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Romania

Oana Georgiana Gîrlescu

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 Romania in 2022

Disability and the labour market

The rate of employment of people with disabilities in Romania is very low, by some definitions as low as 7.3 %. Policies and laws have been amended and projects 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. Moreover, even when they work, most people with disabilities do not earn enough to live a basic, decent life.

Disability, social policies and healthcare

The number of people with disabilities in Romania has been increasing steadily in recent years. More than one in three persons with disabilities of working age face a risk of poverty. People with severe functional limitations are more than twice as likely as others to suffer from severe material deprivation. Social services and the few available community-based services are concentrated in richer or in urban areas, while being very much needed in poorer, rural areas as well. At the same time, the deinstitutionalisation process, particularly when it comes to adults with disabilities, has stalled.

Disability, education and skills

More than half of Romania's children with disabilities receive education in segregated settings or are completely excluded from the education system. Irrespective of whether they are in segregated settings or in mainstream schools, they face the lack of adequate support services, such as support teachers, an adapted curriculum and an adapted physical environment. They are prone to be bullied and have high rates of school dropout. Comprehensive data in relation to their situation is lacking. Moreover, children and young people with disabilities have few education and training opportunities that could provide them with skills that are useful on the labour market.

Investment priorities for inclusion and accessibility

Romania is running a significant number of EU funded / co-funded projects aimed at promoting the rights of people with disabilities. For example, it is investing in stimulating the employment of vulnerable groups, in ensuring access to services and supporting people with mental health problems and people in psychiatric care, in the deinstitutionalisation of children and adults with disabilities and in reducing school dropout rates. Concerning its future investment priorities, it will be investing in the rehabilitation, renovation and development of social infrastructure for persons with disabilities and in ensuring access to tertiary education. These are all areas in which, as underlined across this report, people with disabilities face significant risks and difficulties.

1.2 Recommendations for Romania

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

Recommendation: Bridge the gap between employers and employees with disabilities through measures such as: creating a system of assessments of potential employees' abilities and the establishment of vocational profiles; awareness raising among employers; labour market mediation services and creating training opportunities correlated to the needs of the labour market.

Rationale: On the one hand, there are areas in the labour market where there is a lack of workforce; on the other hand, there are many people with disabilities who can and want to work. Despite the promising laws and policies, employers have difficulties in reaching out to and taking on board people with disabilities.

Recommendation: Take measures to ensure access to and investment in services and support structures across all areas, including general and specialised healthcare services, social services, community-based services, employment and education.

Rationale: People with disabilities face increased risks of material deprivation and isolation, which need to be addressed urgently.

Recommendation: Provide adequate financial and human resources for students with disabilities, in all education settings and at all levels, to ensure access to adequate support. As well as investing in digitalisation and technology, ensure access to other support methods too, such as support teachers, adapted curricula and individualised support plans. Moreover, create education opportunities in correlation with the needs of the labour market.

Rationale: Many children with disabilities in Romania are still excluded from any form of education, while others study in segregated settings. They all face, at all levels of education, problems in accessing adequate support and programmes which will ensure them integration in the labour market.

Recommendation: Develop adequate monitoring methodologies, so as to ensure regular assessment of the implementation of a project; prepare efficient risk mitigation tools. Establish transparency as a priority, publishing information about the different stages of projects relevant for the promotion of the rights of people with disabilities; ensure this information is easily available, in accessible formats and invite all relevant stakeholders to provide input and assessment. Apply similar principles to establishing priorities for using available funding.

Rationale: Romania has been investing EU funds for many years, with the impact on specific areas relevant for the rights of people with disabilities being less satisfactory than expected. Information available publicly about many of these projects remains minimal. Adequate implementation, monitoring, assessment and transparency are needed.

2 Mainstreaming disability equality in the 2022 Semester documents

2.1 Country Report (CR)² and Country Specific Recommendation (CSR)

The following key points highlight where a disability perspective was considered, or should be considered, in the CR/CSR. We address the most relevant of these in the next chapters.

Disability and the labour market

Overall, the labour market performed well despite the COVID-19 pandemic, although key challenges remain. Among these key challenges, the disability employment gap increased to 30.4 percentage points (p. 3 – Country Report), above the EU average of 24.5 percentage points (p. 46 – Country Report). It also emphasises that adverse demographics will lead to a reduction in the workforce in the next decade; this will require higher productivity levels and an increase in the employment rate of, among other, persons with disabilities (p. 4 – Country Report).

Disability, social policies and healthcare

Disadvantaged groups, such as people with disabilities, face severe poverty risks and inequality, with the level of risk being above the EU average (pp. 11 and 47 – Country Report). The share of people with disabilities at risk of poverty or social exclusion also remains among the highest in the EU (p. 47 – Country Report). The Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) tackles poverty and inequality in Romania, which is among the highest in the EU, thereby contributing to implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. The social reforms aim to support children, persons with disabilities and older people as well as the formalisation of domestic work. The deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities should accelerate their integration into the community (p. 7 – Country Report).

Access to social and health services remains insufficient. This impacts particularly on the availability of integrated services and progress in the deinstitutionalisation of adults with disabilities. The situation is less dire when it comes to the deinstitutionalisation process for children, which is predicted to be finalised soon (pp. 4 and 47 – Country Report). Disadvantaged groups, such as people with disabilities, face severe poverty risks and inequality, with the level of risk being above the EU average (pp. 11 and 47 – Country Report). The share of people with disabilities at risk of poverty or social exclusion also remains among the highest in the EU (p. 47 – Country Report).

Disability, education and skills

The education and training system faces persistent quality and inclusiveness challenges. This affects persons with disabilities, who still face reduced training opportunities (p. 46 – Country Report). The rate of early leavers from education and training is high, affecting in particular students with disabilities or disadvantaged groups (p. 46 – Country Report). Under the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU), Romania financed additional classes to mitigate the impact of COVID-19-related school closures on the most vulnerable

² See: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/2022-european-semester-country-report-romania_en.pdf.

pupils. However, there is still a pressing need to improve learning outcomes and reduce inequalities in education (p. 47 – Country Report).

Investment priorities in relation to disability

People with disabilities are targeted by the actions regarding a fair green transition. Romania's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)³ provides for investments in social infrastructure, including for people with disabilities and day centres for children at risk, which also aim at improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (p. 111 -RRP).

The Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) does not include any direct reference to disability. While it makes no new recommendations addressing the labour market or social policy issues, it does include relevant observations related to the need to implement the RRP and previous CSRs.

2.2 National Reform Programme (NRP)⁴ and Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)⁵

The following key points highlight where the situation of people with disabilities or disability policies are relevant to the NRP/RRP. We analyse the most relevant of these in the next chapters.

Disability and the labour market

The NRP describes the legal amendments aimed at transforming the legal system regulating the legal capacity of people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities (pp. 62-63 – NRP). It examines the participation of people with disabilities on the labour market, describing the available support (p. 63 – NRP) and the outcomes of some relevant projects (p. 122 – NRP). In its analysis of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Romania, the Commission identifies one of the challenges as people with disabilities not receiving enough support for independent living and access to employment.⁶

Disability, social policies and healthcare

The RRP proposes the following main reforms relevant for people with disabilities: the reform of the system of protection of adults with disabilities; providing social housing for disadvantaged or vulnerable people including for persons with disabilities and improving the accessibility of buildings. The NRP develops these reforms and proposes measures which go beyond them.

Disability, education and skills

The RRP proposes to improve the quality and inclusive nature of education. The NRP develops these reforms and proposes measures which go beyond them.

³ See: <https://mfe.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ffdbdf26d6fc01f009a8059cfd94b0dd.pdf>.

⁴ See: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/pnr_2022_romania_en.pdf.

⁵ See: <https://mfe.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ffdbdf26d6fc01f009a8059cfd94b0dd.pdf>.

⁶ See: [Commission Staff Working Document: Analysis of the recovery and resilience plan of Romania | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#), p.12.

Investment priorities in relation to disability

The NRP develops the reforms proposed in the RRP and proposes measures which go beyond them. When it comes to reforms and investments in the field of investment and climate change, a relevant measure includes the renovation and development of social infrastructure for people with disabilities (p. 22 – NRP). Regarding the digital transformation of the public administration, it is worth mentioning the steps taken to create the National Management System on Disability (SNMD) (p. 36 – NRP).

Furthermore, the NRP provides brief information on the deinstitutionalisation process for adults and children with disabilities (p. 63 and p. 122 – NRP) and ensuring the transition of young people with disabilities from the special child protection system to the protection system for adults with disabilities. The process of restructuring the centres for people with disabilities continues, and the implementation timeline of the programmes was extended until the end of 2022 (p. 122 – NRP). It is also estimated that 5 000 people with disabilities will be integrated into the community as a result of the deinstitutionalisation process by 2027; at least 300 community-based services will be developed by 2027 (p. 192 – NRP).

This information is complemented by information related to projects being carried out to establish social services such as day care centres, respite care centres / crisis centres and sheltered housing for the deinstitutionalisation of children and adults with disabilities (p. 122 – NRP). Moreover, details about the development of the foster care network, financed under the 2014-2020 European Social Fund (ESF), are given; this led to foster care being provided to 519 children with disabilities (p. 121 – NRP). The NRP also provides information on the increase in allowances for children and youth with disabilities and the award of a compensatory indemnity for people with disabilities (pp. 63 and 193 – NRP). In 2021, the average monthly number of beneficiaries was 3 595.276 children, of whom 317 740 children aged 0-2, with or without disability; 5 054 children with disabilities aged 2-3; 3 201 452 children aged 2-18 without disabilities and young people aged over 18, as well as 71 030 children with disabilities aged 3-18 (p. 189 – NRP).

Furthermore, the NRP provides information on some measures taken to ensure the right to education for children with disabilities, such as a procedure to ensure access of children with disabilities to some important exams (p. 99 – NRP), the organisation of educational remedial activities for over 2 000 students with disabilities (p. 102 – NRP).

The NRP also provides brief information on relevant policy instruments, such as the 2021-2027 National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights.

2.3 Semester links to CRPD and national disability action plans

It is important that Semester plans align with national disability strategy. In Romania, this refers to the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022-2027.⁷ Following a previous strategy period 2016-2020, a new draft strategy for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) was proposed in 2021.⁸ The National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘An equitable Romania’, 2022-2027 and its operational plan were approved in April 2022.⁹ It includes nine lines of action, having eight priority domains, to which a focus is added on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and monitoring the observance of these rights. The national action plan is mentioned in the 2022 NRP (p. 192).

Relevant recommendations arising from participation in the UN CRPD are highlighted in the following chapters. Although it ratified the UN CRPD on 31 January 2011, Romania made its first submission only on 3 March 2022.¹⁰ The first UN CRPD Committee response to Romania is yet to be scheduled.

⁷ Available (in English) at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/strategia2022-2027/download/The%20National%20Strategy%20for%20the%20Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20An%20equitable%20Romania,%202022-2027.pdf>.

⁸ Agerpres, ANPDCA finalised the National Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities for the period 2021-2027 (*ANPDCA a finalizat Strategia națională privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități pentru perioada 2021-2027*), 23 November 2021, available (in Romanian) at: [ANPDCA a finalizat Strategia națională privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități pentru perioada 2021-2027 | AGERPRES • Actualizează lumea](http://agerpres.ro/ANPDCA-a-finalizat-Strategia-naionala-privind-drepturile-persoanelor-cu-dizabilitati-pentru-perioada-2021-2027).

⁹ By Government Decision No. 490/2022, of 6 April 2022, for the approval of the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘An equitable Romania’ 2022-2027, available (in Romanian) at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MO-375-bis-HG-490-06-04-Strategie-dizabilitati.pdf>.

¹⁰ See: [Treaty bodies Download \(ohchr.org\)](https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies).

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

Although it ratified the UN CRPD on 31 January 2011, Romania made its first submission only on 3 March 2022 (the report had been due since 3 March 2013);¹¹ the first UN CRPD Committee response to Romania is yet to be scheduled.

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

3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

According to the Social Scoreboard indicator, cited in the Semester package, the disability employment gap in Romania is considered 'To watch'.

Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Romania of 46.8 % in 2020, compared to 75.7 % for other persons. This results in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 30 percentage points (estimated EU27 average gap 24.5, see Tables 2-4) or an employment chances ratio of 0.6. Statistics published on the Eurostat database indicate a disability employment gap of 30.4 percentage points in 2020, using a slightly different methodology, and rising again to 32.6 points in 2021 (against a pre-COVID-19 figure of 29.2 points).¹²

The same data indicate unemployment rates of 2.1 % and 2.0 %, respectively in 2020 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Romania was 47.8 %, compared to 77.2 % for other persons (see Tables 8-10). These indications are broken down by gender and age in the respective tables in the Annex.

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

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. While no official statistics related to the employment rate are published regularly, there are different national actors reporting such information.

On 31 December 2021 the National Agency for Fiscal Administration reported that 35 213 registered people with disabilities were employed.¹³ Information available for previous years shows that there were 35 600 such persons working in 2017 and 43 000 in 2020.¹⁴

¹¹ See: [Treaty bodies Download \(ohchr.org\)](#).

¹² Eurostat, Disability employment gap by level of activity limitation and sex (source EU-SILC), 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dlm200/default/table.

¹³ See Alături de Voi Foundation, (2022), Analysis: What the employment of people with disabilities in sheltered establishments looks like and what we can do to increase the employment rate (*Analiză: Cum arată angajarea persoanelor cu dizabilități în unități protejate și ce putem face pentru a crește rata de angajare*), 20 April 2022, available (in Romanian) at: [Analiză: Cum arată angajarea persoanelor cu dizabilități în unități protejate și ce putem face pentru a crește rata de angajare - Fundatia "Alături de Voi" Romania](#).

¹⁴ See: Deacu, E. (2020), Analysis. Only 17 % of Romanians with disabilities are integrated on the labour market ([Analiză. Doar 17% dintre românii cu dizabilități sunt integrați pe piața muncii](#)), *Adevărul*, 27 October 2020.

In 2021 the World Bank found that, while 74 % of persons with no disabilities aged 20 to 64 are employed in Romania, only 51 % of persons with some limitations are employed, and the rate drops sharply for persons with severe limitations to only 12 %.¹⁵ Another study published in April 2022 found that the general employment rate of people with disabilities could be as low as 7.3 %.¹⁶

Part-time employees with disabilities are more common than full-time employees with disabilities¹⁷ and people with disabilities are more often employed in the private sector.¹⁸ Furthermore, 90 % of persons with severe limitations living in rural areas and 90 % of those with severe limitations who did not have a primary school education are also inactive.¹⁹

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 in similar positions. At the same time, they mainly access the lowest paid jobs.

The minimum gross monthly wage in Romania was, on 1 January 2022, EUR 525.25 (RON 2 550) for a full-time job.²⁰ In addition, some people with disabilities who work will still have access to monthly disability allowances and a personal complementary budget. Monthly disability allowances are only available for people with accentuated or severe disabilities, their amount being of EUR 57.37 (RON 279),²¹ respectively

¹⁵ World Bank (2021), Diagnosis of the situation of persons with disabilities in Romania. Available at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Diagnosis-of-the-situation-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-Romania.pdf>.

¹⁶ In Romania on 31 December 2021, according to official data published by the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 865 573 persons with disabilities were officially registered; 787 383 people of these were adults, with at least 482 454 people being of an age where they could participate on the labour market. These figures do not include adults with severe disabilities. According to the information provided by the National Agency for Fiscal Administration, in December 2021, only 35 213 people with disabilities were employed. See Alături de Voi Foundation, (2022), Analysis: What the employment of people with disabilities in sheltered establishments looks like and what we can do to increase the employment rate (*Analiză: Cum arată angajarea persoanelor cu dizabilități în unități protejate și ce putem face pentru a crește rata de angajare*), 20 April 2022, available (in Romanian) at: [Analiză: Cum arată angajarea persoanelor cu dizabilități în unități protejate și ce putem face pentru a crește rata de angajare - Fundația "Alături de Voi" Romania](#); a similar figure (7.35 %) had been published in 2020 by the Civil Society Development Foundation (Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile), (2020), Inclusive companies for people with disabilities – challenges and recommendations (*Companii incluzive pentru persoanele cu dizabilități – provocări și recomandări*), November 2020, p. 11.

¹⁷ Birau, R. and others, (2019), *Social Exclusion and Labour Market Integration of People with Disabilities. A Case Study for Romania*, Sustainability, September 2019.

¹⁸ Deacu, E. (2020), Analysis. Only 17 % of Romanians with disabilities are integrated on the labour market (*Analiză. Doar 17% dintre românii cu dizabilități sunt integrați pe piața muncii*), *Adevărul*, 27 October 2020.

¹⁹ World Bank (2021), Diagnosis of the situation of persons with disabilities in Romania. Available at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Diagnosis-of-the-situation-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-Romania.pdf>.

²⁰ Having increased from EUR 464 (RON 2 300) in 2021 and EUR 450 (RON 2 230) in 2020 through Romanian Government (*Guvernul României*) Decision no. 1071 of 4 October 2021, for setting the guaranteed minimum gross basic salary (*Hotărâre nr. 1.071 din 4 octombrie 2021 pentru stabilirea salariului de bază minim brut pe țară garantat în plată*).

²¹ See: [Indemnizație lunară acordată persoanei cu handicap accentuat - Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspectie Socială \(mmanpis.ro\)](#).

EUR 75.67 (RON 368).²² The personal complementary budget varies from EUR 13.2 (RON 64)²³ to EUR 31.8 (RON 158).²⁴ While these benefits have been slightly increased in the past year, their amount is so small that their lack of impact on the overall standard of living of the people receiving them is evident.

Therefore the situation is dire for people with disabilities, with even more difficulties being faced by people with disabilities from rural areas and by people with higher support needs. The challenges identified in the Commission's Country Report and the NRP are relevant given that they touch upon the fact that they touch on regional disparities in employment and the specific vulnerabilities faced by people with disabilities on the labour market.

3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see the 2022 National Reform Programme, the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Romania and the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022-2027.

Law No. 448/2006 guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities to employment and to benefit from reasonable accommodation at their workplace, career guidance and professional retraining, where necessary.²⁵ The National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 'An equitable Romania', 2022-2027 and its operational plan, which were adopted in April 2022,²⁶ provide employment as a line of action.

The strategy includes three specific objectives. The first specific objective is to increase access to employment for persons with disabilities. The strategy acknowledges the very low rate of employment of people with disabilities and the multiple benefits of an inclusive workforce. Sheltered employment is further discussed. Such employment is available in authorised sheltered facilities (ASFs) and in work inclusion social enterprises (WISEs). These mechanisms are underdeveloped and not sufficiently inclusive. Moreover, even though they are designed to provide temporary jobs and vocational training and support for transitioning to the formal labour market, they often lead to the extensive segregation of people with disabilities.

The key elements which it is necessary to address in order to solve the problem are the following:

²² See: [Indemnizație lunară acordată persoanei cu handicap grav - Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspecție Socială \(mmanpis.ro\)](https://mmanpis.ro/).

²³ See: [Bugetul personal complementar lunar pentru adultul cu handicap mediu - Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspecție Socială \(mmanpis.ro\)](https://mmanpis.ro/).

²⁴ See: [Bugetul personal complementar lunar pentru adultul cu handicap grav - Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspecție Socială \(mmanpis.ro\)](https://mmanpis.ro/).

²⁵ 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](https://www.legislatie.ro/)).

²⁶ By Government Decision No. 490/2022, of 6 April 2022, for the approval of the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 'An equitable Romania' 2022-2027, available (in Romanian) at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MO-375-bis-HG-490-06-04-Strategie-dizabilitati.pdf>.

- ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work – persons placed under guardianship are still denied their right to work; also, beneficiaries of disability pensions find it difficult to effectively exercise their right to work without losing their benefits;
- developing effective tools to stimulate employment for persons with disabilities – the quota system designed to incentivise employers to hire persons with disabilities by offering subsidies is not sufficiently attractive;
- increasing the role of employment services tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities – while some support is available at the unemployment agencies across the country, very few people access such support; county employment agencies do not ensure adequate physical accessibility, or accessibility of information and communications;
- raising awareness among working-age persons with disabilities about the options and the rights they have and among employers of the need to support the entry into the labour market of people with disabilities.

The second specific objective refers to increasing the quality of employment for persons with disabilities. The strategy underlines that employment does not automatically safeguard people against the risk of poverty. About 19 % of employed persons with disabilities remain at risk of poverty, this being a generalised problem in Romania, where 24 % of employed people without disabilities also face such a risk. A lot of self-employed persons with disabilities are in precarious jobs, such as seasonal work, with subsistence incomes.

This situation is due to factors such as the lack of financial incentives for employers, limited access to subsidised assistive technology and devices, limited access to support in employment and a lack of guidance and regulations on how to provide effective reasonable accommodation.

Quality employment must therefore be made available; such employment must ensure economic independence and support the personal fulfilment of persons with disabilities. It also needs to offer adaptations which can be made not only to the working space and equipment, but also to training and assessment programmes, job descriptions and working time.

The third specific objective is to increase access to professional training for persons with disabilities. The strategy acknowledges that persons with disabilities are disadvantaged regarding their preparedness for the labour market compared to other persons, because of the lower participation in education and less access to adult learning programmes. Moreover, there is no vocational assessment mechanism for persons with disabilities, and adult training is not adapted to the characteristics of persons with disabilities.

Therefore it is necessary to adapt the courses, which requires the accessibility of the building, of facilities and equipment, training materials, trainer's teaching methods and of all other delivery-related aspects.

The operational plan which accompanies the strategy provides specific, detailed measures aimed at implementing each of these specific objectives.²⁷ This new strategy identifies very well the obstacles faced by people with disabilities in accessing the labour force, as they have been described in previous Semester reports and as they are described in the NRP and the RRP. It also proposes adequate measures. This is a significant step in beginning to address the problems and is to be commended.

Having been adopted in April 2022, an assessment of the implementation of the strategy is not possible at this stage. There are, however, some important reforms that have already been initiated and that need to be mentioned.

Both public and private actors have been carrying out initiatives aimed at facilitating the integration of people with disabilities in the labour market. The National Employment Agency is carrying out 13 projects with the objective of stimulating employment for vulnerable groups, with a total value of over EUR 650 million, supported through the European Social Fund (ESF).²⁸ There is also a project on facilitating the labour market integration of people with disabilities. It has been reported that, within this project, 544 vouchers were issued by the end of December 2021, out of which 286 vouchers were paid for; 1 480 people with disabilities were included in the target group and benefited from professional guidance and counselling services, employment mediation or vocational training; 440 people were employed.²⁹

There are also some local social protection agencies that offer vocational training and counselling services.³⁰ Relevant projects are also carried out by private funders, such as OLX, one of Romania's main job search platforms, which offers employers the possibility to post job offers for people with disabilities for free.³¹

Services essential for ensuring the access of people with disabilities to the labour market are also provided by about 30 non-governmental organisations. They are usually provided in larger cities, with the access of those living in smaller towns or in the rural area being limited. Moreover, these NGO services are funded through donations and grants, and not from the state or local budget.

Romania has also initiated the reform of the legislation regulating legal capacity, with the view of implementing Article 12 of the UN CRPD. In 2020 the Romanian Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the norm regulating the deprivation of

²⁷ See: [Strategie Dizabilități 2022-2027 \(gov.ro\)](#).

²⁸ 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](#)).

²⁹ NRP, p. 122.

³⁰ Civil Society Development Foundation (*Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile*), (2020), Inclusive companies for people with disabilities – challenges and recommendations ([Companii incluzive pentru persoanele cu dizabilități – provocări și recomandări](#)), November 2020, p. 22.

³¹ SMARK, (2020), OLX analysis: The labour market for people with disabilities. OLX Romania launches a category of jobs for the recruitment of people with disabilities ([Analiză OLX: Piața muncii pentru persoanele cu dizabilități. OLX România lansează o categorie de locuri de muncă destinată recrutării persoanelor cu dizabilități](#)), 27 October 2020.

legal capacity of people with disabilities (Article 164(1) of the Civil Code).³² In August 2022 the law reforming the guardianship system entered into force.³³

This draft law does not prohibit full deprivation of legal capacity. It does however introduce a possibility of obtaining support, which does not impair the beneficiary's legal capacity: the assistance for concluding legal documents. It also introduces the possibility of a representative agreement (a mandate of protection), through which an individual who has yet to be deprived of legal capacity, can nominate, for the future and if the case arrives, the person they want to be appointed as their guardian. The law also claims it introduces more safeguards in order to ensure that full or partial deprivation of legal capacity will only be ordered in exceptional circumstances, with the measures taken being individualised and time limited.

