

## 2. SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION

Bogdan Wojtyniak, Jakub Stokwiszewski, Aneta Trochonowicz, Rafał Halik,  
Daniel Rabczenko

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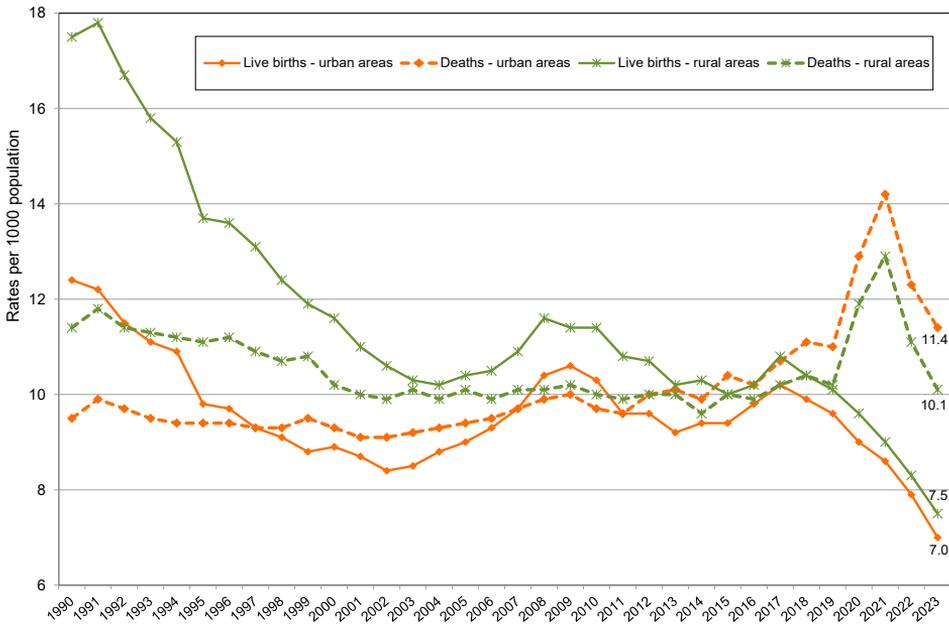
This chapter aims to compare the demographic and social situation of the Polish population to that of the European Union (EU-27) in areas important for public health. The analysis primarily uses figures from the databases of Statistics Poland and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat).

The population of Poland has been declining since 2011, standing at 37,637,100 at the end of 2023. The population reported in the National Population and Housing Census 2021 decreased by approximately 476,000, or 1.2%, compared to the National Population and Housing Census 2011. Net international migration was negative until 2015, and since 2016, the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants has been consistently positive, reaching 6,800 in 2023.<sup>1</sup> The natural increase (the difference between the number of births and deaths) has also been consistently negative in cities since 2012, becoming negative in rural areas in 2015 and again in 2019 (Fig. 2.1). Nationwide, there has been a negative natural increase since 2013. In 2023, 20 of the 27 countries of the European Union and the EU as a whole experienced negative natural increases, with the total population declining in 8 countries.<sup>2</sup> According to Eurostat data, Polish citizens currently make up 8.2% of the total EU population, placing Poland fifth in terms of population size.

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<sup>1</sup> Demographic Yearbook of Poland 2024, Statistics Poland Warsaw 2024

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo\\_gind\\_\\_custom\\_15826549/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo_gind__custom_15826549/default/table?lang=en)



**Fig. 2.1.** Vital statistics in Polish urban and rural areas in 1990–2023 (Statistics Poland data)

Women make up more than half of the population (51.7%), with 107 women for every 100 men (Table 2.1). This excess of women over men only becomes apparent among persons aged 50–54 (in urban areas, 40–44, and in rural areas, 65–69) and increases rapidly in older age groups. For every 100 men aged 65 and over, there are 148 women, and in the elderly age group of 85 and over, for every 100 men, there are as many as 258 women (they account for 72.1% of the total population of Poland in this age group). In the population aged under 50, there is a consistent predominance of men over women (among newborns, boys account for 51.2% in 2023), which is gradually decreasing, mainly as a result of higher premature mortality among men compared to women.

The percentage of children and young people under 20 has been slowly but steadily declining since the second half of the 1980s. In 2023, this group accounted for one-fifth (20.1%) of the total population, the same as people aged 65 and over, who gradually increased their share of the total population (Table 2.1).

Poland's population is younger on average than that of most European Union countries (EU-27). According to Eurostat data as of 1 January 2024 (preliminary estimates), the median age of the entire EU population was 44.7 years, while in Poland, it was 43.0 years. The proportion of people aged 65 and over was 21.6% and 20.5%, respectively.

