these shortcomings. People with disabilities were offered the possibility to choose, upon request, between benefiting of free public transport or receiving reimbursements, within certain limits, for the cost of the fuel of personal vehicles or vehicles belonging to their carers. Law 145/2020 also introduced in more clear terms certain obligations for employers, such as that to adapt the employees' tasks to their abilities and to offer, when needed, flexible working hours. Companies that do not take such measures will be susceptible of receiving significantly higher fines than before, ranging to up to RON 25.000 (approximately EUR 5130). While the legislator's intent is clear, concerns can be raised given that employers in Romania were already reticent in employing people with disabilities; the risk of being applied such quantum of fines might contribute to even more reticence.

Conclusion

Romania has been amending its legislation and policies to support the integration on the labour market of people with disabilities and the matter appears to be on the agenda of the National Employment Agency and of other relevant authorities.

²¹ National Employment Agency, (2020), Newsletter. *Updated on the implementation of the National Employment Programme in February 2020* ([Buletin Informativ.Stadiul realizării Programului național de ocupare a forței de muncă în luna februarie 2020](#)).

²² Bursa, (2020), *Project designed to help people with disabilities enter the labor market* ([Proiect menit să ajute persoanele cu dizabilități să intre pe piața muncii](#)), 8 January 2020.

²³ Fund for Youth Employment News, (2020), [Analysis Report regarding the needs of families of young adults with disabilities elaborated within LEAD Project](#), 25 May 2020.

²⁴ Parliament (*Parliament*), (2020), Law no. 145/2020 for the amendment and completion of Law no. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities (*Legea nr. 145/2020 pentru modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 448/2006 privind protecția și promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap*), 22 July 2020.

However, the concrete results are difficult to commensurate. Some of the measures have proven to be ineffective and attempts to address the shortcoming are to be noted. In the meantime, discrimination continues, obtaining and maintaining employment is difficult and the obtained income is often insufficient to ensure a decent level of life. Moreover, accessing the labour market remains particularly difficult for people with specific types of disabilities, such as intellectual disabilities. Some of these problems are being addressed by private actors, such as corporations and non-governmental organisation (NGOs), but their initiatives are insufficient and most likely, if not corroborated with state-funded programmes, not feasible.

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

The UN CRPD Committee has not yet made recommendations to Romania.

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

The National Strategy 'A society without barriers for people with disabilities', 2016-2020 includes social protection (VII.6).

4.1 Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate the poverty risk rate for working age persons with disabilities in Romania was 25.6 % in 2018, compared to 20.8 % for other persons of similar age - an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 5 percentage points (see Table 14). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was 6.1 points (25.1 % for older persons with disabilities and 19.0 % for other persons of similar age). The tables in annex also indicate the respective rates of At risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) and break these down by gender as well age.

The official number of people with disabilities living in Romania, holding a so-called disability certificate, is of 852.565.²⁵ Given this number represents only 3.85 % of the population number, the actual number of people with disabilities is most likely much higher. Officially 2.05 % (17,496 people) of them live in institutions, while 97.95 % (835,069 people) live independently in the community, with their families or in other settings.²⁶

According to Law no. 448/2006, people with disabilities receive disability certificates, according to their degree of disability, as assessed according to certain criteria as being severe, accentuated, medium and mild. As of 31 March 2019, the percentages are the following: 40.03 % have severe disabilities, 48.72 % accentuated disabilities and 11.26 % medium or mild disabilities.²⁷ According to Emergency Ordinance 1017/2018, people with severe and accentuated disabilities can travel for free with trains and buses. Monthly disability allowances are only available for people with accentuated or severe disabilities, their quantum being of RON 265 (EUR 54.4), respectively RON 350 (EUR 72).²⁸ All people with disabilities have access to a personal complementary budget, which varies from RON 60 (EUR 12.3) to RON 150 (EUR 30).²⁹

²⁵ National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (*Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții*), (2020), Statistic Data. 31 March 2020 ([Date statistice. 31 martie 2020](#)).

²⁶ National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (2020).

²⁷ National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (2020).

²⁸ Directorate General of Social Assistance and Child Protection Bucharest- Sector 6 (Direcția Generală de Asistență Socială și Protecția Copilului București-Sector 6), (2020), The Department for Social Benefits and Facilities ([Serviciul Prestații Sociale și Facilități](#)).

²⁹ Directorate General of Social Assistance and Child Protection Bucharest- Sector 6, The Department for Social Benefits and Facilities (2020).

While the percentage of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion reached a historically low level³⁰ of 32.5 % in 2018, people with disabilities remain at risk, particularly the ones in rural areas, with a risk of 37.6 % vs an EU average of 28.7 %.³¹ The lack of synergies and complementarity between educational, employment and social services further aggravates the situation of this group. Moreover, there are no licensed community services for adults with disabilities.³²

While living in Romania might be less expensive than in other EU Member States, it was determined that individuals will still need RON 2.552 (EUR 525) a month to live a basic decent life, with the amount reaching RON 5.551 for a couple with a child.³³ This amount is significantly higher than what most people with disabilities earn. Almost half of all the people employed in Romania earn less than this amount.³⁴ The situation will aggravate because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost 30 % of Romanians have reported their income has decreased because of the pandemic, the rate being higher among those who already had the smallest income, where the rate who reported such a decrease was of 42 %; the decrease of the income was, on average, of 30 %.³⁵

4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Romania.

General developments

The National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (ANPDCA) has obtained EU funds to strengthen its capacities as a coordination mechanism under Article 33 of the CRPD. It is therefore implementing a project on the matter, the duration of the project being the following: 25.01.2019-25.06.2021. During this time the Authority plans to elaborate the 2021-2027 National Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities and to develop a mechanism to monitor the Strategy's implementation.³⁶ In June 2020, ANPDCA announced it started collecting data necessary for the implementation of this project from relevant

³⁰ This indicator is available for Romania since 2007, when it amounted to 47.0 %.

³¹ European Commission, (2020), [Country Report Romania 2020](#), p. 15, 26 February 2020.

³² European Commission, (2020), [Country Report Romania 2020](#), p. 15, 26 February 2020.

³³ Guga S. and others, (2018), Minimum monthly consumption for decent living for the Romanian population ([Coşul minim de consum lunar pentru un trai decent pentru populația României](#)), September 2018.

³⁴ Wall-Street, (2020), Distribution of salaries in our country: 1 in 4 Romanians earn the minimum wage, and others receive up to 120,000 lei per month ([Distribuția salariilor în țara noastră: 1 din 4 români câștigă salariul minim, iar alții iau până la 120.000 de lei pe lună](#)).

³⁵ Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy (Institutul Român pentru Evaluare și Strategie), (2020), The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Risk perception and insurance culture in Romania ([Impactul pandemiei de COVID-19. Percepția riscurilor și cultura asigurărilor din România](#)), May 2020.

³⁶ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții), (2020), Strengthen the mechanism for coordinating the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([Consolidarea mecanismului de coordonare a implementării Convenției ONU privind Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități](#)), 23 June 2020.

authorities.³⁷ No other information is available in relation to the stage of implementation of this project.

Regarding the participation of civil society and people with disabilities in the decision-making processes, law proposals are often subjected to debate and civil society members are invited to roundtables and working groups. The ANDPDCA, formerly known for its lack of visibility and collaboration with civil society, has changed in 2020, after a child rights activist was appointed to lead it.³⁸ Since then, this institution continued the activities it was carrying out, expanded them significantly and, most importantly, became visible among stakeholders. For example, it follows the monitoring visits and monitoring reports published by non-governmental organisations, provides information about them and, where appropriate and within its mandate, takes measures (e.g. following-up on the findings with a monitoring visits, submit complaints before other relevant authorities).³⁹ It also invites stakeholders, experts, parents of children with disabilities and NGOs to debates in relation to the activities it is carrying out; for example, it has invited people to submit opinions and participate in discussions in relation to its initiative to elaborate minimum standards for respite centres.⁴⁰ In the same time, the stalling of the relevant reforms, including the examples mentioned above, makes such dialogue less relevant, as it seems to have little impact on the actual reform of policies and legislation.

Other important issues that need to be addressed include the manner of awarding disability certificates, with the requirements for obtaining such certificates being stiff and inflexible and sometimes leading to people with disabilities being refused allowances or support, although they do need it, just because they do not fit certain criteria. This categorisation goes hand in hand with the distribution of funds; local authorities and service providers are allocated funds according to it, which means that services are designed and funded around the needs of groups, rather than around the needs of individuals. This approach promotes segregation and influences people with disabilities' access to social benefits, to the labour market⁴¹ and, as a consequence, it impacts on their general wellbeing and quality of life.

³⁷ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (2020).

³⁸ G4 Media, (2019), Maria Mădălina Turza, human rights activist, mother of a girl with Down syndrome, has been appointed to lead the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions ([Maria Mădălina Turza, activistă pentru drepturile omului, mama unei fetițe cu sindrom Down, a fost numită la conducerea Autorității Naționale pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții](#)), 17 November 2019.

³⁹ See for example Romania, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (*Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții*), (2020), Independent monitoring mechanisms - ZERO tolerance for inhuman treatment ([Mecanismele independente de monitorizare – ZERO Toleranța pentru tratamentele inumane](#)), press release, 5 February 2020.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (*Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții*), (2020), DEBATE: Minimum quality standards for respite centers for children with disabilities ([În DEZBATERE: Standarde minime de calitate pentru CENTRE RESPIRO destinate copiilor cu dizabilități](#)), press release, 21 August 2020.