This law could therefore ensure that the number of people with disabilities deprived of legal capacity who are also deprived of their right to work, is reduced significantly. At this stage its impact is difficult to assess. It is however certain that supported decision-making has become, for the first time, regulated in Romanian legislation.

³² Decision of the Constitutional Court No 601/2020 on the exception of unconstitutionality of the provisions of Article 164 para. (1) of the Law No. 287/2009 on the Civil Code.

³³ Law No. 140 of 17 May 2022 regarding some protection measures for people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities and the modification and completion of some normative acts ([Lege nr. 140 din 17 mai 2022 privind unele măsuri de ocrotire pentru persoanele cu dizabilități intelectuale și psihosociale și modificarea și completarea unor acte normative](#)).

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

Although it ratified the UN CRPD on 31 January 2011, Romania made its first submission only on 3 March 2022;³⁴ the first UN CRPD Committee response to Romania is yet to be scheduled.

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

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

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

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 26.0 % in 2020, compared to 20.4 % for other persons of similar age – an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 6 percentage points (see Table 14). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was 4.4 points (26.1 % for older persons with disabilities and 21.7 % for other persons of similar age). The tables in the Annex also indicate the respective rates of risk of poverty or social exclusion and break these down by gender as well age. Recently updated data from Eurostat indicates that this relative risk rose again for the working-age disabled population (29.5 %) but fell for the older age group (23.6 %) in 2021.³⁵

For persons with disabilities of working age in Romania (aged 18-64) the risk of poverty before social transfers was 52.1 % and 26 % after transfers. The in-work poverty rate for persons with disabilities in this age range was 18.7 % in 2020, rising to 25.5 % in 2021.³⁶ This might be due to younger adults losing income from work in the COVID-19 pandemic while older people kept their pensions.

Of interest to health policy are the data on self-reported unmet needs for medical examination (too expensive, too far to travel or waiting list). Disability equality gaps are evident here too and, on this basis, the rate for persons with disabilities in Romania was 16.4 %, compared to 0.6 % for other persons (see Table 15 in the Annex).

On 31 March 2022, Romania had 867 474 registered people with disabilities, representing 4.43 % of the population.³⁷ The official number of people with disabilities is growing steadily: with 768 400 people with disabilities in 2016, the figure has increased, in the past 6 years, by almost 13 %. Overall, 98.09 % (850 942) of them are in the care of families or live independently (non-institutionalised) and 1.91 %

³⁴ See: [Treaty bodies Download \(ohchr.org\)](#).

³⁵ Eurostat, People at risk of poverty by level of activity limitation, sex and age, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/HLTH_DPE020_custom_3348056.

³⁶ Eurostat, In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by level of activity limitation, sex and age, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dpe050/default/table.

³⁷ 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*), (2022), Statistical data ([Date statistice](#)), 31 March 2022.

(16 532 adults with disabilities) live in residential public institutions.³⁸ Despite a commitment to finalise the deinstitutionalisation process for adults with disabilities, the number of institutionalised adults with disabilities has decreased since 31 March 2021 by only 224 people (from 16 756 to 16 532).³⁹ People with severe functional limitations are more than twice as likely than others to suffer from severe material deprivation.⁴⁰ Social services are concentrated in richer areas or in urban areas, while being very much needed in poorer, rural areas as well.⁴¹ The lack of synergies and complementarity between educational, employment and social services further aggravates the situation of people with disabilities.⁴²

In Romania one needs EUR 574 (RON 2 818) a month to live a basic decent life, with the amount reaching EUR 1 483 (RON 7 278) for a couple with two children.⁴³ This amount is significantly higher than what most people with disabilities earn. Half of the people employed in Romania earn less than this amount.⁴⁴

4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see the 2022 National Reform Programme, the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Romania and the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022-2027 (see Section 2 for details of these documents).

The National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘An equitable Romania’, 2022-2027 and its operational plan, which were adopted in April 2022,⁴⁵ provide as three of its nine line of action the following:

- social protection, including habilitation / rehabilitation;
- independent living and integration in the community, including access to public services; and
- health.

³⁸ 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*), (2022), Statistical data ([Date statistice](#)), 31 March 2022.

³⁹ 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*), (2021), Statistical data ([Date statistice](#)), 31 March 2021.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, (2020), Basis Note ([Notă de fundamentare](#)), 2020.

⁴¹ National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Romania ([Planul Național de Redresare și Reziliență](#)), 2021, p. 32.

⁴² National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Romania ([Planul Național de Redresare și Reziliență](#)), 2021, p. 32.

⁴³ Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, (2020), Minimum monthly consumption for decent living, updated for 2020 ([Coșul minim de consum lunar pentru un trai decent, actualizat pentru anul 2020](#)), September 2020.

⁴⁴ Wall-Street, (2020), Distribution of salaries in our country: 1 in 4 Romanians earns the minimum wage, and others receive up to EUR 24 472 (RON 120 000) 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](#)).

⁴⁵ By Government Decision No. 490/2022, of 6 April 2022, for the approval of the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘An equitable Romania’ 2022-2027, available (in Romanian) at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MO-375-bis-HG-490-06-04-Strategie-dizabilitati.pdf>.

Social protection

The strategy underlines that persons with severe functional limitations are more than twice as likely as others to suffer from severe material deprivation,⁴⁶ which means they cannot afford a minimum number of goods and services that are desirable or even necessary to live. Romania has some of the highest levels of severe material deprivation in the European Union, both among the population as a whole and among persons with severe limitations. In 2018, 14 % of persons with high support needs suffered from severe material deprivation, while the proportion was only 6 % for persons with some or without limitations. Although the rate of severe material deprivation seems to have gradually decreased in the last few years, it has remained unchanged for persons with severe limitations.⁴⁷

To address this, the strategy proposes two specific objectives:

- improve access to poverty reduction programmes for the general population; and
- improve coverage of additional costs related to disability through existing programmes.

The strategy points out that there are three main financial support programmes that are established with the specific purpose of reducing poverty: the guaranteed minimum income, the family support allowance and the heating allowance. Access to these programmes must be ensured for all people with disabilities by, for example, eliminating physical barriers and ensuring relevant information is provided in accessible formats.

Given that Romania has some of the highest levels of severe material deprivation in the European Union for the population as a whole, the impact of these programmes on people with disabilities, even if they are made available, will most likely be reduced.

Moreover, disability often involves specific additional costs, which will vary depending on a variety of factors, such as the level of the support needs, the region where the person lives and the person's lifestyle or occupation. The main problem remains the lack of an adequate financing level for the benefits available for persons with disabilities.

Independent living and integration in the community

In relation to this line of action the strategy proposes as a first specific objective to improve the regulatory framework for social services. To achieve this, the strategy proposes to create a mechanism for proper individual needs assessments, as well as a needs assessment to be carried out at the local level. This would help with the distribution of available funding and the development of adequate services.

The need to allocate adequate funding for this purpose is also underlined, as is the need to simplify the procedure for obtaining the approval and licensing of social services and to create a proper monitoring mechanism for social services providers.

⁴⁶ See: [Strategie Dizabilități 2022-2027 \(gov.ro\)](#).

⁴⁷ See: [Strategie Dizabilități 2022-2027 \(gov.ro\)](#).

The second specific objective is related to the deinstitutionalisation of people with disabilities, a matter which is also touched upon in the NRP. Figures show that 1.91 % of people with disabilities, meaning 16 532 adults, still live in residential public institutions.⁴⁸

The strategy finds that, in order to move forward with deinstitutionalisation, it is necessary to develop deinstitutionalisation guidelines and an intensive training programme for the stakeholders involved in the process; and to provide constant guidance and monitoring of the deinstitutionalisation process, as well as sustained funding.

The third specific objective is related to improving access to community social services necessary for independent living. In order to be able to live independently, some people with disability need certain services, which need to be available, accessible, adequate and reasonably priced. In order to achieve this, Romania has to take measures in relation to the fact that community-based services are mostly not available. In particular, professional personal assistance is almost non-existent.

The fourth specific objective is related to improving access to social housing. While acknowledging the role of social housing as a tool for supporting social inclusion, the strategy points out that, in practice, access to such services remains difficult for people with disabilities. This is due to the fact that there is an insufficient stock of social housing, which is most often not physically accessible; moreover, there is very little coordination between social services and the local services responsible for providing social housing.

Health

In relation to health, the general objective of the strategy is to ensure quality healthcare services for persons with disabilities. As a first specific objective, the strategy proposes to improve the access of persons with disabilities to treatment and public health services.

The strategy emphasises that the national disability prevention programmes are scarce and that the level of functionality of individuals is considered as important an indicator for measuring the health of the population as mortality and morbidity. Moreover, people with disabilities have unmet medical needs to a greater extent than those without disabilities, most of the time for financial reasons. While 2 % of people without disabilities who had a medical need in the previous 12 months considered that their needs were not met, this rate rose to 18 % for those with some support needs, and to 42 % for those with high support needs.⁴⁹

Eurostat estimates a significant reduction in self-reported unmet needs for medical examination in 2021 for people with severe limitations: down from 33.6 % in 2020 to

⁴⁸ 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*), (2022), Statistical data ([Date statistice](#)), 31 March 2022.

⁴⁹ World Bank (2021), Diagnosis of the situation of persons with disabilities in Romania. Available at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Diagnosis-of-the-situation-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-Romania.pdf>.

25.4 % in 2021. Concerning people with some or severe limitation, the change was much less significant: it went down from 16.4 % in 2020 to 13.6 % in 2021. This information has not been corroborated with other information obtained during this research; in any case, according to the data published by Eurostat, this ratio still remains the highest in the European Union when it comes to people with severe limitations, and the third highest when it comes to people with some or severe limitations (after Greece and Estonia).⁵⁰

The strategy also emphasised the disparity in the geographical distribution of general practitioners and specialist doctors.

The second specific objective relates to ensuring the exercise of the right to sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities. Access to the services and information necessary to exercise this right remains limited for people with disabilities. Persons with disabilities do not have access to free methods of contraception and have limited access to screening for breast cancer and cervical cancer, as well as to anti-HPV vaccination.

The medical and psychosocial professionals who work in the services dedicated to persons with disabilities are insufficiently trained to provide advice and biased cultural context seems to prevail.

The last specific objective refers to improving the access of persons with disabilities to treatment, offered with dignity and respect. This objective tackles the discrimination and biases from service providers, which has been identified as one of the main barriers to accessing healthcare services.

About 31 % of persons with high support needs who accessed healthcare services in the previous year reported that they felt discriminated against or harassed at least once because of their disability.⁵¹ Training healthcare professionals is therefore vital, in order for them not to underestimate the physical or cognitive abilities of patients. Monitoring the compliance of healthcare facilities with the rights and needs of persons with disabilities is equally important.

The operational plan which accompanies the strategy provides specific, detailed measures aimed at implementing each of the lines of action and each of their specific objectives.⁵² This new strategy identifies very well the obstacles faced by people with disabilities in accessing the labour force, as described in previous Semester reports and in the NRP and the RRP. It also proposes adequate measures. This is a significant step in beginning to address the problems and is to be commended.

Having been adopted in April 2022, an assessment of the implementation of the strategy is not possible at this stage. There are however some remarks that can be made.

⁵⁰ See: [Statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1).

⁵¹ World Bank (2021), Diagnosis of the situation of persons with disabilities in Romania. Available at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Diagnosis-of-the-situation-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-Romania.pdf>.

⁵² See: [Strategie Dizabilități 2022-2027 \(gov.ro\)](https://www.gov.ro/Strategie-Dizabilitati-2022-2027).

According to Law No. 448/2006, people with disabilities receive disability certificates, attesting they have a severe, accentuated, medium or mild disability.⁵³ People with severe and accentuated disabilities can travel for free by trains and buses.⁵⁴ Monthly disability allowances are only available for people with accentuated or severe disabilities, their amount being EUR 57.37 (RON 279)⁵⁵ and EUR 75.67 (RON 368) respectively.⁵⁶ The personal complementary budget varies from EUR 13.2 (RON 64)⁵⁷ to EUR 31.8 (RON 158).⁵⁸ While these benefits have been slightly increased in the past year, their amount is so small that their lack of impact on the overall standard of living of the people receiving them is evident.