**Table 2.1.** Population of Poland by sex, place of residence and selected age groups in 2013–2023 (as at 31 December)

Year	Total	Men	Women	Urban areas	Rural area	Number of women per 100 men	Population (%)		
	Numbers in thousands						Under 20	65 and over	urban
2013	38,496	18,630	19,866	23,258	15,238	107	20.5	14.7	60.4
2014	38,479	18,620	19,859	23,216	15,262	107	20.3	15.3	60.3
2015	38,437	18,598	19,839	23,166	15,271	107	20.1	15.8	60.3
2016	38,433	18,593	19,840	23,129	15,304	107	20.0	16.4	60.2
2017	38,434	18,593	19,840	23,109	15,324	107	20.0	17.0	60.1
2018	38,411	18,582	19,829	23,067	15,344	107	20.0	17.5	60.1
2019	38,383	18,567	19,816	23,033	15,350	107	20.0	18.1	60.0
2020	38,089	18,417	19,671	22,777	15,311	107	20.2	18.5	59.8
2021	37,908	18,323	19,585	22,624	15,284	107	20.3	18.9	59.7
2022	37,766	18,249	19,517	22,490	15,276	107	20.2	19.5	59.6
2023	37,637	18,182	19,454	22,377	15,260	107	20.1	20.1	59.5

Source: based on Statistics Poland data

According to Eurostat projections, this favourable difference for Poland will gradually diminish, and by the mid-2050s, both the median age and the percentage of people aged 65 and over (but not including the oldest aged 80 and over) will be higher in Poland than the EU-27 average (Table 2.2). It is worth noting that in Poland, the proportion of the oldest people, i.e. those aged 80 and over, will grow most rapidly between 2025 and 2040, while the proportion of those aged 65–79 will only increase significantly between 2040 and 2055.

Important demographic and social indicators reflect the changes in the population's age structure and the problem of population ageing. One of these is the old-age dependency ratio, defined as the proportion of people of an age at which they are usually no longer in the labour force (i.e. aged 65 and over) to the working-age population (in this case, aged 20–64). As shown in Figure 2.2, in the coming decades, we will see a significant increase in this ratio, i.e. faster growth in the elderly population than in the working-age population, both in Poland and across the EU (albeit with differences between countries), with the unfavorable change being greater in Poland.

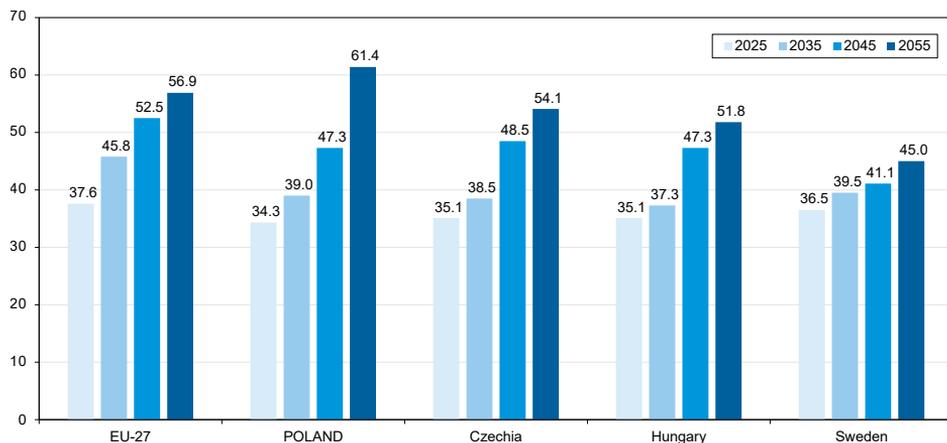
The ongoing changes in the Polish population's age structure and ageing are well illustrated by the changes shown in the age pyramid and the significant increase in the number of people in the oldest age groups (Fig. 2.3).

**Table 2.2.** Projected median age and percentage of persons aged 65 and over and 80 and over in Poland, the EU and selected countries in 2025–2055