⁴¹ See Bungau S. G. and others, (2019), [Practices and attitudes regarding the employment of people with disabilities in Romania](#), Quality - Access to Success, 20(170):154, May 2019.

The funds allocated to the social services available for vulnerable groups, including children, adults with disabilities, elderly people cared for in institutions or at home and victims of domestic violence, were significantly increased in 2020, for the first time since 2015. The increase ranged from 44 % to 98 %.⁴²

Legal capacity and involuntary treatment

Several reforms of the social policies relevant for people with disabilities are underway in Romania. One of these relates to the amendment of Law no. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.⁴³ The reform was initiated in May 2017 with a view to implementing the general measures imposed following the European Court of Human Rights's (ECtHR's) judgment in the case of *Centre for Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania*.⁴⁴ According to the Romanian Government, the draft law would make supported decision-making mechanisms available for people with disabilities.⁴⁵ The proposed amendments⁴⁶ were however criticised by civil society as insulating and preserving a system of deprivation of legal capacity which violates the CRPD.⁴⁷ In the meantime, on 16 July 2020, the Romanian Constitutional Court declared the guardianship system unconstitutional.⁴⁸ A working group was subsequently established within the Ministry of Justice, with the objective to review and reform the guardianship system. Its first meeting should take place in September 2020.

In April 2020 the Romanian Government also stated before the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to have in place a plan of reforming the psychiatric system,⁴⁹ as imposed by the general measures ordered through two ECtHR judgments issued in 2012.⁵⁰ This should address the material conditions in psychiatric facilities, as well as problems regarding involuntary treatment and involuntary hospitalisation. While the

⁴² Decision No. 426/2020 on the approval of cost standards for social services ([Hotărârea nr. 426/2020 privind aprobarea standardelor de cost pentru serviciile sociale](#)), 2 June 2020.

⁴³ Law No. 448 of 6 December 2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with a handicap ([Legea nr. 448 din 6 decembrie 2006 privind protecția și promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap](#)), 6 December 2006.

⁴⁴ European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), [Centre for Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania](#), No. 47848/08, 17 July 2014.

⁴⁵ Romania, [Communication from the authorities on the general measures in the case of Centre for Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania \(Application No. 47848/08\)](#), 24 April 2019.

⁴⁶ Romania, Draft law for amending and completing some normative acts ([Proiect de Lege pentru modificarea și completarea unor acte normative](#)), 5 April 2019.

⁴⁷ Association for the support of children with special needs 'Dr. Katz'(2019), [Submission by the Association for the support of children with special needs 'Dr. Katz' in the case Centre for Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania \(Application no. 47848/08\)](#), 20 May 2019.

⁴⁸ Romania, Constitutional Court ([Curtea Constituțională](#)), Press release, 16 July 2020 ([Comunicat de presă, 16 iulie 2020](#)), press release, 16 July 2020.

⁴⁹ Romania, [Communication from the authorities on the general measures \(05/05/2020\) in the cases of Cristian Teodorescu and Parascineti v. Romania \(Applications No. 22883/05, 32060/05\)](#), 7 May 2020.

⁵⁰ European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), [Parascineti v. Romania](#), no. 32060/05, 13 March 2012 and European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), [Cristian Teodorescu v. Romania](#), No. 22883/05, 19 June 2012.

civil society claims the plan has been long overdue and is yet to be written down, let alone implemented,⁵¹ no steps forward seem to have been made recently.

Support for independent living

Concerning the deinstitutionalisation of people with disabilities, Romania had reported in recent years a significant progress in the deinstitutionalisation of children, with EU Funds being used to develop a comprehensive plan for the transition from institutional to community-based care for children,⁵² which started being successfully implemented. A similar approach was envisaged for adults with disabilities. In 2019 a new Ministerial Order was adopted,⁵³ with the purpose to improve the quality of social services for adults with disabilities and their living standard, including measures such as reviewing the quality standards for residential social services; developing quality standards of respite and crisis centres; and developing standards for case management aimed at coordinating and integrating activities for people with disabilities and organizing and managing social assistance measures. The adoption of this Order was complemented by a variety of projects which are being carried out with support from EU Funds. The overall assessment of all these initiatives is hard to be made currently, given most measures have been initiated to recently.

To take a few examples, authorities aim at creating a platform for storing information on people with disabilities- the National Disability Management System - SNMD.⁵⁴ This system would allow the creation and management of files for beneficiaries, the monitoring of the residential and non-residential centres and the rapid access to information registered by local social protection agencies. While experts were recruited in November 2019 for the implementation of this projects, there are no subsequent news about the stage at which the implementation is currently.

On 13 February 2020 the ANDPDCA also officially launched 'People with disabilities - the transition from residential to community services', a project initiated on 6 August 2019, which is to be carried out until 6 July 2022.⁵⁵ Its objectives include the

⁵¹ Centre for Legal Resources (*Centrul de Resurse Juridice*), (2020), The Romanian Government's action plan in the field of psychiatry is long overdue ([Planul de Acțiune în domeniul psihiatriei al guvernului român se lasă așteptat](#)), press release, 16 June 2020.

⁵² Operational Programme Administrative Capacity 2014-2020 (POCA), Project: 'Elaboration of the DI plan for children in institutions and ensuring the transition of their care in the community – SIPOCA 2 Code' awarded to National Authority for the Protection of Child's Rights and Adoption. Start date: 31 March 2016, implementation period: 30 months, Total amount: RON 13,503,126.00, (of which RON 11,346,946.84 financial contribution from the European Union and RON 2,156,179.16 own contribution of the Beneficiary).

⁵³ Order of the labour and social justice minister No. 82/2019 on approving the specific minimum quality standards mandatory to the social services for disabled adults.

⁵⁴ OP C, PA 2 Information and communication technology for a competitive digital economy, action 2.3.1; more information available at <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/despre-noi/programe-si-strategii/sistem-national-de-management-privind-dizabilitatea/>.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (*Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții*), (2020), Press release following the launch of the project 'People with disabilities - the transition from residential to community services', ([Comunicat de presă în urma desfășurării Conferinței de lansare a proiectului "Persoane cu dizabilități – tranziția de la servicii rezidențiale la servicii în comunitate"](#)), press release, 14 February 2020.

development of public policy proposals to prevent institutionalization and of tools for monitoring and controlling standards in the field of social services for adults with disabilities. Given it is at an early stage, no further public information is available on its implementation.

The de-institutionalisation of adults' process is therefore still ongoing, with significant EU Funds being used in the process, without significant achievements to be reported for 2020. The barriers to deinstitutionalisation remain similar in the past recent years and include the insufficiency of community-based services, with Romania still being at the stage of needs assessment and policy development. Moreover, it is important to make sure that mistakes are not repeated and deinstitutionalisation is not confused with moving children and adults to smaller-scale institutions.⁵⁶ Similarly, while deinstitutionalisation has been framed as a priority in policies, the legal framework and bylaws has not been adapted to support the change. For example, providing housing and part-time support in a flat is hard to fit into the existing legal framework related to social services, which establishes mandatory safeguards based on the institutional model. Beneficiaries cannot choose what and when they want to eat and are obliged to live with the same strict set of rules and rigid routine.⁵⁷

The Ministries of Labour and Social Justice, National Education and Health have launched a pilot programme aimed at providing integrated community services in 139 of the poorest localities in Romania, which would combat poverty and increase the social inclusion of vulnerable persons, including persons with disabilities. The project is to be carried out from 2018 to 2022 and the activities to be carried out include supporting participation in social life, harmonizing needs assessment and multidisciplinary interventions necessary to overcome vulnerability, developing and implementing integrated intervention strategies and intervention plans for selected priorities, long-term individual, family and community development, etc. and assessing the impact of the intervention; and increasing the level of education, reducing school dropout and low school participation, improving school performance, access to informal education programs, access to school counselling and career guidance services.⁵⁸ No data is available on the progress of this project.

Measures related to the spread of COVID-19

The Government adopted a variety of measures in relation the spread of the COVID-19 virus, some supported with available EU funding. The Ministry of Health allocated RON 150 million (approx. EUR 30 million) to buy protective masks for vulnerable groups, including the people with disabilities whose only income is constituted by social benefits;⁵⁹ such people are to receive monthly 30 protective masks.⁶⁰ According to the provisions of Government Emergency Ordinance (GEO) No. 43/2020, hygiene products purchased by the Ministry of European Funds, as beneficiary of the

⁵⁶ Community Living for Europe. Structural Funds Watch, (2018), *Inclusion for all: achievements and challenges in using EU funds to support community living*, p. 25.

⁵⁷ Community Living for Europe. Structural Funds Watch, (2018), p. 28.

⁵⁸ <https://mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/proiecte-programe/in-curs-de-implementare/5566-fp-sci>.

⁵⁹ <https://www.bursa.ro/ministerul-sanatatii-a-lansat-procedura-de-achizitie-a-pesto-90-de-milioane-de-masti-pentru-persoanele-vulnerabile-42238937>.

⁶⁰ <https://www.bursa.ro/iohannis-a-promulgat-legea-prin-care-unele-categorii-de-persoane-primesc-lunar-30-de-masti-02711045>.

Assistance for Disadvantaged People Operational Program, were to be purchased for people with disabilities living in residential centres; moreover, funds available through the Human Capital Operational Program, were to be used to cover salary related expenses, transport and protection equipment related expenses, as well as other categories of expenses related to the social assistants/ caretakers involved in supporting persons with disabilities or families taking care of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic; specialised staff working in the field were also awarded a monthly risk compensation of RON 2,500 (approximately EUR 515) gross.