Children holding a disability certificate are entitled to a monthly allowance of EUR 121.70 (RON 600).⁵⁹ The same amount is granted to youth with disabilities attending pre-university classes organised in accordance with the law, but no later than the age of 26 years. To reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion, adults and children with disabilities benefited by a compensatory indemnity granted only once in January 2022; its amount varied from EUR 12.18 (RON 60) to EUR 71.02 (RON 350).⁶⁰

The amount of these allowances shows that their impact on the overall quality of life of people with disabilities is very likely to be limited. Adequate funding is therefore urgently necessary.

Concerning deinstitutionalisation, despite a long-assumed commitment to finalise the process as soon as possible, the number of adults still living in institutions has only decreased marginally in the past five years (by 8.35 %): from 18 038 in December 2018⁶¹ to 16 532 in March 2022.⁶²

⁵³ As of 31 March 2021, the percentages are the following: 40.07 % have severe disabilities, 48.08 % accentuated disabilities and 11.85 % medium or mild disabilities – see 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*), (2021), Statistical data ([Date statistice](#)), 31 March 2021.

⁵⁴ Emergency Ordinance 1017/2018.

⁵⁵ See: [Indemnizație lunară acordată persoanei cu handicap accentuat - Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspecție Socială \(mmanpis.ro\)](#).

⁵⁶ See: [Indemnizație lunară acordată persoanei cu handicap grav - Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspecție Socială \(mmanpis.ro\)](#).

⁵⁷ See: [Bugetul personal complementar lunar pentru adultul cu handicap mediu - Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspecție Socială \(mmanpis.ro\)](#).

⁵⁸ See: [Bugetul personal complementar lunar pentru adultul cu handicap grav - Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspecție Socială \(mmanpis.ro\)](#).

⁵⁹ The 2021 [National Reform Programme](#), p. 80.

⁶⁰ GEO No 126/2021 amending the Law No. 61/1993 on the state allowance for children, and granting a compensatory allowance for the people with disabilities, available (in Romanian) at [ORD DE URGENTA 126 15/12/2021 - Portal Legislativ \(just.ro\)](#).

⁶¹ See: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ANPD-Buletin-statistic-IV-2017-publicabil.doc>.

⁶² With 17,908 in December 2018, 17,562 in December 2019, 16 911 in December 2020 and 16 607 in December 2021 (see [Statistici – Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilități \(gov.ro\)](#)).

Moreover, even if the average number of beneficiaries has dropped in large-scale centres, there has been a slight increase in the number of large residential care centres (those with more than 50 beneficiaries, as well as those with 100 beneficiaries or more).⁶³

The number of public social assistance institutions for adults with disabilities, as of 31 March 2022 is 539 (compared to 510 in March 2021 and 500 in March 2020), of which 484 are residential settings (compared to 455 in March 2021 and 444 in March 2020) and 55 are full-time non-residential settings (compared to 55 in March 2021 and 56 in March 2020). About 1 052 people with disabilities live in so-called sheltered housing.⁶⁴

Of the 484 residential settings for adults with disabilities, 60 have more than 50 beneficiaries, accommodating 6 955 people (compared to 79 settings in March 2021). According to the authorities, all these centres are in the process of restructuring.⁶⁵ Settings with less than 50 residents, while representing institutions according to the UN CRPD, are not, for now, targeted by policies aimed at restructuring them.

Besides these, there are also 277 residential services (265 public residential services and 12 private residential services) for children with disabilities. These services include 176 family houses, 44 apartments, 33 classic placement centres, 21 modulated placement centres and 3 other services. They accommodate 3 717 children in total (compared to 3 848 in March 2021 and 4 366 in March 2020).⁶⁶ None of these services are considered institutions, with authorities reporting that the process of deinstitutionalisation of children was finalised.⁶⁷

According to the NRP, there is an intense process of restructuring the centres for people with disabilities being carried on (p. 63). The deadline for implementing the programmes (financed by the State Budget) for deinstitutionalising adults with disabilities and ensuring the transition of young people with disabilities from the special child protection system to the protection system for adults with disabilities has been extended to the end of 2022. Given the number of individuals still institutionalised and the evolution of these figures over the recent years, the completion of this process by the end of 2022 is not likely to happen.

The Operational Arrangements between the Commission and Romania⁶⁸ make reference to the reform of the protection system for adults with disabilities. The first milestones, to be achieved by the end of 2022, are the entry into force of the Guide to

⁶³ World Bank (2021), Diagnosis of the situation of persons with disabilities in Romania. Available at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Diagnosis-of-the-situation-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-Romania.pdf>.

⁶⁴ See: [Statistici – Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilități \(gov.ro\)](http://statistici.gov.ro).

⁶⁵ 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*), (2021), Statistical data ([Date statistice](#)), 31 March 2021.

⁶⁶ See: [Buletin statistic în domeniul muncii și protecției sociale în trimestrul I 2022 \(mmuncii.ro\)](#).

⁶⁷ See: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ANPD-Trim-I-2022-Buletin-Statistic-v1.docx>.

⁶⁸ See: [Operational Arrangements between the Commission and Romania | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

Accelerating the Deinstitutionalisation Process and of the national strategy for the prevention of institutionalisation.

The other targets, to be achieved by 2026, are to reduce the total number of institutionalised persons with disabilities and to ensure that institutionalised persons with disabilities receive personalised support to deinstitutionalise and implement their 'independent living pathway'. The goal is to reduce the number of institutionalised adults to 11 500 and for 8 455 people to receive personalised support.⁶⁹ These targets are not very ambitious, given that in the NRP there is a commitment to finalise the deinstitutionalisation process by the end of 2022 and there are currently 16 532 institutionalised adults with disabilities.

In its 2021 RRP, Romania identified the lack of community-based support services and the difficulties encountered in the deinstitutionalisation process as important barriers towards the inclusion of people with disabilities. As a result, these became investment priorities (pp. 67, 71). The related proposed objectives are somehow modest, including, for the next five years, the development of only 35 new community-based services (for 1 250 beneficiaries/year) and the modernisation of 150 such services that already exist (pp. 962-963); moreover, the settings able to access funding for renovation include so-called 'protected housing', which, in the form they took until now in Romania, resembled institutional settings, rather than an entity where people would live independently.

⁶⁹ [Operational Arrangements between the Commission and Romania | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#), pp. 407-408.

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

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

Although it ratified the UN CRPD on 31 January 2011, Romania made its first submission only on 3 March 2022;⁷⁰ the first UN CRPD Committee response to Romania is yet to be scheduled.

5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

The EU-SILC 2020 estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with caution due to relatively wide confidence intervals but they consistently indicate disability equality gaps (an average of 2-3 years provides a more stable indication). Table 16 indicates early school leaving rates disaggregated by disability status in Romania. Youths with disabilities (aged 18-24) tend to leave school early 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 the completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (aged 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider age range 30-39).

The total number of children identified with disabilities has increased from 71 893 in 2019⁷¹ to 77 672 as of 31 March 2021⁷² and to 79 838 as of 31 March 2022.⁷³ An estimate corresponding to the 2018/19 school year indicates that 66 272 children with special educational needs were enrolled in pre-university education.⁷⁴ In the 2020/21 school year there were 56 575 children with disabilities registered as attending school; 35 782 (46 %) of them were in mainstream schools, while 20 793 (approximately 27 %) were in special schools.⁷⁵ It therefore appears that more than 21 000 (approximately 27 %) children with disabilities were not, in the previous school year, enrolled in any form of education. Given these figures, it seems that the percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in mainstream education has remained, in the past years, relatively stable; the number of children with disabilities in special schools has decreased by almost 30 %, while the number of children not enrolled in any form of education is significant and might have increased dramatically in recent years.

⁷⁰ [Treaty bodies Download \(ohchr.org\)](#).

⁷¹ See: Ceccar Business Magazine, 'ANPDCA: 71,893 children with disabilities, registered at the end of June 2019', 8 November 2019, <https://www.ceccarbusinessmagazine.ro/anpdca-71893-copii-cu-dizabilitati-inregistrati-la-finele-lunii-iunie-2019-s6783/>.

⁷² See: <http://anpdca.gov.ro/w/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/situatie-copii-cu-certificate-de-incadrare-in-grad-de-handicap-la-31-03-2021.doc>.

⁷³ See: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ANPDPA-trim-I-2022-Buletin-statistic-v1.docx>.

⁷⁴ National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 'An equitable Romania' 2022-2027, p. 33, available (in English) at: <http://anpd.gov.ro/strategia2022-2027/download/The%20National%20Strategy%20for%20the%20Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20An%20equitable%20Romania,%202022-2027.pdf>.

⁷⁵ According to information provided by the Ministry of Education on 1 October 2021, following a request for information.

Around one third of 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.⁷⁶ Children with disabilities in mainstream schooling also face a variety of challenges, given that the support available for them is extremely limited. The physical accessibility of schools is more often lacking than being ensured. When it comes to education facilities for children aged 6-14, 21 % of them have adequate wheelchair ramps and 13 % have accessible access.⁷⁷ There are schools where no classroom is on an accessible path for persons with locomotor disabilities (9 %) and even more with no classroom on an accessible path for persons with visual impairments (45 %).⁷⁸

The courses followed to become a teacher include very little information on working with children with disabilities, failing to equip future professionals with the skills they need.⁷⁹ The initial training given to teachers in mainstream education covers only superficial areas of special pedagogies, which can hardly be capitalised on in professional practice during their teaching career. The participation rates of mainstream education teachers in continuous training courses for learning how to work with students with disabilities and / or special educational needs is low. The reason for the low participation is also due to the fact that teachers in mainstream education currently have no obligation to complete courses in the field of inclusive education, although in the offer of the teacher training centres, as well as of other continuous training providers, there are accredited / approved training programmes addressing this issue. It is also true that the thematic approach in these programmes is not guided by a strategic document. There are also no systematic educational resources specific to working with students with disabilities and / or special education needs.⁸⁰

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.⁸¹ Moreover, it has been reported that the bullying these children face in mainstream education often leads to dropouts or transfers from the mainstream schools.⁸²

⁷⁶ See: Council of Europe (2019) Commissioner of Human Rights: Report following her visit to Romania from 12 to 16 November 2018: <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

⁷⁷ See: http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/Transparenta_decizionala/31032021NF_strategie_dizabilitate.pdf.

⁷⁸ National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 'An equitable Romania' 2022-2027, p. 34.

⁷⁹ See: http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMPS/Transparenta_decizionala/31032021NF_strategie_dizabilitate.pdf.

⁸⁰ National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 'An equitable Romania' 2022-2027, p. 34.

⁸¹ See: Hot News (2019) 'Map of the counties with the most children in special schools. One support teacher for 150 children with disabilities (study)', <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-educatie-22981826-romania-exista-singur-profesor-sprijin-pentru-150-copii-dizabilitati.htm>.

⁸² See: Council of Europe (2019) Commissioner of Human Rights: Report following her visit to Romania from 12 to 16 November 2018 <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

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 EUR 18 000 a year for therapies and private support teachers.⁸³

Regarding access to tertiary education, in 2017 only 7 % of university students in Romania reported having a disability, a chronic condition or other functional limitations, this being one of the lowest percentages in the European Union. This proportion is even lower in reality. Among those who identify as persons with disabilities, 43 % do not encounter limitations in their learning activities. Also, more than half of the students with limitations related to their studies (56 %) do not need or do not want any support from the authorities to be able to complete their university studies.⁸⁴

5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see the 2022 National Reform Programme, the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Romania and the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022-2027.

The National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘An equitable Romania’, 2022-2027 and its operational plan, which were adopted in April 2022,⁸⁵ provides education as one of its main lines of action.

Its general objective is to ensure the access of children and young persons with disabilities and / or special educational needs (SEN) to inclusive and quality education in the community, on an equal basis with other children and young people, so that they can reach their full potential for development.