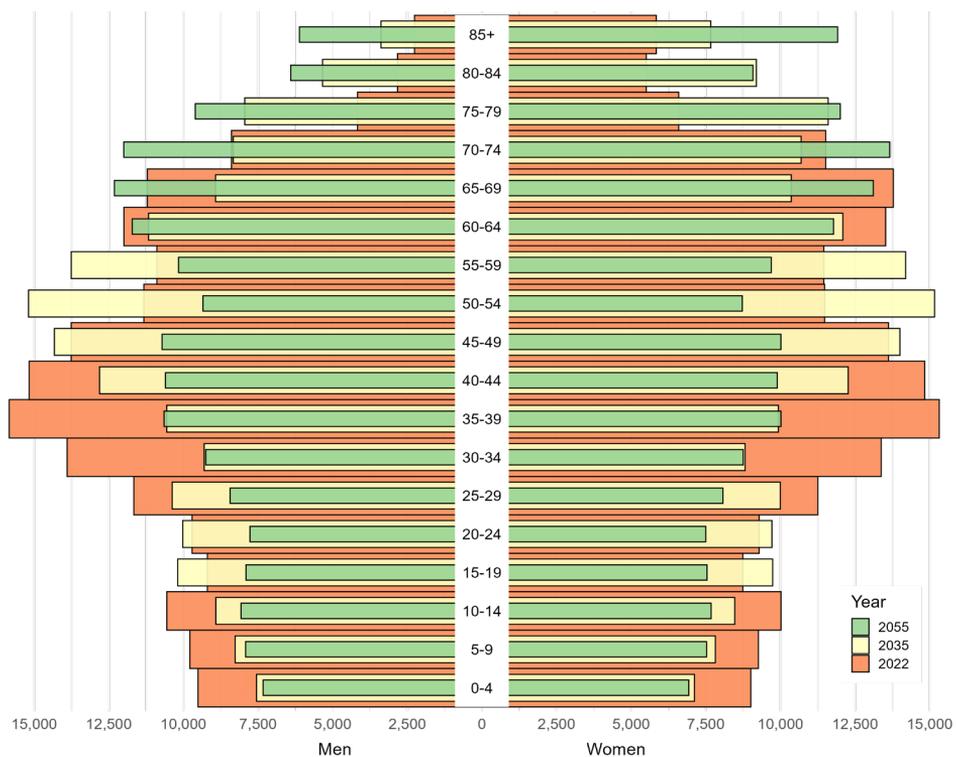
Country	2025	2035	2045	2055
<b>Population median age</b>				
UE27	44.8	46.6	47.7	48.3
Czech Republic	44.0	46.1	46.4	46.1
Germany	45.1	45.9	47.0	46.9
Poland	42.7	47.0	49.4	49.4
Sweden	40.8	42.5	43.1	44.0
Hungary	44.6	45.7	46.8	47.0
Italy	49.0	51.0	51.4	51.9
<b>Percentage of population aged 65 and over</b>				
UE27	21.8	25.5	28.1	29.6
Czech Republic	20.4	22.2	26.3	28.1
Germany	22.5	26.5	26.8	27.6
Poland	20.2	22.8	26.5	31.2
Sweden	20.5	22.1	22.9	24.4
Hungary	20.8	21.8	25.9	27.5
Italy	24.7	29.8	33.4	33.6
<b>Percentage of population aged 80 and over</b>				
UE27	6.1	7.8	9.9	11.6
Czech Republic	4.7	7.1	7.6	9.5
Germany	7.2	7.4	10.1	10.9
Poland	4.2	7.0	9.0	9.9
Sweden	6.0	7.4	8.0	9.1
Hungary	4.9	6.5	7.2	9.1
Italy	7.8	9.3	11.8	14.9

Source: Eurostat's EUROPOP2023 data

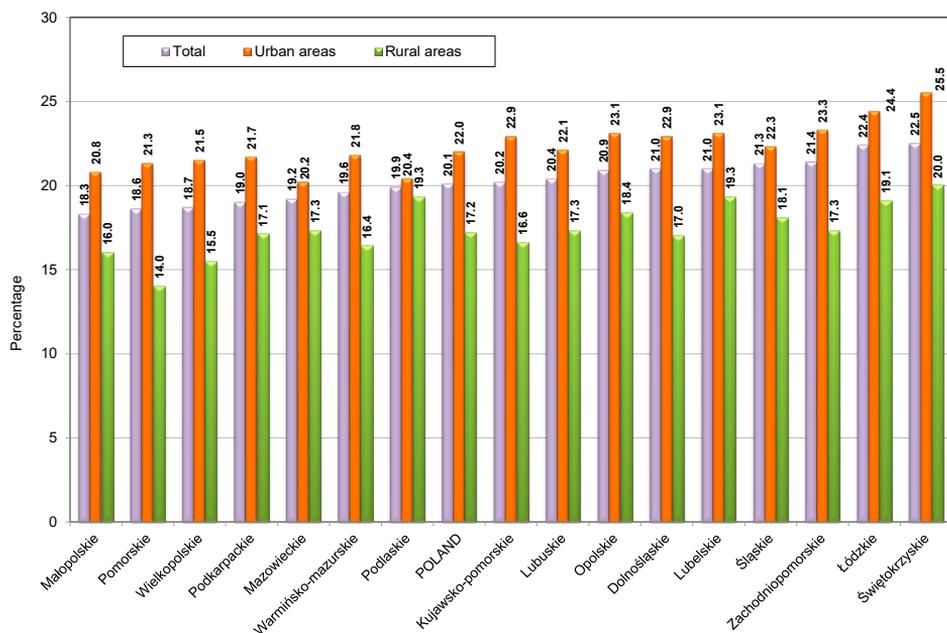
The urban population is on average older than rural population; in 2023, the proportion of people aged 65 and over was 22.0% in urban areas and 17.2% in rural areas, while the median age was 43.8 and 41.3, respectively. The highest proportion of the population aged 65 and over in urban areas is found in Świętokrzyskie and Łódzkie voivodships, while the lowest was recorded in Małopolskie (Fig. 2.4). The largest difference in the age structure of the urban and rural populations was observed in Pomorskie voivodship, where the proportion of older people in urban areas was 7.3 percentage points (ppt) higher than in rural areas, and the average age (median) of urban residents was 4.2 years higher than that of rural residents.