A variety of other measures were taken to mitigate the social impact of the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic, including:⁶¹

- the extension of the provision of certain social benefits with 90 days (e.g. the insertion incentive granted to parents returning to work before the end of the parental leave; the support allowance for raising children with disabilities; the general child allowance); it must be however noticed that the quantum of these benefits is often so small (ranging from EUR 60 to EUR 150), that it is in any case not sufficient to substantially reduce the risk of living in poverty;
- the activity of social public or private services such as residential care and assistance centres for older people, residential centres for children and adults with disabilities and for other vulnerable categories could not be ceased or interrupted.⁶²

Social protection agencies took a variety of measures to ensure their services continued to be available during the pandemic, including the following: conduction child protection and other types of investigation on the basis of phone interviews, photos, video-recordings and other online communication methods; and organizing in person meetings only when absolutely necessary, with the implementation of social distancing protocols. Moreover, online services were made available in relation to relevant assessment procedures and obtaining disability certificates, with people being able to submit documentation and have their application dealt with online; such services will continue to be available after the end of the pandemic.⁶³ An easy-to-read guide was made available with information regarding the transmission of COVID-19 and adequate preventive measures.⁶⁴ Moreover, the validity of disability certificates

⁶¹ GEO No. 30/2020 amending some pieces of legislation and establishing some social protection measures for the purpose of the epidemiological situation caused by the spread of SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus and GEO No. 32/2020 amending GEO No. 30/2020 amending some pieces of legislation and establishing some social protection measures for the purpose of the epidemiological situation caused by the spread of SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

⁶² Military Ordinance No. 8/ 10.04.2020 on measures preventing the spread of COVID-19.

⁶³ For example, see Social Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Sector 4 (*Direcția Socială de Asistență Socială și Protecția Copilului Sector 4*), (2020), Our institution launched several online services ([Instituția noastră a lansat o serie de servicii online](#)).

⁶⁴ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (*Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții*), (2020), COVID-19 Prevention Guide ([COVID-19 Ghid de Prevenire](#)).

and other documents entitling people to social benefits was prolonged during the emergency state with 90 days.⁶⁵

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection also launched a project, funded by the European Social Fund, to provide direct support to 100,000 older people and people with disabilities affected by COVID-19 related measures. It includes direct financial assistance, and psychological and other tailored support, and will be implemented in partnership with 116 municipalities.⁶⁶

The ANDPDCA was also active in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. In the first weeks of the pandemic, all social services, including residential centres, were in dire need of masks, personal protective equipment and products. Before these were made available at a national level, the ANDPDCA concluded collaborations with the National Committee for Special Emergency Situations, UN agencies and private companies to distribute over 1.5 million such items.⁶⁷ ANDPDCA also created, on 10 March 2020, its own Crisis Cell⁶⁸ which aimed to ensure the process of coordination and management of the crisis situation generated by the COVID-19 epidemic. Mechanisms were established for real-time communication, coordination with the country's general directorates for social protection and data collection mechanisms; recommendations, circulars and methodological provisions on managing and combating the spread of COVID-19 virus in residential and community social services are being issued constantly.

⁶⁵ For example, see Social Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Sector 4 (*Direcția Socială de Asistență Socială și Protecția Copilului Sector 4*), (2020), Our institution launched several online services (*Instituția noastră a lansat o serie de servicii online*).

⁶⁶ <http://mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/transparenta/anunturi/5962-metodologie-selectie-proiect-covid-19>.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (*Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții*), (2020), '[Situția răspândirii epidemiei COVID-19 în sistemul de asistență și protecție a copilului la finalul stării de urgență](#)', press release, 16 May 2020.

⁶⁸ <http://andpdca.gov.ro/w/info-covid-19-2/>.

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

The UN CRPD Committee has not yet made recommendations to Romania:

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

The National Strategy 'A society without barriers for people with disabilities', 2016-2020 includes Vocational education and training (VII.5).

5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

The EU-SILC estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with some caution due to variable confidence levels, but they consistently indicate disability quality gaps. Table 16 indicates early school leaving rates disaggregated by disability status. Youth with disabilities (aged 18-24) tend to leave school significantly more than non-disabled peers of the same age groups (and this is reinforced by widening the sample size to age 18-29). Table 17 shows completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (age 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider sample for age 30-39).

In Romania, most children with disabilities are either not included in any form of education, or go to so called special schools, segregated educational facilities designated for children with disabilities. From the total number of 71.893 children with disabilities,⁶⁹ 29.433 were reported to be in special schools, 33.748 in mainstream schools, with the rest of about 8.700 not being enrolled in any form of education.⁷⁰ Some estimate the number of children with disabilities not enrolled in any form of education could be as high as 20.000.⁷¹

The situation is therefore dire, with at least 12 % of children with disabilities not being enrolled in any form of education, 40 % a in segregated settings and the rest of 48 % presumably included in mainstream schools. According to NGOs, around one third of the special schools' function as closed institutions, and special schools often fail to provide children with disabilities with the necessary skills for their inclusion in society.⁷²

It must also be underlined that instances of abuse and violence in special educational facilities are often reported in the media and that the educational opportunities offered to children studying in these facilities are reduced.⁷³ Children with disabilities in mainstream schooling also face a variety of challenges, given than the support

⁶⁹ <https://www.ceccarbusinessmagazine.ro/anpdca-71893-copii-cu-dizabilitati-inregistrati-la-finele-lunii-iunie-2019-s6783/>.

⁷⁰ <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-educatie-22981826-romania-exista-singur-profesor-sprijin-pentru-150-copii-dizabilitati.htm>.

⁷¹ <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

⁷² <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

⁷³ <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

available for them is extremely limited. It has been reported that there are only 1.385 support teachers nationwide, with their distribution not being equitable across different regions; in several counties in the country there is one support teacher for every 150 students with disabilities. The curriculum for children with disabilities is not adapted, there are no accessibility and assistive technologies, and mainstream teachers have not received any training in how to work with children with disabilities.⁷⁴ Moreover, it has been reported that the bullying these children face in mainstream education often leads to drop outs or transfers from the mainstream schools.⁷⁵

This makes many parents of children with disabilities forced to try to cover support costs from private resources, with a study showing some spend from EUR 4.000 to 18 000 a year for therapies and private support teachers.⁷⁶

Moreover, as underlined in Romania's Country Report, education spending is amongst the lowest in the EU. Early school leaving is very high, in particular for pupils in rural areas, Roma children and children with disabilities. An integrated, nation-wide strategy targeting early school leaving is not yet in place. Educational outcomes, especially in rural and economically deprived areas, are not improving. The acquisition of digital skills is low, posing challenges for the future labour market integration of graduates. The labour market relevance of vocational education and training and higher education remains low, harming graduates' job perspectives. Early school leavers from education and training stood at 16.4 % in 2018, almost 6 points above the EU average. This rate is particularly high in rural areas (around 25 %),⁷⁷ for Roma⁷⁸ and children with disabilities.⁷⁹ The high rate of early leavers from education and training in some regions correlates with low degrees of urbanisation (e.g. North-East). Comprehensive measures targeting early school leaving through tailor-made support for vulnerable pupils are not yet in place. Such measures would contribute to progressing toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 5 and 10.

5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Romania.

The challenges underlined above are well known by the legislator and policy makers, with a variety of measures being taken to address them.

The National Education Law⁸⁰ provides as a rule mainstream education. It however regulates special schools, differentiated on degrees and types of established deficiencies, allowing therefore the perpetuation of the segregation of children with

⁷⁴ <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-educatie-22981826-romania-exista-singur-profesor-sprijin-pentru-150-copii-dizabilitati.htm>.

⁷⁵ <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

⁷⁶ <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-educatie-22981826-romania-exista-singur-profesor-sprijin-pentru-150-copii-dizabilitati.htm>.

⁷⁷ The rate is 15 % in towns and 4.2 % in cities (European Commission, 2019i).

⁷⁸ According to 2016 data, 53 % of Roma had completed primary education only (FRA, 2016).

⁷⁹ The early school-leaving rate for persons with disabilities is 41.4 %, among the highest in the EU and more than double the EU average (19.6 %) whereas the tertiary attainment rate (22.6 %) is significantly below the EU average (32.4 %).

⁸⁰ Law No. 1/2011 Articles 48-56.

disabilities and of a system based on general attributes, rather than providing for the inclusion of students and responding, in an individualised manner, to their support needs and abilities. The duration of schooling of children with special educational needs can be, if necessary, extended on the basis of individual assessments. While technically education is free, given the lack of necessary therapies and support, parents are often forced, if they can afford it, to use private services. Children with disabilities can be home-schooled or be provided education in the proximity of health care units.

The National Education Law also established, at the level of each county, so-called centres of resources and educational assistance, in charge with carrying out the evaluation, psycho-educational assistance and school and professional orientation for children, pupils and young people with special educational needs. According to the Law, children with disabilities also receive educational support through support and itinerant teachers, on a case-by-case basis. The National Education Law also provides that children and young people with disabilities who are enrolled in education, either mainstream or special, enjoy social assistance consisting in ensuring the daily allowance for food, school supplies, clothing and footwear in an amount equal to that for children in the child protection system, as well as of free accommodation in boarding schools or care centres for children with special educational needs within the county. Children can also be transferred between the special and the mainstream system, at the initiative of teachers or parents.