The first specific objective of the strategy, in relation to education, is improving access to quality education at all pre-university levels. It is therefore required to ensure an accessible physical, information and communications school environment, qualified staff and adapted teaching and assessment methods, used together with appropriate assistive materials and technologies.

In order to promote inclusive education, a partnership agreement was initiated between the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Ministry of Education, regarding collaboration between the parties to ensure the right of children and young persons with disabilities and / or SEN to receive a quality education that allows for intellectual and psycho-emotional development in an inclusive school environment.

⁸³ See: Hot News (2019) ‘Map of the counties with the most children in special schools. One support teacher for 150 children with disabilities (study)’, <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-educatie-22981826-romania-exista-singur-profesor-sprijin-pentru-150-copii-dizabilitati.htm>.

⁸⁴ National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘An equitable Romania’ 2022-2027, p. 35.

⁸⁵ By Government Decision No. 490/2022, of 6 April 2022, for the approval of the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘An equitable Romania’ 2022-2027, available (in English) at <http://anpd.gov.ro/strategia2022-2027/download/The%20National%20Strategy%20for%20the%20Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20An%20equitable%20Romania,%202022-2027.pdf>.

The second specific objective is to improve the access of persons with disabilities to tertiary education. Tertiary education institutions must provide access to the physical, and information and communications environment, with reasonable adaptations of teaching and assessment methods. Universities must be prepared to include students with disabilities and ensure they can enjoy the same opportunities as their counterparts without disabilities.

The operational plan which accompanies the strategy provides specific, detailed measures aimed at implementing each of lines of action and each of their specific objectives.⁸⁶ This new strategy identifies very well the obstacles faced by children with disabilities in accessing education. The analysis and the measures proposed are in line with the UN CRPD, focusing on inclusive education.

This approach is to be commended; it indicates a shift of perspective, given the fact that existing legislation accepts segregation, and, in practice, segregation, either in special schools or in mainstream schools, seems to be the reality children with disabilities have to face.

The strategy itself admits that teachers and principals of education units find that, while students with intellectual disabilities represent a considerable category, the system is poorly prepared logistically for their school integration.⁸⁷

The legal framework for inclusive education is extensive, but it lacks a coherent and unitary approach. The National Education Law⁸⁸ provides as a rule mainstream education. However, it also regulates special schools, differentiated by degrees and types of established deficiencies, allowing therefore the perpetuation of the segregation of children with disabilities. Children with disabilities can be home-schooled or be provided education in the proximity of healthcare units.

The National Education Law establishes, at the level of each county, so-called centres of resources and educational assistance, in charge of 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 peripatetic teachers, on a case-by-case basis. Children can be transferred between the special and the mainstream system, at the initiative of teachers or parents.

While mainstream schools at the primary and middle levels have a legal obligation to enrol students with disabilities, this legal obligation does not exist in the case of preschool education; children can therefore be rejected. This is particularly significant given that early education is very important for children with disabilities as early diagnosis and interventions can significantly improve their development.

The Law 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,

⁸⁶ See: [Strategie Dizabilități 2022-2027 \(gov.ro\)](#).

⁸⁷ National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 'An equitable Romania' 2022-2027, p. 34.

⁸⁸ Law No. 1/2011 Articles 48-56.

although no official data on it is available, appears to be high, with no effective mechanism in place to prevent its incidence, or to gather data and offer support where it occurs.⁸⁹ The National Education Law⁹⁰ also has two special provisions related to ensuring physical accessibility for students with physical disabilities.

The activity of peripatetic and support teachers is regulated as a special education activity, according to Article 262 (3) (f) of the National Education Law No. 1/2011, with subsequent amendments and completions. Providing school facilitators that are necessary for students with disabilities and / or special education needs is challenging, because their activity is not funded by the education system. Staff who specialise in working with children with disabilities and / or special education needs are concentrated in the special education system and only students enrolled in it benefit from their services (e.g. therapies).⁹¹

The 2021 RRP addresses many of these issues. It states that an early warning mechanism in education, aimed at preventing school dropout, has been implemented; the mechanism includes, in its target group, children with disabilities (pp. 1178-1285). Romania is also carrying out a reform aimed at the digitalisation of education, which includes a disability perspective. The proposed measures refer to the development of digital content and digital educational tools to create creative educational solutions for students with disabilities (p. 73). Teachers are to be trained to use inclusive methodologies, taking into consideration, among other things, the needs of students with disabilities (p. 1281). Moreover, regarding the university infrastructure, investments are planned to be used to increase the number of places in canteens and dormitories and to create reading spaces and leisure time, dedicated to students from vulnerable groups, such as students with disabilities (p. 1237). The RRP also states, in a general manner, that the training and vocational courses which will be made available will be disability inclusive (e.g. courses for construction students to develop their skills concerning energetic efficiency (p. 376); vocational training and retraining of all persons working or wishing to work in the field of conservation / restoration (p. 384), centres for those interested in developing a research career (pp. 749-750)).

On 22 September 2021 Romania adopted the National Child Support Programme in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic – ‘Caring for children’.⁹² This programme is aimed at ensuring that, given these special circumstances, the living conditions of children improve, children are protected from domestic violence and measures are taken to ensure their safety online.⁹³ The programme might be relevant for children with disabilities as well, although it does not include, at least not in its main text, any

⁸⁹ See: Council of Europe (2019) Commissioner of Human Rights: Report following her visit to Romania from 12 to 16 November 2018, <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

⁹⁰ Law No. 1/2011.

⁹¹ National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ‘An equitable Romania’ 2022-2027, p. 34.

⁹² See: <https://www.ces.ro/newlib/PDF/proiecte/2021/OUG-aprob-PNS-Din-grija-pentru-copii.pdf>.

⁹³ Romania, Prime-Minister (*Prim Ministrul*), (2021), Decision No. 365 of 23 June 2021 for the elaboration of the National Child Support Programme in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic – ‘Caring for children’ ([Decizia nr. 365 din 23 iunie 2021 pentru elaborarea Programului național de suport pentru copii în contextul pandemiei de COVID-19 - "Din grijă pentru copii"](#)).

specific reference to this particular group. It will be implemented, to begin with, for a period of two years, having an allocated budget of EUR 6 million.⁹⁴

The funds available to implement all the measures proposed in laws and policies 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.⁹⁵ In the meantime, the 2021 Recovery and Resilience Plan focuses on digitalisation and developing online instruments, which is unlikely to remove all the barriers children with disabilities face.

⁹⁴ See: https://www.stripesurse.ro/florin-citu-anunta-ca-a-fost-adoptata-ordonanta-de-urgenta-pentru-implementarea-programului-din-grija-pentru-copii_2006844.html.

⁹⁵ See: Council of Europe (2019) Commissioner of Human Rights: Report following her visit to Romania from 12 to 16 November 2018, <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-romania-from-12-to-16-november-2018-by-dunja-mi/1680925d71>.

6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

The Common Provisions Regulation (CPR),⁹⁶ formally adopted by the European Union on 24 June 2021, sets out common provisions for EU funds in the framework of the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2021-2027. In accordance with Annex III of the CPR, the horizontal enabling condition in the field of disability is ‘the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC’.

In order to ensure this condition is being fulfilled, a memorandum was adopted;⁹⁷ this established a collaboration framework between the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions (ANPDCA) and the Ministry of European Investments and Projects. Within this framework, the Guide ‘The reflection of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Preparation and Implementation of Programmes and Projects with Grants for the Period 2021-2027’⁹⁸ was developed.

Updates on use of existing EU funds (up to 2022)

Disability and the labour market

The project ‘Facilitating the insertion of people with disabilities on the labour market’,⁹⁹ was led by the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions and the National Employment Agency. The project was initiated on 23 May 2019 and, although it was to be completed by 23 May 2022, it was extended until 31 July 2023. The activities to be carried out include support in identifying and applying for jobs, support for employers to ensure the accessibility of workplaces 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 total value of the project is EUR 22 697 262.01 (RON 111 978 816.40), of which EUR 19 164 544.33 (RON 94 549 862.89) is from EU funds. It was reported that for the period 23 May 2019 – 31 November 2021, the following was achieved:¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1060](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

⁹⁷ According to the reply of the Ministry of European Investments and Projects received on 29 October 2021, following a request for information. The text of the memorandum does not appear to have been made public.

⁹⁸ Ministry of European Investments and Projects, (2021), Guide ‘The reflection of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Preparation and Implementation of Programmes and Projects with Grants for the Period 2021-2027’ (*Ghid - Reflectarea Convenției ONU privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități în pregătirea și implementarea programelor și proiectelor cu finanțare nerambursabilă alocate României în perioada 2021-2027*), 2 July 2021.

⁹⁹ More information available at: [Facilitarea inserției pe piața muncii a persoanelor cu dizabilități – Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilități \(gov.ro\)](#).

¹⁰⁰ See: <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Comunicat-presa-Decembrie-2021.pdf>.

- 1 295 people with disabilities were included in the target group who benefited from information and professional counselling services, work mediation or professional training;
- 440 persons were employed, of which 156 were financed by subsidies according to Article 80 and Article 85 of Law No. 76/2002 regarding the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation;
- 609 compliance verification notes on granting or rejecting the granting of vouchers were created and 544 vouchers issued;
- the list of suppliers / producers of technologies and assistive devices and access technologies on the website www.andpdca.gov.ro was updated, including, at present, 21 suppliers;
- 561 telephone hearings granted to people with disabilities regarding the way in which they can benefit from the voucher, which are the necessary documents, which are the institutions they can contact;
- a mobile phone number intended for potential voucher beneficiaries has been allocated;
- informative materials related to the project were distributed;
- 15 infographics that include information about suppliers and the necessary steps to follow in order to obtain the voucher were posted on the andpdca.gov.ro website;
- 1 video elaborated on the stages to be followed in order to obtain the voucher;
- the promotion activity planned for the project was completed, namely two advertising productions (video spot and audio spot) in order to ensure the communication and advertising support of the project and communication activities with partners;
- the two advertising productions were broadcast (video spot on TVR 1 and N 24, respectively the audio spot on Radio Romania and Digi FM) during the month of November;
- monthly Informative Bulletins intended for communication to associations of persons with disabilities of information regarding the progress achieved in the development of the project were made and sent.

Disability, social policies and healthcare

On 1 October 2020, the National Centre for Mental Health and Anti-Drug Control (*Centrul Național de Sănătate Mintală și Luptă Antidrog*, CNSM) implemented projects to which almost EUR 4.4 million from EU funds were allocated, aimed at supporting people with mental health problems and people in psychiatric care. These projects included the following:¹⁰¹

- a project targeted at increasing professional skills among medical personnel involved in the detection of affective disorders and the prevention of suicidal behaviour; this project aims to train 636 nurses, 204 doctors and 60 psychologists – it already carried out training for 500 nurses, 105 doctors and 14 psychologists;
- the project ‘Support for the development of community mental health services for children and adolescents’, dedicated to professionals working in the field of

¹⁰¹ (2021), [Communication from the authorities on the individual and general measures \(12/10/2020\) in the cases of Cristian Teodorescu and Parascineti v. Romania \(Applications No. 22883/05, 32060/05\)](#) (French only), 13 October 2020.

pediatric psychiatry. This project is carried out in collaboration with the Regional Academic Community for Autism, ADHD, Tourette Syndrome and Narcolepsy from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim. The goal is to train 700 participants so that they can detect early mental disorders in children and adolescents and intervene adequately. The project was initiated in March 2020 and, according to the latest available information, it was at the stage of developing training programmes.

The implementation of the projects, financed under European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the regional operational programme (ROP), with the aim of deinstitutionalising children and establishing social services such as community-based support, training for professional personal assistants, day care centres and sheltered housing for people with disabilities is ongoing. Concerning people with disabilities, 18 projects were contracted to date, with the payments amounting to EUR 3.69 million (the budget was EUR 12.68 million, of which EUR 10.78 million is from ERDF).¹⁰²

Disability, education and skills

The National Programme for the Reduction of School Dropouts¹⁰³ was initiated by the Ministry of Education. It is part of the 'Educated Romania' National Reform Project, and receives funding through the RRP (EUR 543 million – non-refundable).