**Fig. 2.2.** Old-age dependency ratio (number of persons aged 65 and over/number of persons aged 20–64) in Poland and the EU average and selected countries, projected for 2025–2055



**Fig. 2.3.** Population of Poland by sex and age in 2019 and projections for 2030 and 2050 (Eurostat’s EUROPOP2019 data)



**Fig. 2.4.** Percentage of people aged 65 and over in the total population, in urban and rural areas by voivodships in 2023 (based on Statistics Poland data)

The proportion of the urban population has been declining since 2000 and stood at 59.5% in 2023. According to projections from Statistics Poland, this figure will continue to decline slowly but steadily. The most urbanised voivodship is Śląskie, where 75.8% of the population lived in urban areas in 2023, while nearly half as many people, 41.0%, lived in urban areas in Podkarpackie voivodship. Furthermore, in three voivodships: Lubelskie, Małopolskie and Świętokrzyskie, urban populations accounted for less than half of the total voivodship population.

The number of live births after 2017 is decreasing both in absolute terms and in relation to the population (Table 2.3). The decline in the number of births affects both urban and rural areas. One of the basic measures indicating the number of births is the total fertility rate. It defines the average number of children a woman would give birth to during her entire reproductive period (15–49 years), assuming that she would give birth in line with the fertility rates for a given age, measured in a given year. In other words, the total fertility rate is calculated based on the sum of the partial fertility rates. It is commonly accepted that if the fertility rate fluctuates between 2.10 and 2.15, replacement-level fertility can be assumed, meaning that the offspring generation replaces the parent generation.

Figure 2.5 shows that Poland ranks among the countries with the lowest rates (1.20 in Eurostat's preliminary estimate and 1.16 according to Statistics Poland). It should also be noted that this figure is well below 2.0 in all EU countries, with the EU average standing at just 1.38.

**Table 2.3.** Births in Poland in 2011–2023

Rok	Live births			Stillbirths	
	Number (in thousands)	Per 1,000 population	Extramarital as % of live births	Number	% of total births
2011	388.4	10.1	21.2	1,653	0.42
2012	386.3	10.0	22.3	1,601	0.41
2013	369.6	9.6	23.4	1,386	0.37
2014	375.2	9.7	24.2	1,341	0.36
2015	369.3	9.6	24.6	1,075	0.29
2016	382.3	9.9	25.0	1,147	0.30
2017	401.2	10.5	24.1	1,101	0.27
2018	388.2	10.1	26.4	1,277	0.33
2019	375.0	9.8	25.4	1,238	0.33
2020	355.3	9.3	26.4	1,231	0.35
2021	331.5	8.7	26.7	1,220	0.37
2022	305.1	8.1	28.1	1,023	0.34
2023	272.5	7.2	28.7	918	0.34

Source: based on Statistics Poland data

More than one in four children born in Poland today is outside formal marriage (Table 2.3). The proportion of such births has been steadily increasing for several years and increased by more than a third between 2011 and 2023. There is considerable variation between voivodships with regard to the proportion of such births and changes over time. Between 2019 and 2023, the percentage of extramarital births was by far the highest in Zachodniopomorskie and Lubuskie voivodships (Fig. 2.6a). On the other hand, the incidence of extramarital births is three times lower in Podkarpackie voivodship (and only slightly higher in Małopolskie voivodship). The proportion of births outside marriage is higher in urban than rural areas (32.9% vs 22.9% in 2023), with the largest difference in Śląskie (16.3 ppt) and Łódzkie voivodships (16.0 ppt), while this proportion is virtually the same in urban and rural areas in Zachodniopomorskie voivodship (0.0 ppt).