The same Law provides that the system of special education includes a special curriculum, psycho pedagogical assistance programs, textbooks and alternative teaching methodologies, adapted to the type and degree of disability. The Law also provides that teachers should be trained to deal with bullying. While this provision is to be commended, it must be underlined that the occurrence of bullying, although no official data on it is available, appears to be high, with no effective mechanism in place to prevent its incidence, to gather data and to offer support where it occurs.⁸¹

The funds available to implement all the measures proposed in the law are limited, impacting on the possibilities of schools and local authorities to offer reasonable accommodation, adapted curricula and methodologies. These deficiencies often force children with disabilities to drop out or to shift to home-schooling.⁸² The National Education Law⁸³ also has two special provisions related to ensuring the physical accessibility for student with physical disabilities. While they are to be welcome, they also stand to illustrate the previous tendency to understand reasonable accommodation mainly as in place to address physical barriers. This started changing in recent years. For example, in 2020 a new procedure was adopted to ensure children with support needs receive adequate support during national examinations,⁸⁴ which included support for people with various intellectual and psycho-social disabilities.

⁸¹ <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

⁸² <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

⁸³ Law No. 1/2011.

⁸⁴ Ministry of Education and Research (*Ministerul Educației și Cercetării*), (2020), Procedure for ensuring equal opportunities for students who are visually impaired/ hearing impaired/ with the autism spectrum disorder/ with specific learning disabilities during the national examinations: the

In addition to the education provided for children and young people with disabilities, the Strategy for Education and Professional Training for Romania in the period 2016-2020⁸⁵ discusses the necessity to provide financial support for accommodation and meals of vulnerable young people, including young people with disabilities, enrolled in vocational training, as well as the necessity to further develop sheltered workshops and other alternative forms of training to enhance the socio-professional insertion of students with disabilities, including by providing teaching and assistive equipment. The Strategy also established as an objective developing adapted curricula for students with disabilities.

The Romanian National Council for Combating Discrimination (*Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării* -CNCD) found as discriminatory the provision according to which a particular number of places are allocated in schools and universities for Roma children, finding that such places should also be allocated to children with special educational needs. It underlined that, given many of these children encountered significant challenges during the educational process, such as the lack of psychologists and of support teachers, an affirmative measure should also be taken in their favour, to compensate in the competition with the other children and young people.⁸⁶ Following the decision, the Ministry of Education and Research, together with the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (ANPDCA) and members of civil society, initiated a debate aimed at amending the relevant policy.

In conclusion, at the level of legal norms and policies, we can observe the tendency to regulate and to promote access to education for students with disabilities, while tolerating segregation. The legal and policy framework therefore fails to propose a guarantee of the right of children and of young people with disabilities to inclusive education, as described by Article 24 of the CRPD.

Measures related to the spread of COVID-19

During the emergency state, when educational facilities were temporarily closed, parents/ carers were able to take a form of paid special leave in case they could not work from home or telework. This special leave was available to parents/carers of children under 12 years old or under 18 years old in the case of children with disabilities, when the children were enrolled in education.⁸⁷ The leave was also available to parents/ carers of children and adults with severe disabilities, irrespective of whether they were enrolled or not in education.

national assessment for the 8th grade and the baccalaureate- the 2020 session ([Procedura cu privire la asigurarea condițiilor de egalizare a șanselor pentru elevii cu deficiențe de vedere/ deficiențe de auz/ tulburare de spectru autist/ tulburări specifice de învățare care susțin examenele naționale: evaluarea națională pentru absolvenții clasei a VIII-a și examenul național de bacalaureat- sesiunea 2020](#)), 14 February 2020.

⁸⁵ Ministry of Education and Research (*Ministerul Educației și Cercetării*), (2016), Romanian Education and Training Strategy for the Period 2016-2020 ([Strategia Educației și Formării Profesionale din România pentru Perioada 2016-2020](#)).

⁸⁶ Romanian National Council for Combating Discrimination (*Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării* -CNCD), (2020), App. No. 39251/09.07 .2019, Decision No. 202 of 26 February 2020.

⁸⁷ Law No. 19/2020.

During this special leave parents/carers would earn 75 % of their normal salary, but not more than 75 % of the average gross salary.⁸⁸ While the measure is to be welcomed, it must be noted that for many people with such children, working from home or teleworking, while also supervising and providing care to their children, is extremely difficult to do simultaneously. Moreover, for those working for the minimum income or salaries not much higher than it, monthly struggles for making ends meet were already in place, therefore a 25 % reduction of the income proved to have a significant impact.

In September 2020 Romanian schools re-opened, with children being generally expected to attend classes in person; the Ministry of Education issued an Order⁸⁹ according to which children and young people with disabilities, together with other students belonging to so-called categories at risk, would come to school only if recommended by their attending physician and with the written consent of their parents; an obligation on educational facilities was also required to identify solutions for ensuring online access, if necessary, or taking measures to ensure these children's safety; this policy was not issued with sufficient methodological guidelines and risks to lead to the further exclusion of students with disabilities.

The Ministry of Education is also offering regular guidance and information on how educational activities are being carried out.⁹⁰ According to the most recent such press release, published on 1 October 2020,⁹¹ educational facilities are functioning in three different regimes: all student coming to school daily (1), students coming to school following a rotating schedule, combining in person attendance with online schooling (2) and only online schooling (3).

UNICEF has, in the meantime, started to assess the situation of children and their families, with a focus on the vulnerable ones, in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak in Romania. It found that as the state of emergency extended, inequalities in access to public services (healthcare, educational, social services) widened for different population groups. The COVID-19 pandemic has determined an increase in the vulnerabilities of the persons already at risk. Moreover, restrictions on movement have heightened domestic violence risks for those where this risk was present before and the problems of those living in overcrowded dwellings have worsened. The economic effects of the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic are more strongly felt by the Romanian society as the actions to contain the spread of the virus are maintained.⁹²

⁸⁸ Law No. 19/2020.

⁸⁹ <http://educatiaccontinua.edu.ro/source/legislatie/Ordin%20comun%20MS%20-%20MEC.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Ministry of Education and Research (*Ministerul Educației și Cercetării*), (2020), Press release (*Comunicate de presă*), 1 October 2020.

⁹¹ Ministry of Education and Research (*Ministerul Educației și Cercetării*), (2020), Newsletter: the dynamics of the functioning scenarios of the pre-university education units (*Buletin Informativ: dinamica scenariilor de funcționare a unităților de învățământ preuniversitar (1 octombrie 2020)*), 1 October 2020.

⁹² UNICEF and others, (2020), [Rapid assessment of the situation of children and their families, with a focus on the vulnerable ones, in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak in Romania. Phase I. Round 4](#), July 2020.

6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

6.1 Updates on use of existing EU funds (to 2020)

EUR 285.86 million have been made available the stated purpose to transition from institutional to family and community-based living, with budgeted activities including the development of day care services in the community, recovery centres, day centres for the development of independent life skills, counselling centres for children and young people, youth assistance programmes and support for access to or maintenance on the labour market.⁹³ The progress of the projects funded up until now is hard to assess, partly because issues encountered within the process of the distribution of the funds and partly because many of the projects were initiated relatively recently. For example, in a recent assessment report of the distribution of the funds, it was stated that, with the current available data provided to monitors, it appears that certain of the targets established under projects related to people previously institutionalised which are currently benefiting of community based-services (children, people with disabilities and elderly) are estimated to be reached, by 2023, in a proportion of a maximum of 6 %.⁹⁴

On 13 February 2020 the ANPDCA also officially launched 'People with disabilities - the transition from residential to community services',⁹⁵ a project initiated on 6 August 2019, which is to be carried out until 6 July 2022.⁹⁶ The project is funded by the Government and the European Union Structural and Investment Funds, with a total budget of EUR 3.160.000, out of which EUR 2.500.000 are from ESIF. The general objective is to accelerate the deinstitutionalization process of adult persons with disabilities along with the design of public policy and working tools for the development of alternatives for support for independent living and community integration and the prevention of re / institutionalization. The specific objectives of the project are:

- Developing a public policy proposal for the development of alternatives for independent living and community integration and the prevention of re / institutionalization, based on evidence obtained from the ex ante evaluation;
- Design of working tools in the field of social services for adults with disabilities;
- Achieving coordination at the interinstitutional level to avoid overlapping initiatives and avoid double funding.

⁹³ Community Living for Europe. Structural Funds Watch, (2018), *Inclusion for all: achievements and challenges in using EU funds to support community living*, pp. 18-20.

⁹⁴ Ministry of European Funds (*Ministerul Fondurilor Europene*), First Annual Evaluation Report (*Primul Raport Annual de Evaluare*), (2020), p. 263, 25 August 2020.

⁹⁵ <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/despre-noi/programe-si-strategii/persoane-cu-dizabilitati-tranzitia-de-la-servicii-rezidentiale-la-servicii-in-comunitate/>.

⁹⁶ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (*Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Drepturile Persoanelor cu Dizabilități, Copii și Adopții*), (2020), Press release following the launch of the project 'People with disabilities - the transition from residential to community services', (*Comunicat de presă în urma desfășurării Conferinței de lansare a proiectului "Persoane cu dizabilități – tranziția de la servicii rezidențiale la servicii în comunitate"*), press release, 14 February 2020.

The expected results of the project are the following:

- proposal of public policies for the prevention of institutionalisation;
- instruments for monitoring and controlling standards in the field of social services for adults with disabilities.