This programme addresses early school leaving and school dropout, focusing on students at risk of dropping out, particularly on students belonging to vulnerable groups, Roma students, students from rural and small urban areas, students with disabilities or special educational needs, students from economically disadvantaged communities, children at risk of social exclusion due to poverty, lack of housing, single-parent families, disorganised families, students exposed to other social risks.¹⁰⁴

Among others, the programme implements the early warning mechanism in education (MATE) by awarding grants, in two rounds, to an estimated number of 2 500 out of a total of 3 235 state secondary education units with a medium and high risk of dropping out, identified by the project 'Development of an integrated system of prevention, intervention and compensation to increase school participation'.

Each grant will have a maximum value of EUR 200 000, depending on the number of enrolled students and the degree of marginalisation of the locality, and will be implemented over a period of three years.

¹⁰² The 2021 [National Reform Programme](#), p. 79; following a request for information, the Ministry of European Investments and Projects, replying on 29 October 2021, confirmed there were, at that date, 15 ongoing projects concerning deinstitutionalisation; they also provided details about the activities carried out within each of the 15 projects.

¹⁰³ [Programul Național pentru Reducerea Abandonului Școlar || Rezultatele primului apel de proiecte din cadrul Programului Național pentru Reducerea Abandonului Școlar \(PNRAS\) - martie 2022 | Ministerul Educației.](#)

¹⁰⁴ [1.391 de unități de învățământ vor beneficia de finanțare în cadrul celui mai mare program de sprijinire a participării la educație din istoria recentă a României: Programul Național pentru Reducerea Abandonului Școlar | Ministerul Educației.](#)

Priorities for future investments according to the Operational Arrangements for the implementation of the RRP

The Operational Arrangements between the Commission and Romania were signed in May 2022.¹⁰⁵

The arrangements make reference, in relation to future investments, to the rehabilitation, renovation and development of social infrastructure for persons with disabilities. The first milestone, to be achieved by the end of 2024, is to modernise 50 community-based services for persons with disabilities; these services should add up to accommodating at least 1 000 persons per year.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, by 2025, 55 new community-based services for people with disabilities should be built, which should accommodate, as a minimum, 4 870 people.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, the Operational Arrangements plans to ensure university infrastructure by, among other things, upgrading or creating new in-use accommodation places by the third quarter of 2024. It is noted that students with disabilities, among other groups considered disadvantaged, should be given priority in these newly built facilities.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ [Operational Arrangements between the Commission and Romania | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

¹⁰⁶ [Operational Arrangements between the Commission and Romania | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#), pp. 126-127 and p. 414.

¹⁰⁷ [Operational Arrangements between the Commission and Romania | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#), pp. 127 and p. 415.

¹⁰⁸ [Operational Arrangements between the Commission and Romania | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#), pp. 317-319.

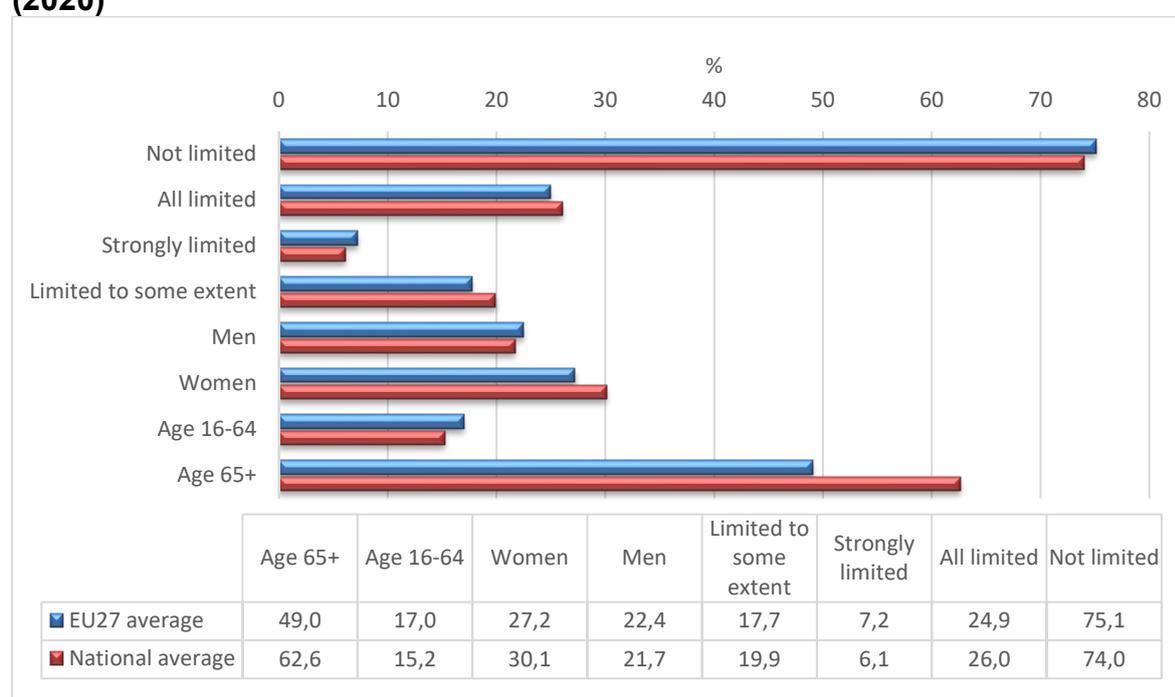
7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database¹⁰⁹ and statistical reports.¹¹⁰

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

The proxy used to identify people with disabilities (impairments) is whether ‘for at least the past 6 months’ the respondent reports that they have been ‘limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do’.¹¹¹

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



Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022

In subsequent tables, these data are used to indicate ‘disability’ equality gaps and trends relevant to the analytical chapters – for the labour market, social policies and healthcare, and education – by comparing outcomes for persons who report and do not report ‘activity limitations’.¹¹² National estimates for Romania are compared with EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

¹¹⁰ Eurostat (2019) Disability Statistics: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics.

¹¹¹ The EU-SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM), [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_\(MEHM\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_(MEHM)).

¹¹² This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at: <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

¹¹³ The exit of the United Kingdom from the EU changed the EU average. EU27 averages have also been affected by time series breaks in other large countries, such as Germany.

7.1 Data relevant to disability and the labour market

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

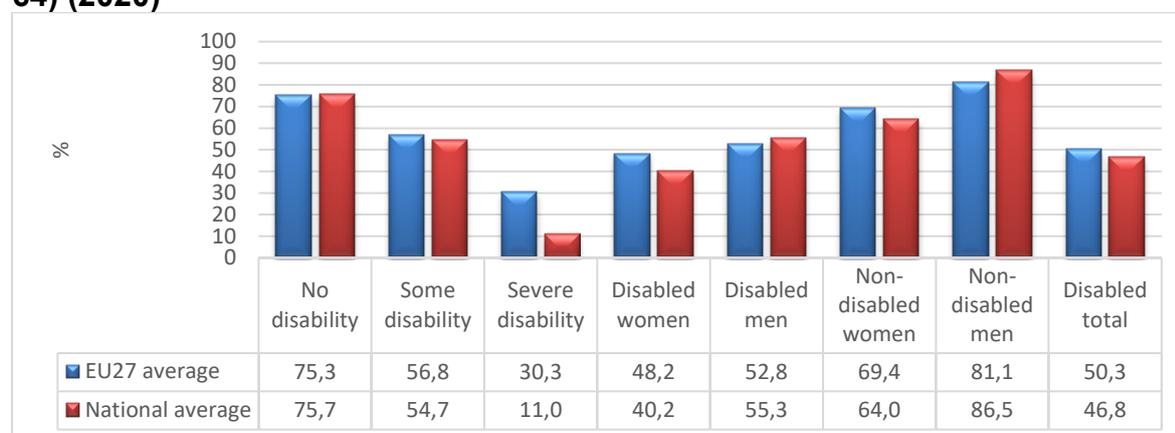


Table 3: Employment rates in Romania, by disability and age group (2020)

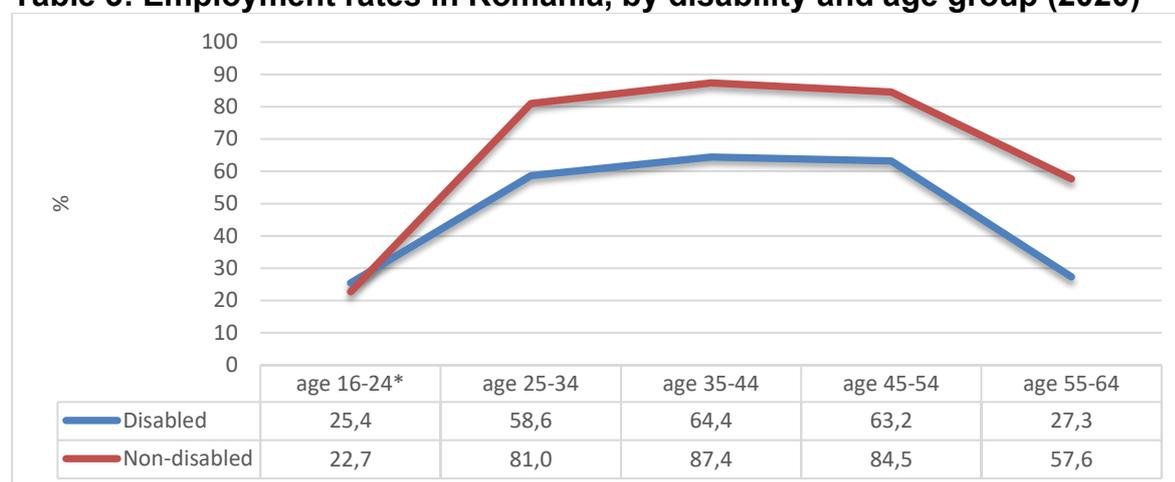
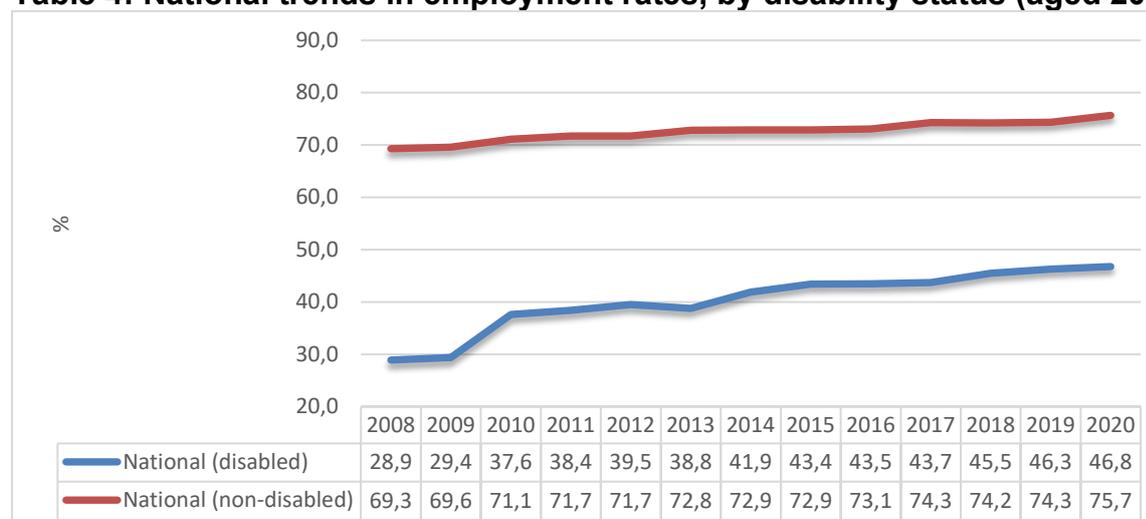


Table 4: National trends in employment rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)