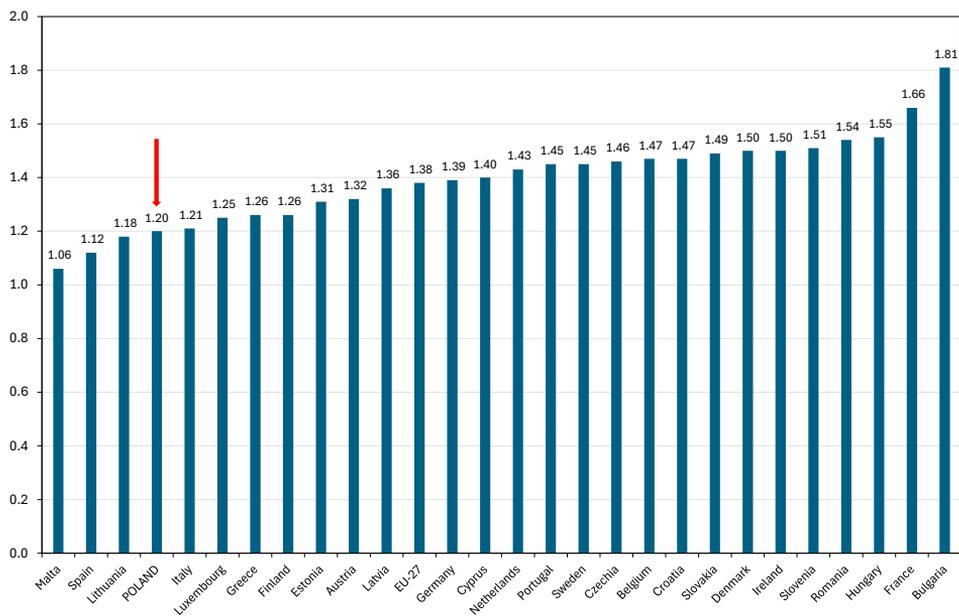


Fig. 2.5. Total fertility rate in the EU-27 in 2023 (Eurostat data)

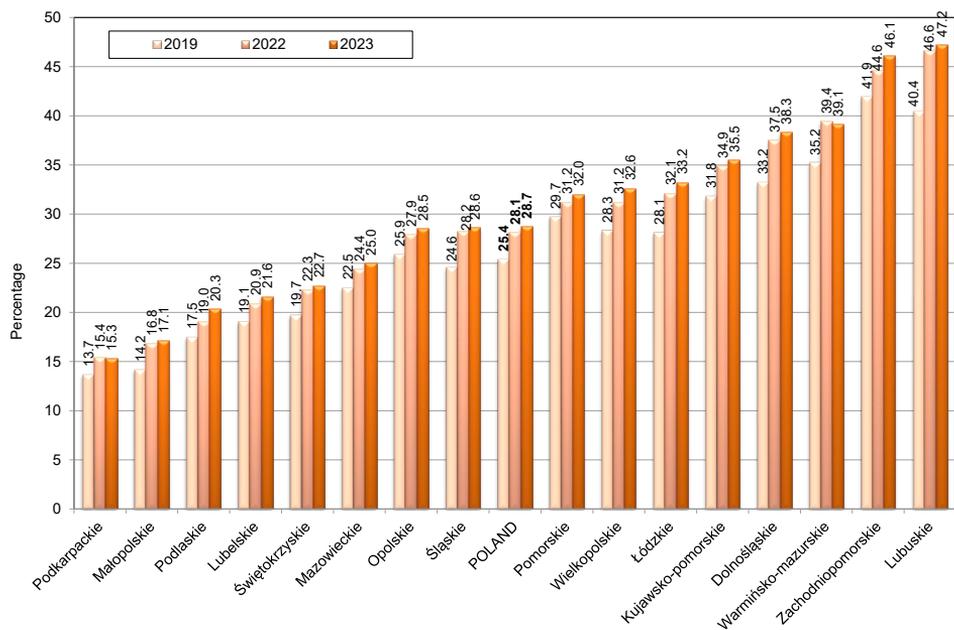
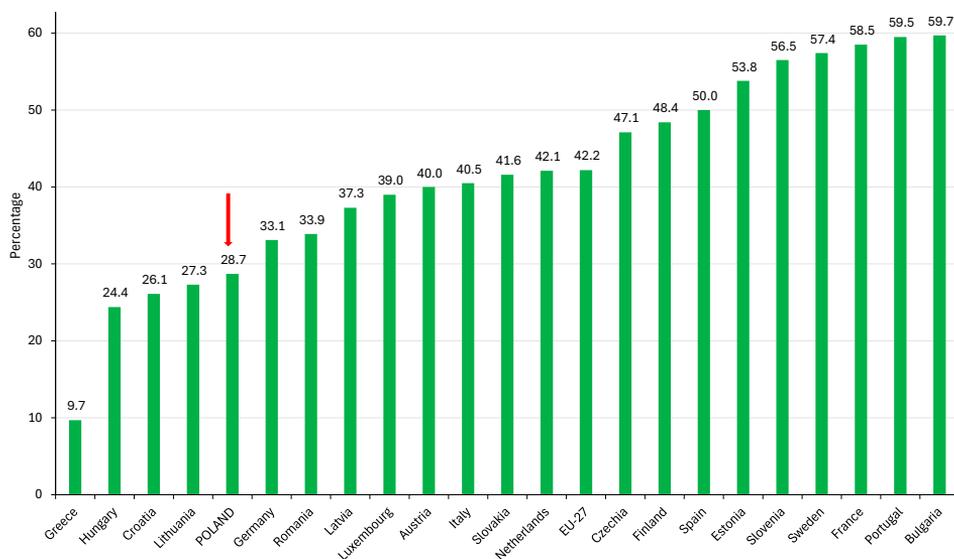


Fig. 2.6a. Percentage of extramarital births among live births by voivodship in 2019, 2022 and 2023 (Statistics Poland data)

According to Eurostat data, the percentage of extramarital births in Poland is low compared to the twenty-seven EU countries; only Greece, Hungary, Croatia and Lithuania have lower rates than Poland (Fig. 2.6b). In six countries, such births account for more than half of all births. In total, across all EU countries, an average of 42.2% of children are born outside formal marriages.