Given it is aimed at creating a framework for deinstitutionalisation, the project could be efficient and have a long-standing impact. Previous attempts to initiate the deinstitutionalisation process for adults with disabilities, which involved spending significant amounts from EU funds, have been scattered and uncoordinated and, consequently, unsuccessful. While the project does constitute a promising practice, it must also be underlined that, unfortunately, it comes at the end of the 2014-2020 EU funding period. The 2014–2020 ESIF Regulations had introduced the ex-ante conditionality on social inclusion 9.1, which required Member States to create and implement strategies on poverty reduction, including measures for the transition from institutional to community-based care. The objectives set up for this project, which are likely to be reached with a delay, given the COVID-19 pandemic, should have been reached at the beginning of this funding period. Given this situation, deinstitutionalisation will need to constitute a priority during the following funding period as well.

The National Employment Agency reports that it is currently carrying out 13 projects aimed at stimulating employment for vulnerable groups, in a total value of over 650 million euros, supported through the European Social Fund.⁹⁷

One of them is the Project 'Facilitating the insertion of people with disabilities on the labour market',⁹⁸ lead by the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions and the National Employment Agency and funded by the Romanian Government and the European Union through European Structural and Investment Funds (the European Social Fund through the Human Capital Operational Program 2014-2020). The project was initiated on 23.05.2019 and is to be completed on 23.05.2022. This project will therefore be carried out over 36 months and aims at offering support to people with disabilities so as to ensure their access to the general labour market. Such support includes addressing physical, informational and communication related barriers. The activities to be carried out include support being offered to people with disabilities in identifying and applying for jobs, support for employers in order to ensure the accessibility of work places for people with disabilities and subsidies for people with disabilities for the purchase of devices and assistive and access technologies to be used during professional activities. The expected results are the following:

- 7000 people with disabilities to be informed and counselled for employment;

⁹⁷ National Employment Agency, (2020), Newsletter. Updated on the implementation of the National Employment Programme in February 2020 (*Buletin Informativ. Stadiul realizării Programului național de ocupare a forței de muncă în luna februarie 2020*), available at https://www.anofm.ro/upload/12520/BI_MARTIE_2020.pdf.

⁹⁸ More information available at <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/despre-noi/programe-si-strategii/facilitarea-insertiei-pe-piata-muncii-a-persoanelor-cu-dizabilitati/>.

- 200 persons with disabilities will benefit of the subsidies offered by the state to employers (the state contribution to their salaries for a determined period of time);
- as many people as possible will receive the subsidies awarded through the project for devices and special technologies;
- 200 adapted workspaces to be created;
- 1 campaign to inform beneficiaries about the purchase of assistive products to be carried out.

This project constitutes a promising practice related to addressing problems faced by people with disabilities on the labour market. One element that is important is understanding that many people with disabilities will need assistive technologies and devices and support them in obtaining them by creating a list with available providers and providing subsidies to support people in purchasing them.

The practice is sustainable as it provides people with knowledge on how to identify and apply for jobs, it provides subsidies for acquiring assistive technologies and other devices and it ultimately leads to people obtaining jobs. Therefore, a number of the beneficiaries of the project will, beyond its completion, remain with valuable knowledge on how to search for jobs, be owners of vital assistive technologies and devices or have a job.

The project includes measurable targets, which are being reviewed regularly. For example, it was found that in the period 01.05.2020 - 31.08.2020, the following has been achieved:

- 103 people included in the target group received support (information services and vocational counselling, employment mediation or vocational training);
- 67 persons with disabilities requested subsidies for assistive technologies and devices; 51 of them received the requested subsidies;
- 8 people with disabilities were employed;
- the list of suppliers/ manufacturers of assistive technologies and devices has been updated and made available including 13 suppliers;⁹⁹
- information Bulletins were produced and sent monthly for the communication of information;
- regarding the progress made.

6.2 Priorities for future investment (after 2020)

Regional development investments will have five main objectives in 2021-2027, with a strong focus on objectives 1 and 2: (1) Smarter Europe, through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation and support to small and medium-sized businesses; (2) a Greener, carbon free Europe, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change; (3) a more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks; (4) a more Social Europe, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare;

⁹⁹ <http://andpdca.gov.ro/w/>.

(5) a Europe closer to citizens, by supporting locally-led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.

In order to promote the rights of people with disabilities, it is necessary to prioritise investment in the following:

Smarter Europe, through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation and support to small and medium-sized businesses:

- upskilling and reskilling of workers;
- job-search assistance to jobseekers.

a more Social Europe, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare:

- Ensure that available funding, including EU funds and the public budgets, are used to meet the State's obligations to respect, protect and ensure fundamental rights, particularly the right to independent and community-based living, for all persons with disabilities.
- Long-term investment plans are needed to reinforce the Romanian social and health care system by securing staff and equipment and improve the coverage and accessibility of health services, including community-based services, to all citizens, including people with all types of disabilities, in both urban and non-urban areas. It is essential that it is clearly stated that only operations which contribute to social inclusion will be funded.

a Europe closer to citizens, by supporting locally led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU:

- The areas of focus should include physical mobility and accessibility. It is essential that it is clearly stated that only infrastructure that contributes to family and community-based care and independent living is funded.

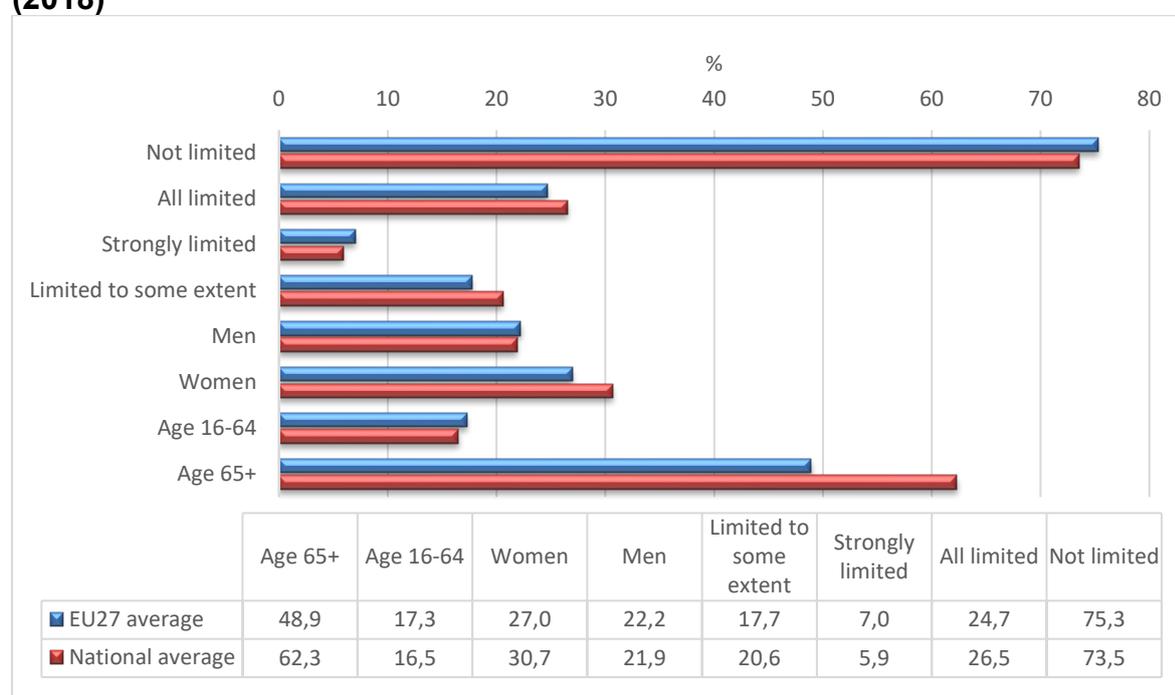
7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database¹⁰⁰ and statistical reports.¹⁰¹

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 six months’ the respondent reports that they have been ‘limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do’.¹⁰²

Table 1: Self-reported ‘activity limitations’ as a proxy for impairment/disability (2018)



Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 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

¹⁰⁰ Eurostat health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

¹⁰¹ Eurostat (2019) *Disability Statistics* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics.

¹⁰² 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)).

not report 'activity limitations'.¹⁰³ National estimates for Romania are compared with EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.¹⁰⁴

7.1 EU data relevant to disability and the labour market (2018)

Table 2: Employment rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)