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

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

7.1.1 Unemployment

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

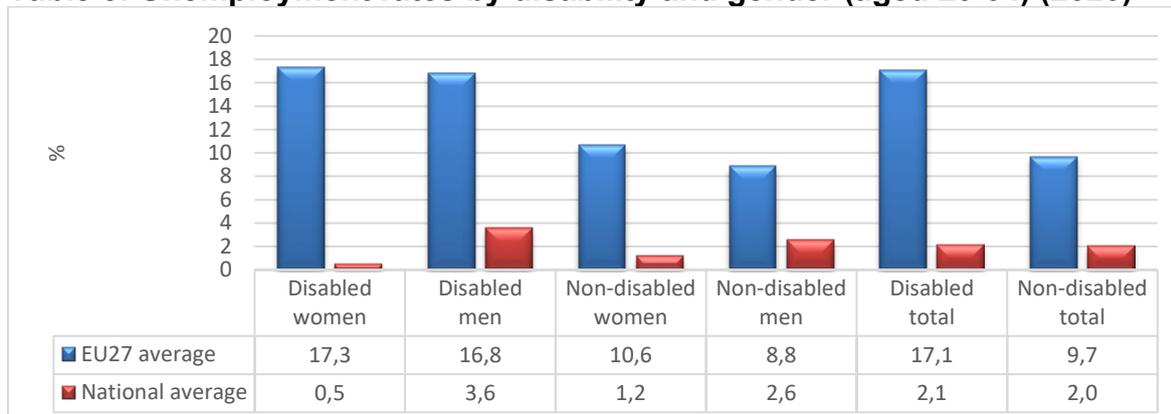


Table 6: Unemployment rates in Romania, by disability and age group (2020)

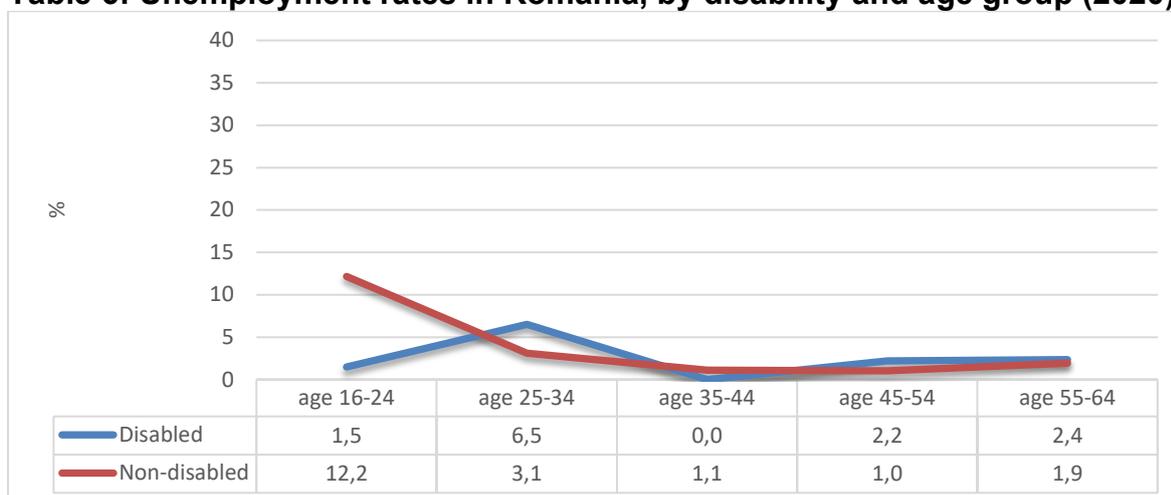
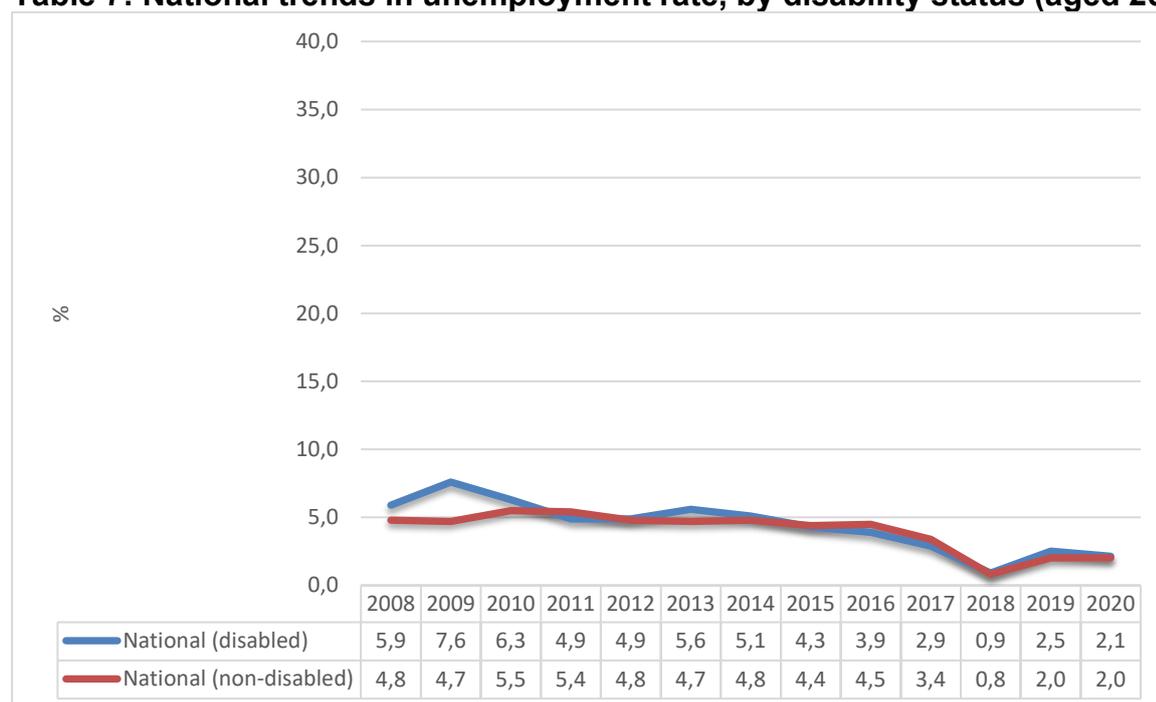


Table 7: National trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64)


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

7.1.2 Economic activity

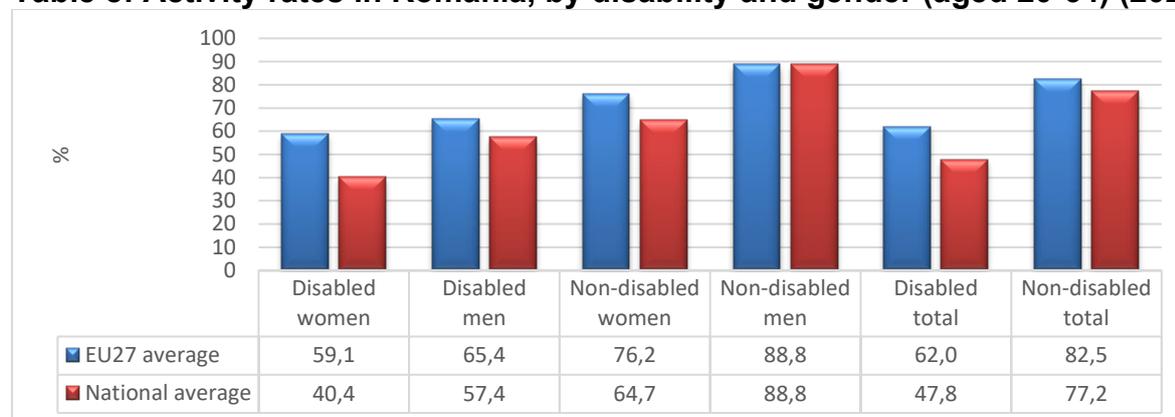
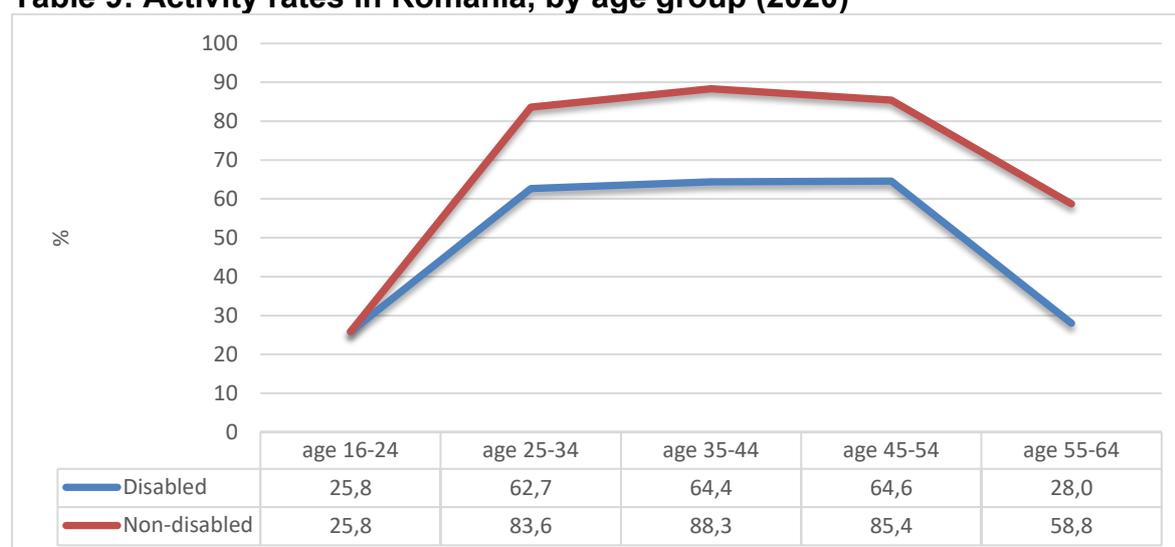
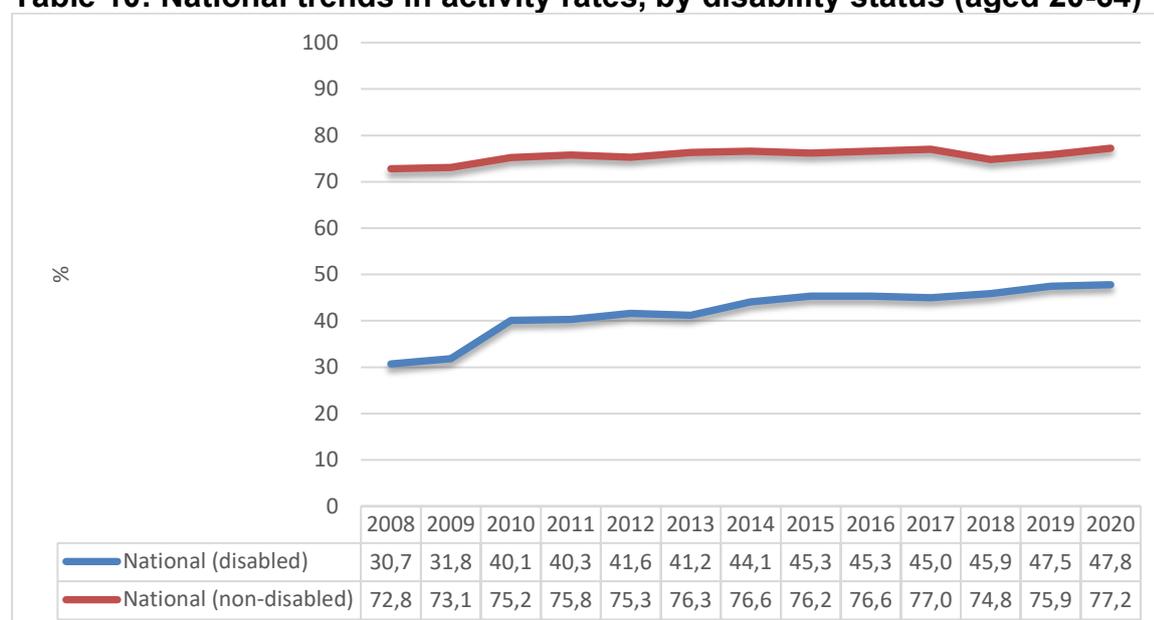
Table 8: Activity rates in Romania, by disability and gender (aged 20-64) (2020)


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

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

7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Romania

Disability data is not yet available from the core European Labour Force Survey but labour market indicators for Romania were disaggregated from ad hoc modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.¹¹⁴

Additional sources of evidence are referred to in the text of Section 3.