**Fig. 2.6b.** Percentage of extramarital births among live births in the EU-27 in 2023. (Eurostat data)

In 2023, 5.7% of live births had low birth weights, i.e. newborns whose birth weight was below 2,500 g (Table 2.4). The frequency of such births has remained stable since 2017. Low-birth-weight babies are born less frequently in Poland than in the European Union average; according to WHO estimates, the proportion for the EU-27 was 6.5% in 2022 (WHO HFA DB<sup>3</sup>).

The difference between voivodships in the proportion of newborns with low birth weight has slightly increased in recent years. In 2018–2023, the least favourable situation (the highest percentage of such newborns) was observed in Śląskie voivodship, where this proportion has been steadily increasing recently, in Lubuskie and Lubelskie voivodships, with the most favourable situation in Podlaskie and Pomorskie voivodships (Fig 2.7).

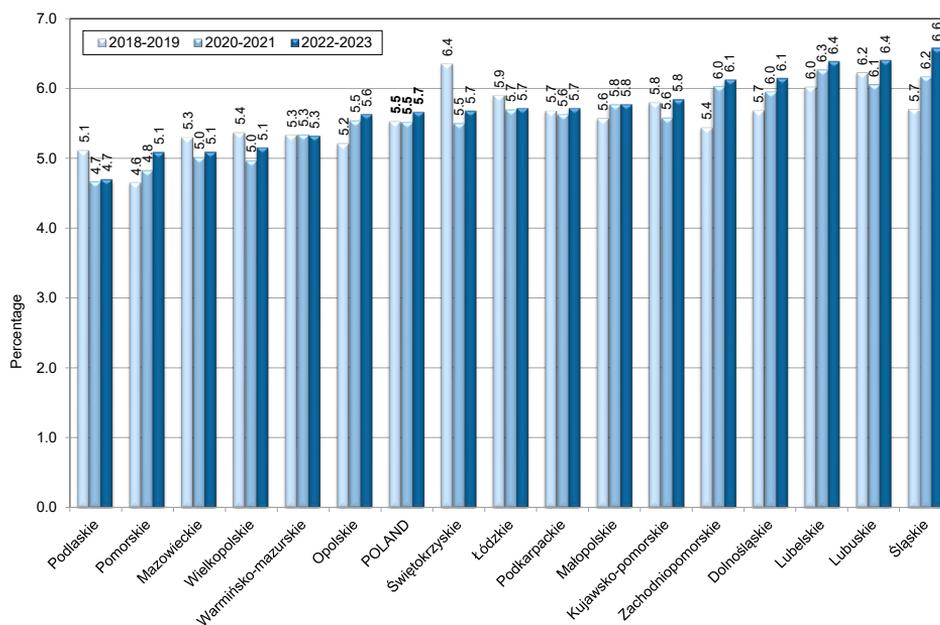
<sup>3</sup> [https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/indicators/hfa\\_600-7100-of-live-births-weighing-2500-g-or-more/#id=19695](https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/indicators/hfa_600-7100-of-live-births-weighing-2500-g-or-more/#id=19695)

**Table 2.4.** Live births by birth weight in selected years 2013–2023

Year	Live births				
	Total	Under 2,500 g		2500 g or more	
		Number	Per cent <sup>1</sup>	Number	Per cent <sup>1</sup>
2013	369,576	22,019	6.0	347,553	94.0
2014	375,160	22,211	5.9	352,940	94.1
2015	369,308	21,351	5.8	346,611	94.2
2016	382,257	22,314	5.8	359,929	94.2
2017	401,982	23,062	5.7	378,877	94.3
2018	388,178	21,451	5.5	366,686	94.5
2019	374,954	21,174	5.6	353,724	94.3
2020	356,540	19,991	5.6	336,454	94.4
2021	331,511	18,761	5.7	312,631	94.3
2022	305,132	17,342	5.7	287,696	94.3
2023	272,451	15,330	5.6	257,091	94.4