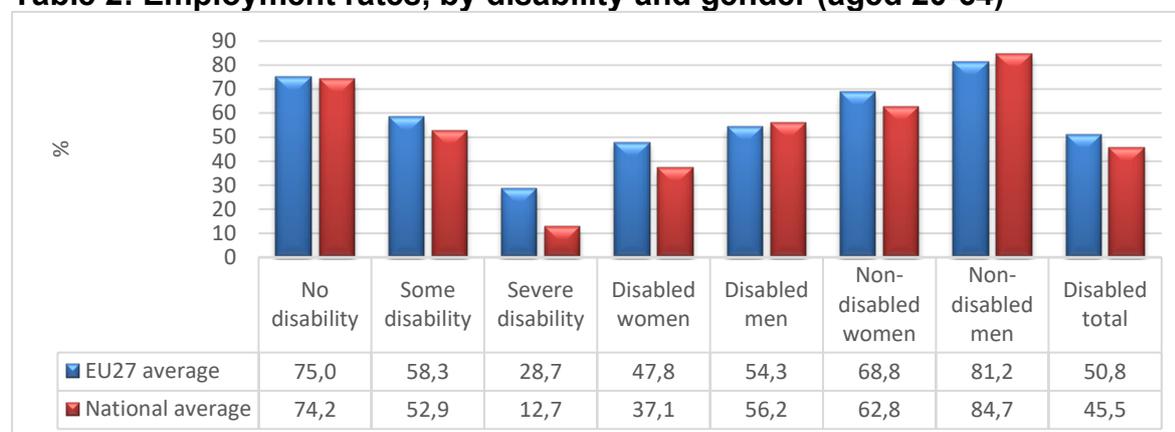
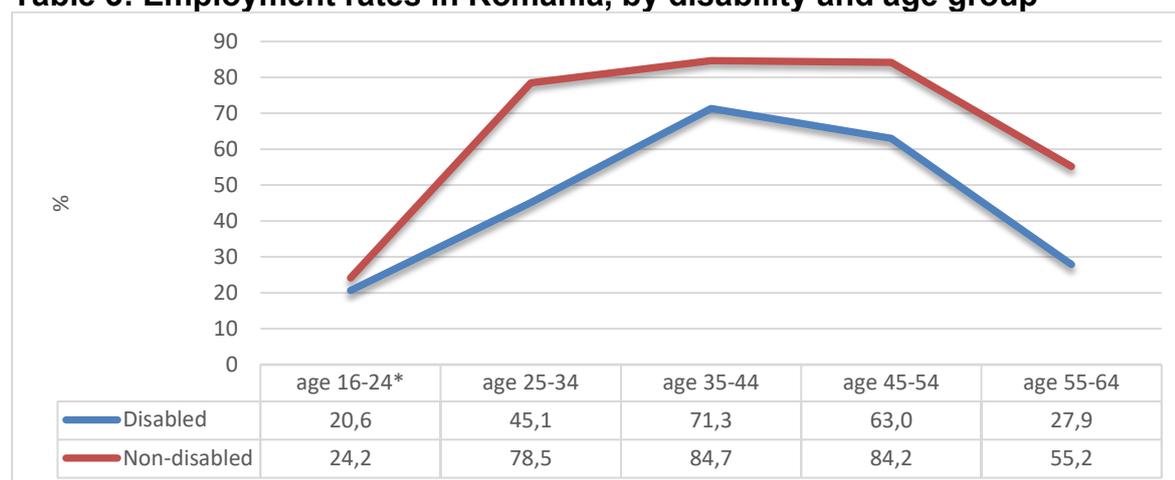


Table 3: Employment rates in Romania, by disability and age group



¹⁰³ This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>).

¹⁰⁴ 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)

Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.1 Unemployment

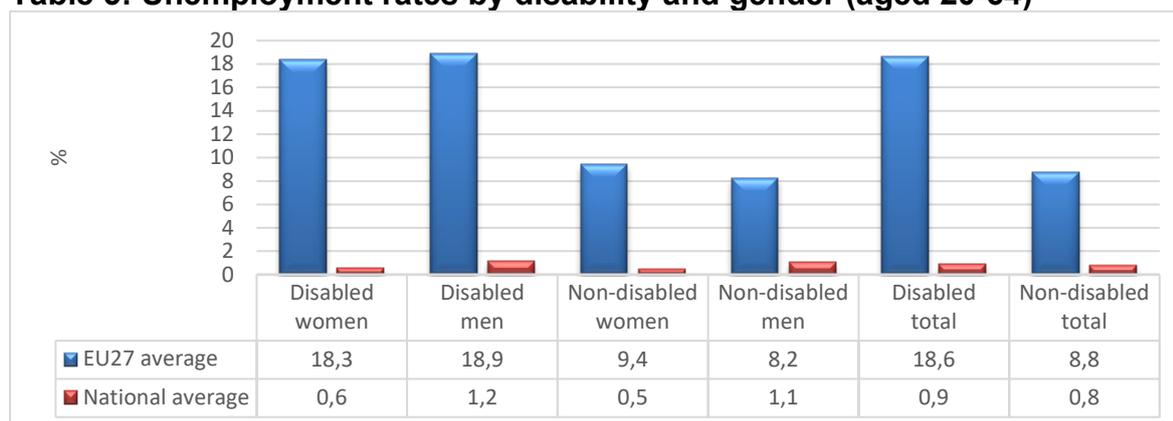
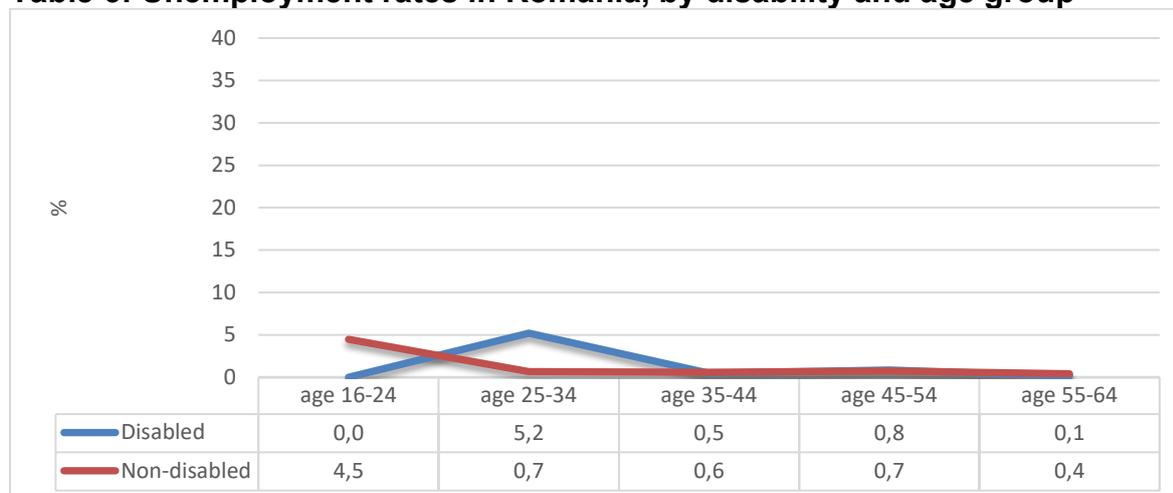
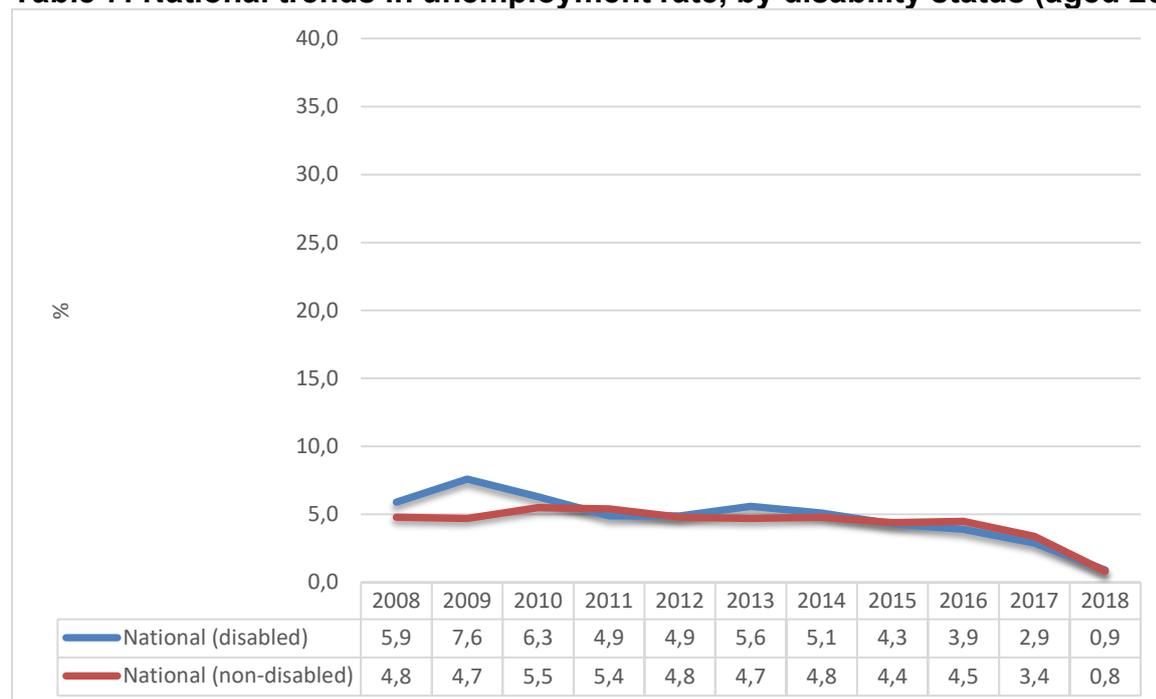
Table 5: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64)**Table 6: Unemployment rates in Romania, by disability and age group**