¹¹⁴ Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

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

Table 11: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and risk (aged 16-64)¹¹⁵

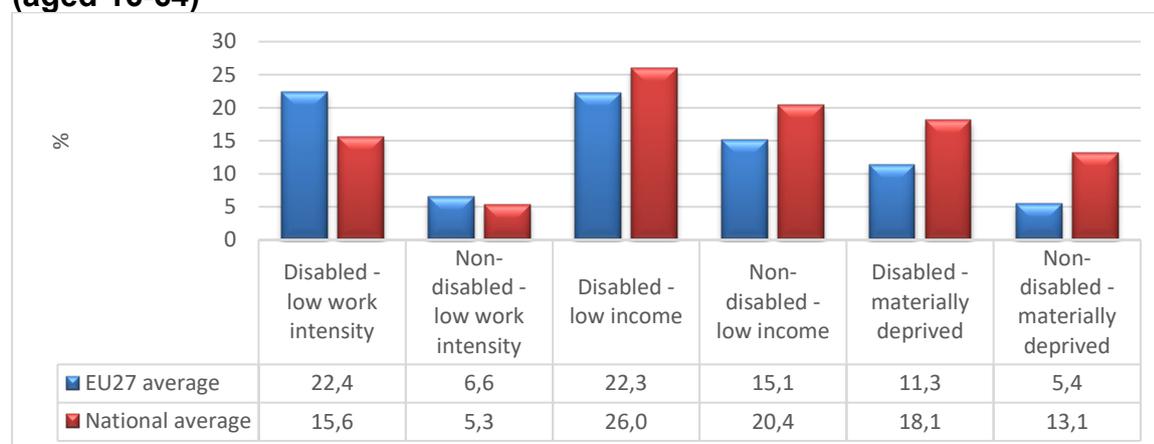


Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)

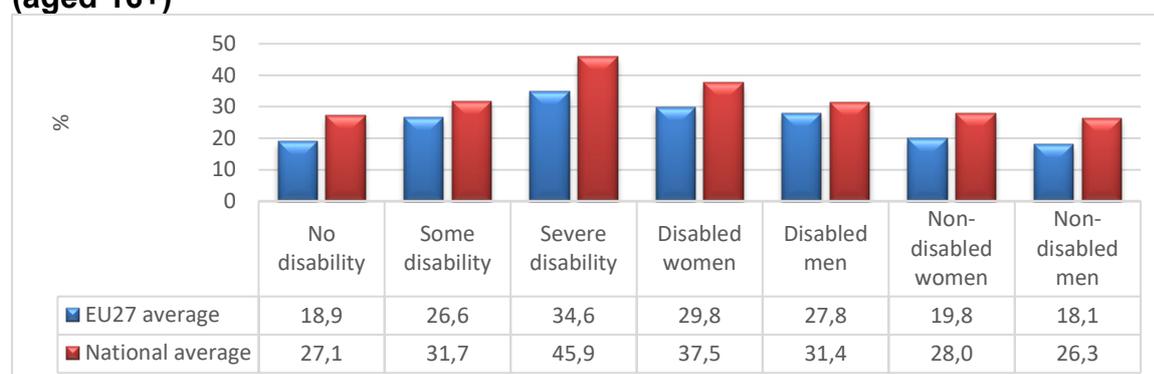
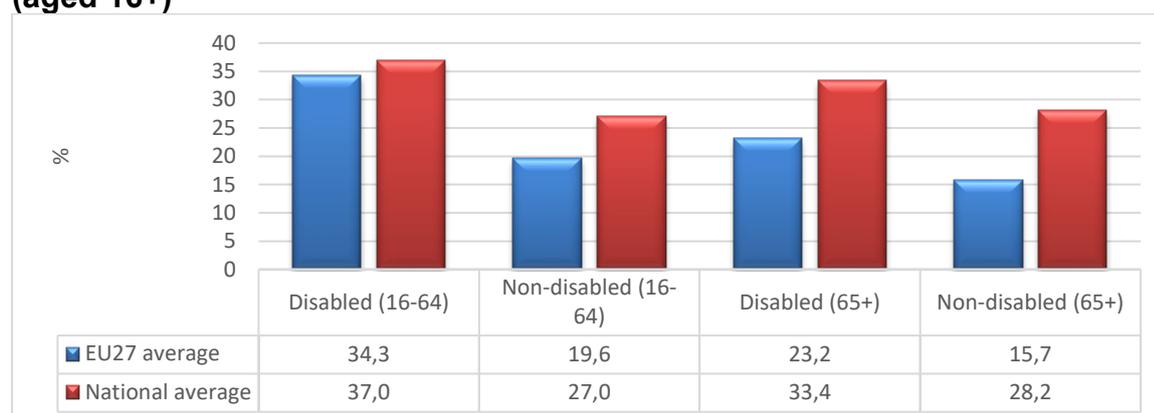
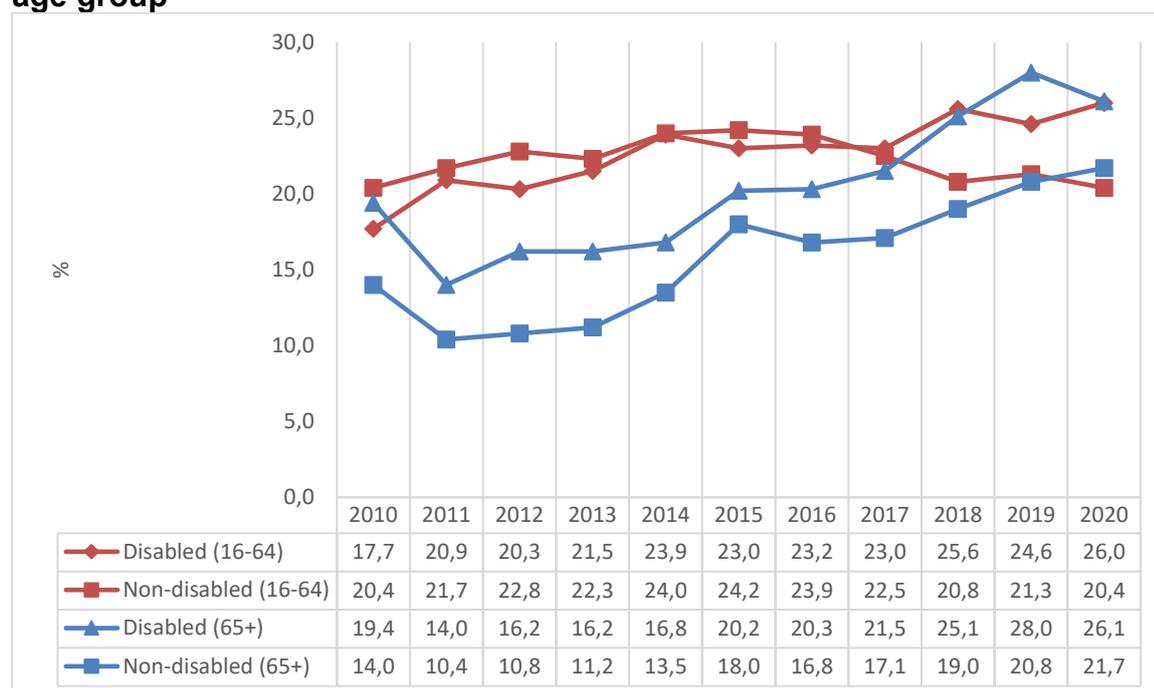


Table 13: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)



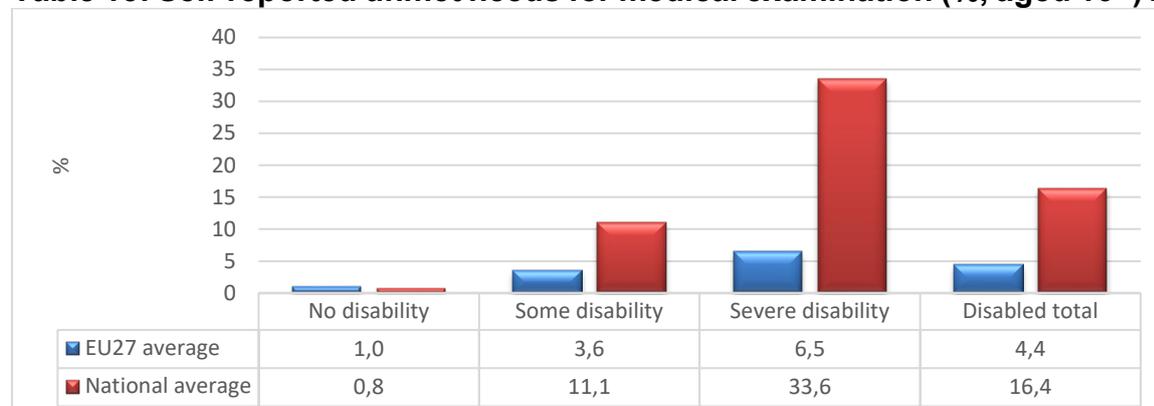
Source: EU-SILC 2020 Release April 2022 (and previous UDB)

¹¹⁵ Aged 16-59 for low work intensity.

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

Source: Eurostat Health Database [hlth_dpe020] – People at risk of poverty

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

Table 15: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination (% , aged 16+) 2020

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

Note: EU mean averages are also skewed by high values in a minority of countries within disability groups but median averages for the total disability and no disability groups in 2020 are consistent with the 3-year mean values.

7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or healthcare data in 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.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Eurostat Health Database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

Additional sources of evidence are referred to in the text of Section 4.

7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

Table 24: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)¹¹⁷

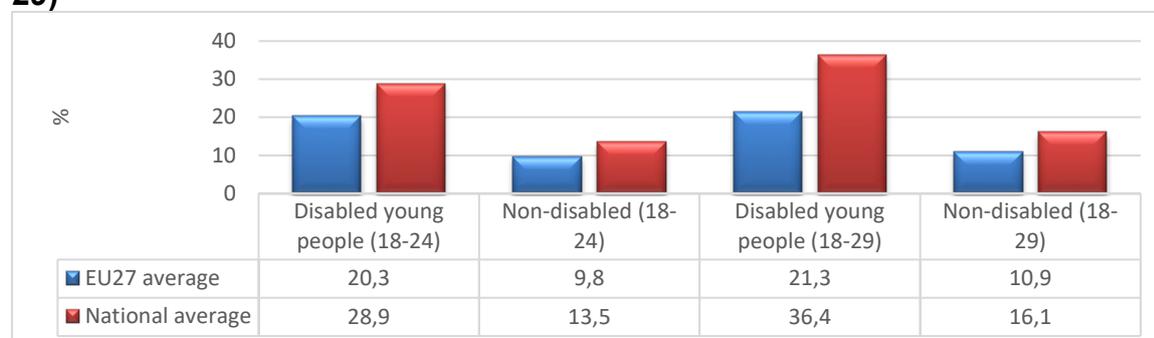
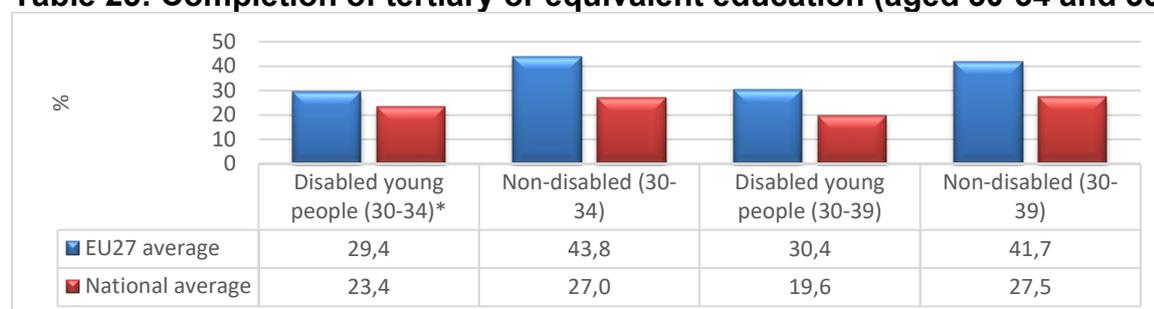


Table 25: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)



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

Note: Confidence intervals for the disability group are large and reliability low (due to the small sample size in the target age group). An average of several years may be needed to establish trends or to compare breakdowns by gender. There were fewer than 50 observations in the disability group aged 30-34, which should be treated with caution.

7.3.1 Alternative sources of education data in Romania

Additional sources of evidence are referred to in the text of Section 5.

¹¹⁷ There was a change from International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 1997 to ISCED 2011 qualification definitions in 2014 although some Member States continued to use the older definition after this time.

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