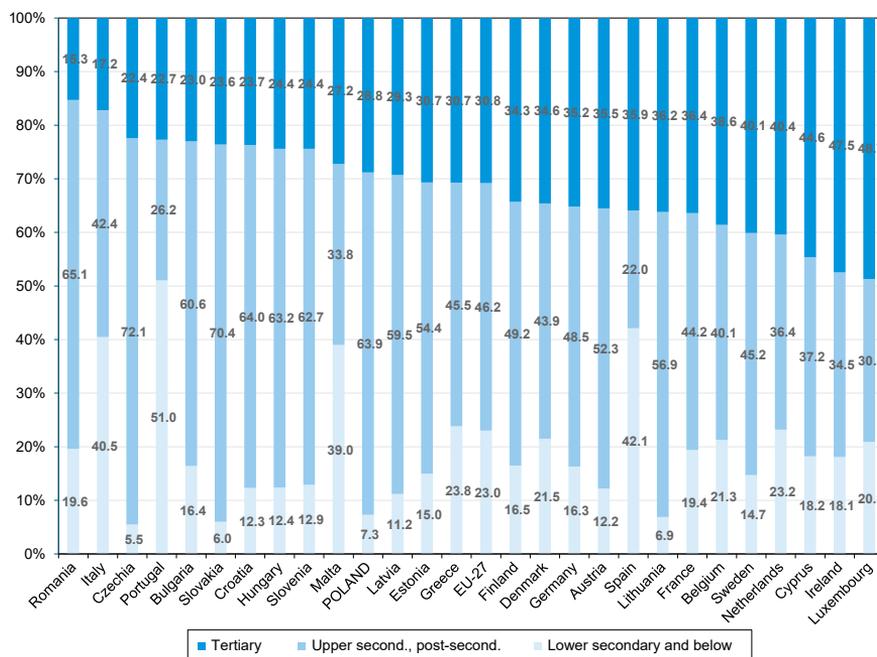
<sup>1</sup> Only live births with a recorded birth weight were included

Source: based on Statistics Poland data



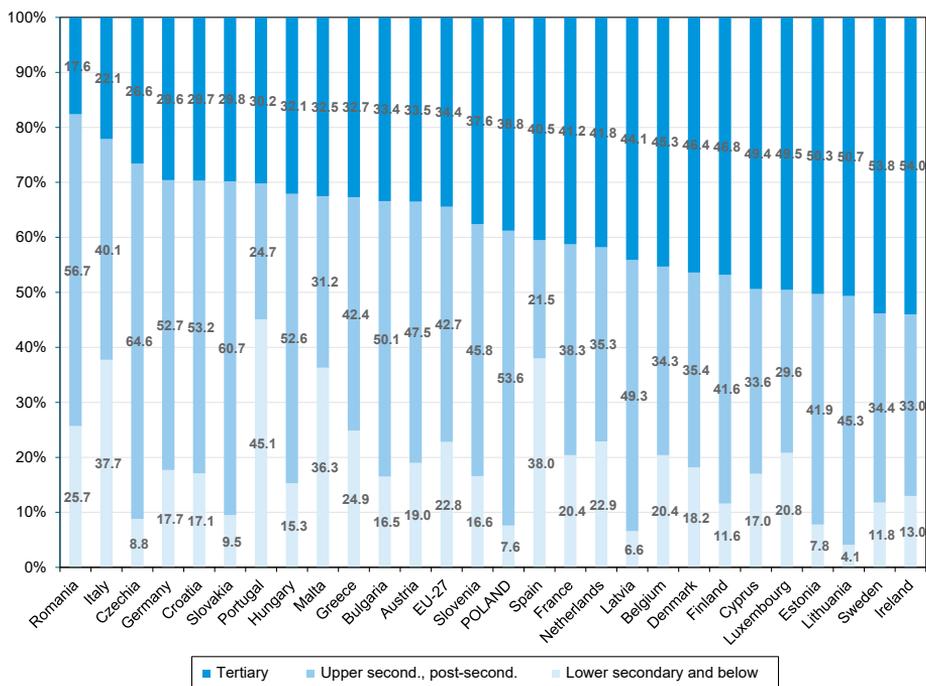
**Fig. 2.7.** Percentage of low birth weight (below 2500 g) live births by voivodship, 2018–2019, 2020–2021 and 2022–2023 (based on Statistics Poland data)

Socio-economic status has a recognised, highly significant impact on health status. The Polish population's socio-economic structure is less favourable than that of the other EU-27 countries, albeit with some exceptions. The level of education is one of the most important determinants of social status. The presented education groups were created by Eurostat based on the categorisation of education levels in the ISCED-11<sup>4</sup>: levels 0–2 – less than primary, primary or lower secondary level of education; levels 3–4 – upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education; and levels 5–8 – tertiary education. Although the proportion of persons with tertiary education has increased significantly in Poland in recent years, it is still slightly lower among men than the EU average but higher than in the Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary (Fig. 2.8a). The lower proportion of men with the lowest level of education in Poland compared to the EU as a whole should be considered a positive factor. The percentage of women with tertiary education in Poland is higher than the EU-27 average but lower than, for example, in Lithuania, Estonia or Latvia (Fig. 2.8b). As for men, the percentage of women with the lowest level of education in Poland is significantly lower than the EU average.



**Fig. 2.8a.** Structure of education among men aged 25–74 by level of education attained in Poland and other EU-27 countries in 2023 (Eurostat's EU-LFS data).

<sup>4</sup> <https://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/international-standard-classification-education-iscsed>



**Fig. 2.8b.** Structure of education among women aged 25–74 by level of education attained in Poland and other EU countries in 2023 (Eurostat’s EU-LFS data).