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

Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.2 Economic activity

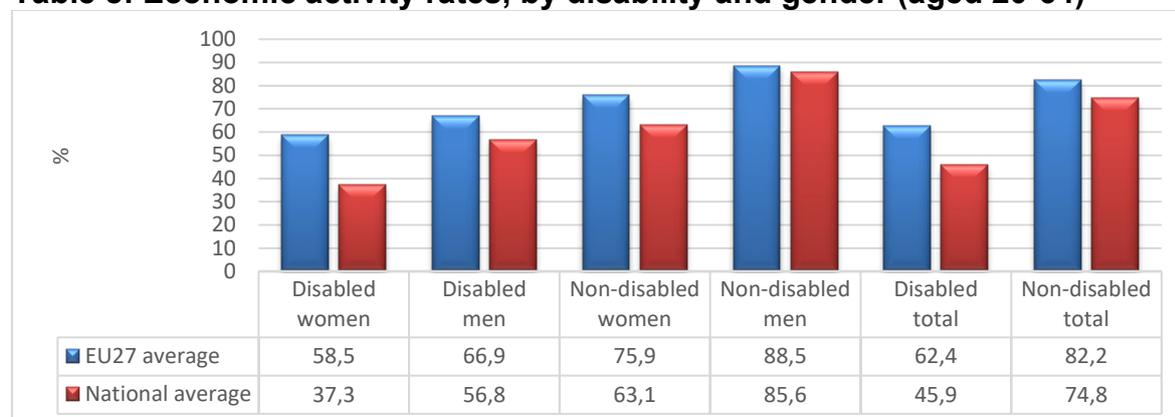
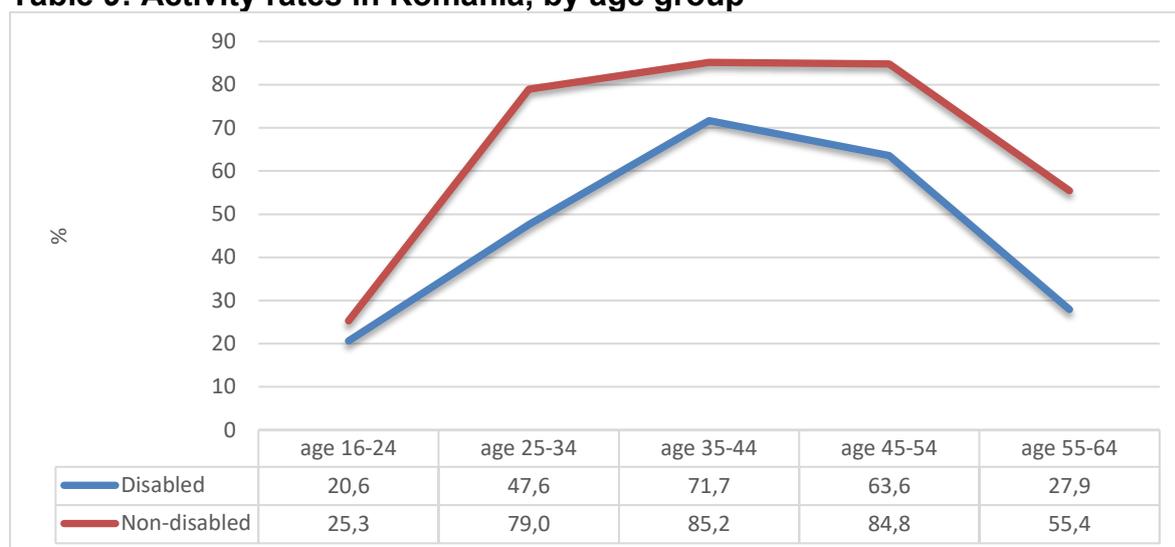
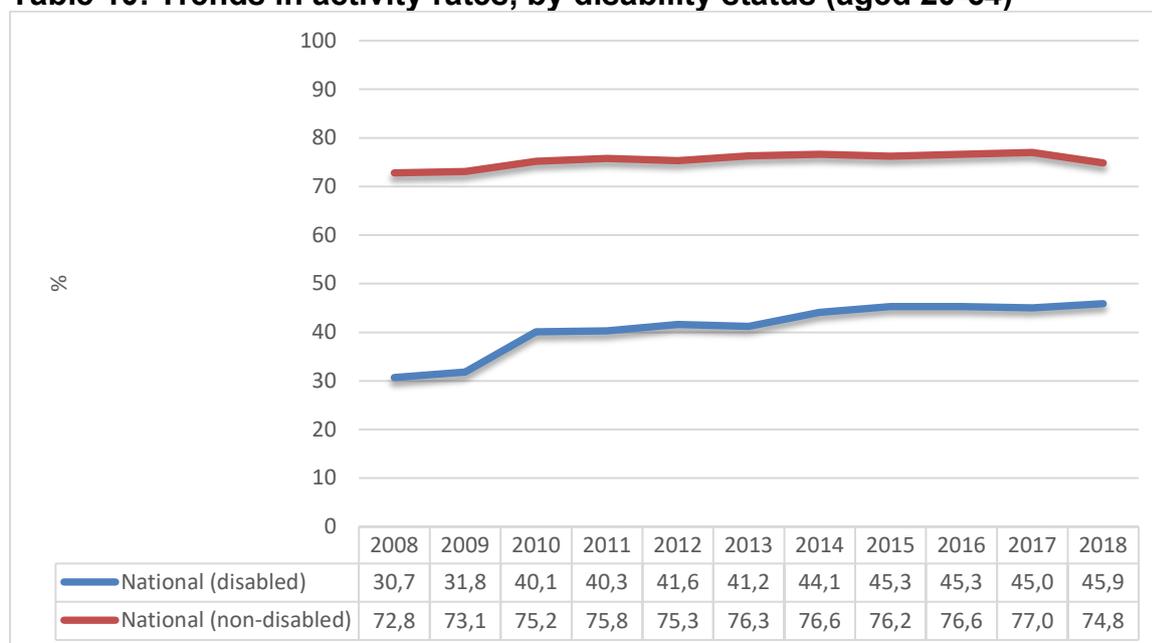
Table 8: Economic activity rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)

Table 9: Activity rates in Romania, by age group**Table 10: Trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)**

Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Romania

Disability data is not included in the core European Labour Force Survey but labour market indicators for Romania were disaggregated from ad modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.¹⁰⁵

Disability issues are not yet included in the Labour Force Surveys in Romania. The Ministry of Labour and Social Justice used to publish data on the number of employed persons with disabilities (per type of disability) and the number of sheltered workshops.

¹⁰⁵ Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

The Quarterly Statistic Bulletin on the situation of persons with disabilities no longer includes such data.¹⁰⁶

7.2 EU data relevant to disability, social policies and healthcare (2018)

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

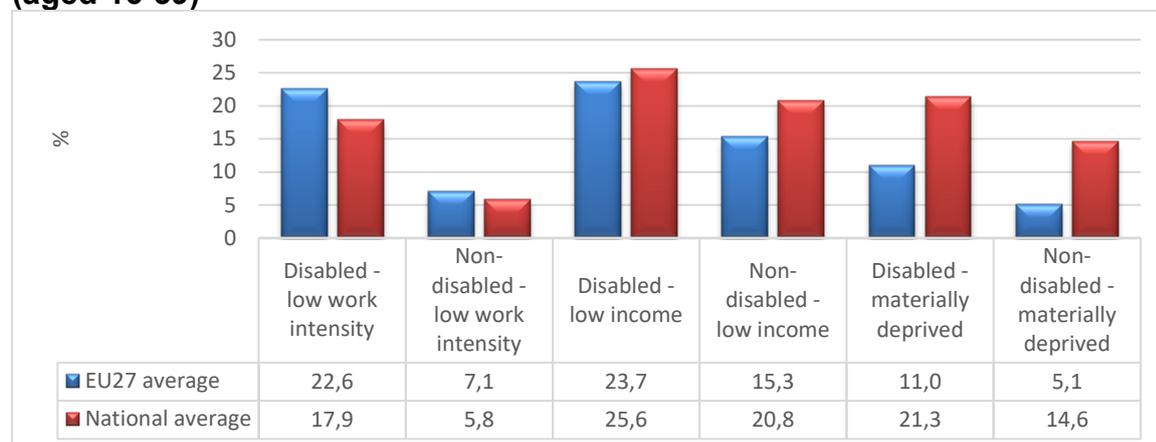
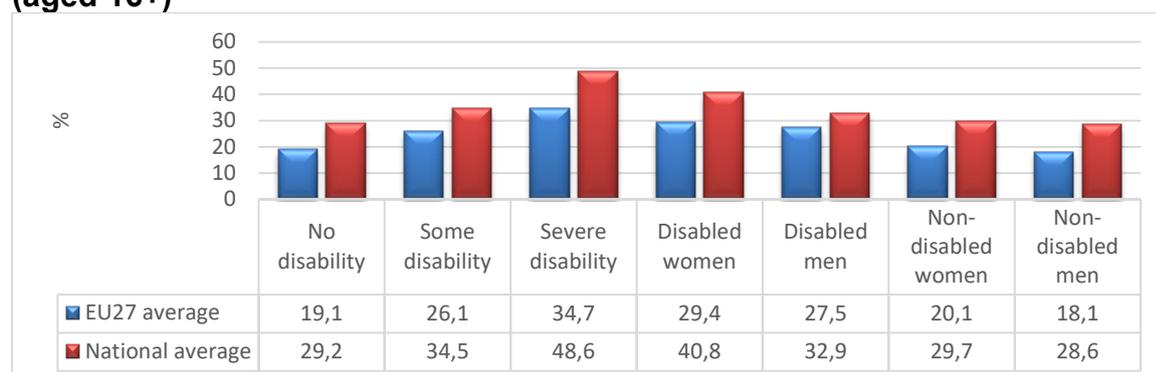
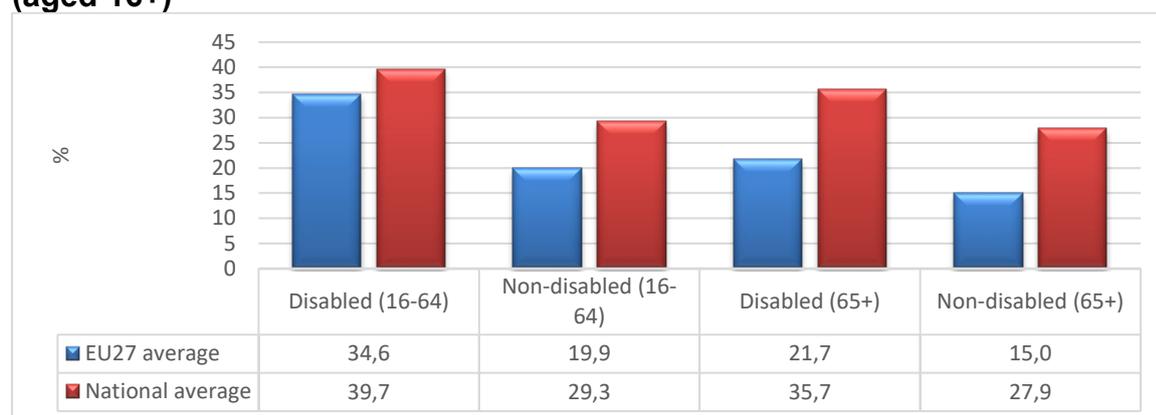


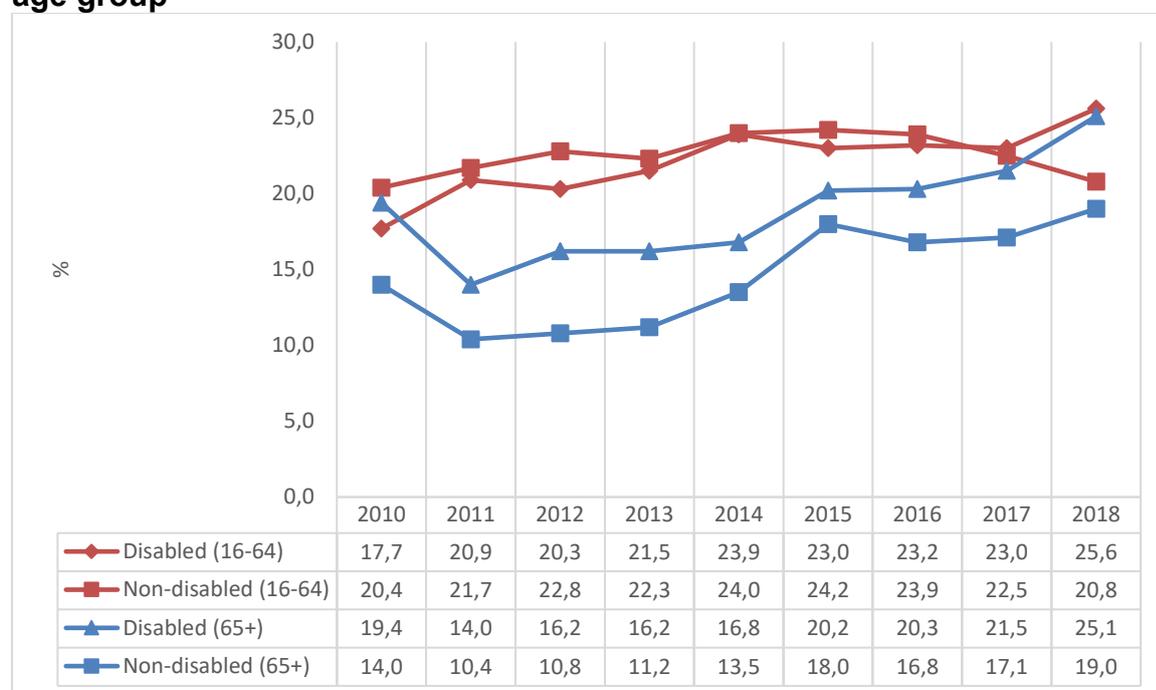
Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)



¹⁰⁶ Available at <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/transparenta/statistici/trimestriale/>.

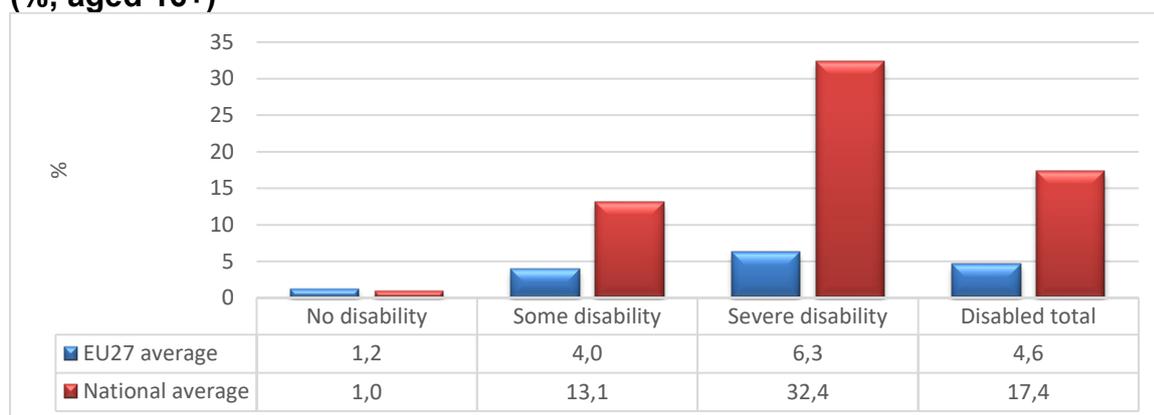
Table 13: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)

Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 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 2018 are consistent with the 3-year mean values.

7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or health care data in Romania

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.¹⁰⁷

The Ministry of Labour and Social Justice publishes data on the number of persons with disabilities (per type of disability), per county and with information related to whether they live in institutionalised settings or in the community. The Quarterly Statistic Bulletin on the situation of persons with disabilities includes such data.¹⁰⁸

The Ministry of Labour and Social Justice also publishes data on the number pensioners, mentioning the number of those receiving a disability pension, disaggregated by degree of disability and gender, as well as the average quantum of this pension.¹⁰⁹

Local social protection agencies also published bi-annual reports on their activity, which includes information on the services offered to children and adults with disabilities. This data is however collected only locally and given that Romania has 41 counties, examining this data in order to get a national picture can be time consuming.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

¹⁰⁸ Available at <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/transparenta/statistici/trimestriale/>.

¹⁰⁹ The yearly statistics are available at <http://mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/transparenta/statistici/date-statistice>.

¹¹⁰ One example of such a report is available at <https://www.dasiasi.ro/raport-privind-activitatea-dgaspc-iasi-semesterul-i-2020--dtl-165997.html>.

7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

Table 16: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)¹¹¹

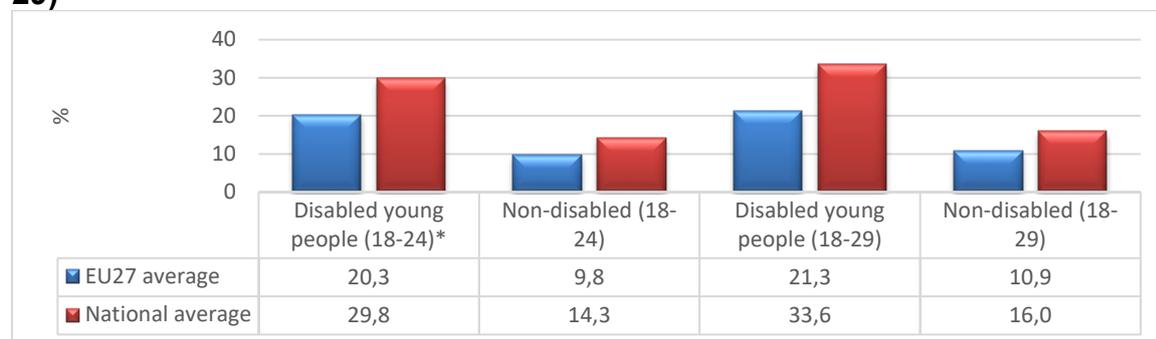
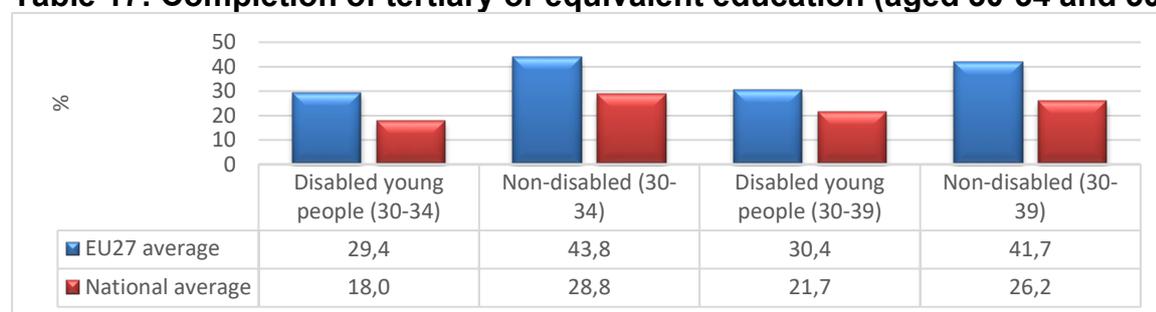


Table 17: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)



Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 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 Romania

Disability data is not included in the core European Labour Force Survey, but education and training indicators were disaggregated from ad hoc modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.¹¹² Similar caution is needed with this data.

Some administrative data is also provided in the European Agency's Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE), concerning the population of enrolled students identified with special educational needs in Romania.¹¹³

¹¹¹ 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.

¹¹² Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

¹¹³ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, *Statistics on Inclusive Education*, <https://www.european-agency.org/data/data-tables-background-information>.

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