Although Poland’s economic situation is improving, and gross domestic product (GDP) growth is faster than the EU average, thanks to which the gap between Poland and other EU countries is slowly narrowing, GDP per capita (in PPS) remains one of the lowest in the EU; in 2023, it was 21.8% lower than the EU-27 average,<sup>5</sup> ranking Poland in 21st place among EU countries. The situation is worse in Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, Slovakia, Croatia and Hungary. At the same time, the average (median) equivalised net income in Poland in 2023 was 17.1% lower than the EU-27 average, placing Poland in 19th place in the EU. Ten years earlier, in 2013, net income in Poland was, on average, 39.2% lower than in the EU, and Poland ranked 20th among EU countries.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama\\_10\\_pc\\_\\_custom\\_15967999/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10_pc__custom_15967999/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc\\_di03\\_\\_custom\\_16077825/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_di03__custom_16077825/default/table)

The decrease in income inequality and income growth in Poland compared to the EU-27 average should be considered a positive development. This is expressed by the income quintile share ratio – the disposable income of the 20% of people with the highest income in Poland in 2023 was 4.06 times higher than that of the 20% of people with the lowest income, while for the EU-27, this ratio was 4.72 (Eurostat data<sup>7</sup>). This ratio is lower than in Poland in seven countries, including Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

The decline in economic poverty and social exclusion, estimated based on household income and expenditure, which is expected to continue in Poland until 2022, should be considered highly beneficial from a public health perspective. Unfortunately, this trend slowed down in 2023. According to the definition adopted by EU countries, people living in households whose disposable income is below the poverty threshold set at 60% of the median income in a given country, taking into account the comparability scale and social transfers, are considered at risk of poverty. Social exclusion is a risk for people in households with severe material deprivation (unable to meet at least 4 out of 9 recognised needs for financial reasons) or people in households with very low work intensity.<sup>8</sup> The latest Eurostat data show that in Poland, this rate is currently 5 ppt lower than the EU-27 average (Fig. 2.9a), and only in four EU countries is the risk of poverty or social exclusion less widespread than in Poland: Czechia, Slovenia, Finland and the Netherlands. A positive difference compared to other EU countries can be observed among children and young people under 18 (the situation is worse than in Poland in 20 countries), with no improvement among the oldest population aged 65 and over. However, the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in this group is also below the EU average.

The risk of poverty and social exclusion of children is very strongly related to the educational level of parents, both in Poland and in the EU in general. After 2015 (or, more precisely, after 2016), there has been a significant improvement in Poland in this respect, but the disparity is still significant (Fig. 2.9b). However, it is worth noting that while in 2015 children of parents with education other than tertiary were more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than

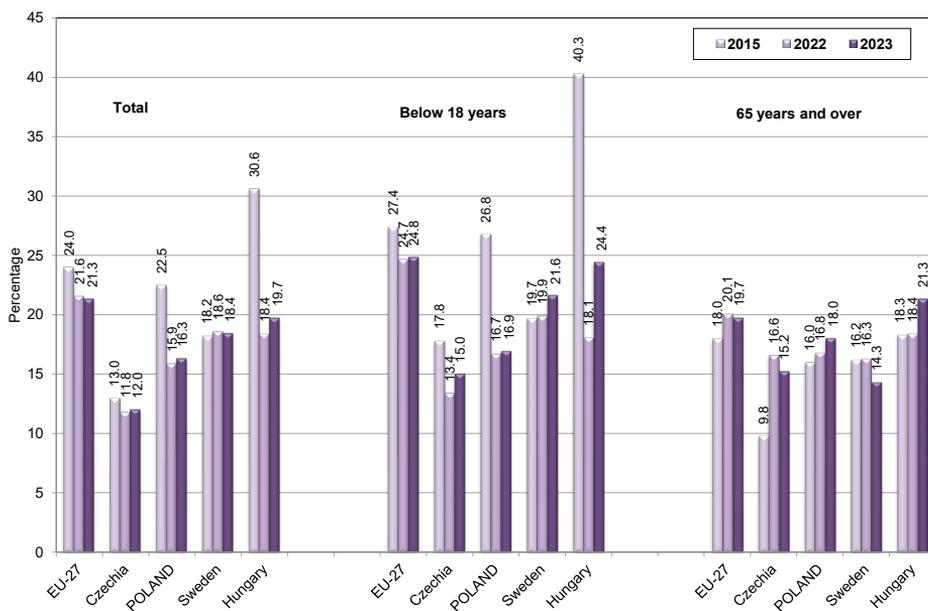
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<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc\\_di11\\_\\_custom\\_15986004/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_di11__custom_15986004/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:At\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion\\_\(AROEPE\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:At_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion_(AROEPE))

the EU average, this was no longer the case in subsequent years, and the risk has been lower than in Sweden, for example, in recent years.

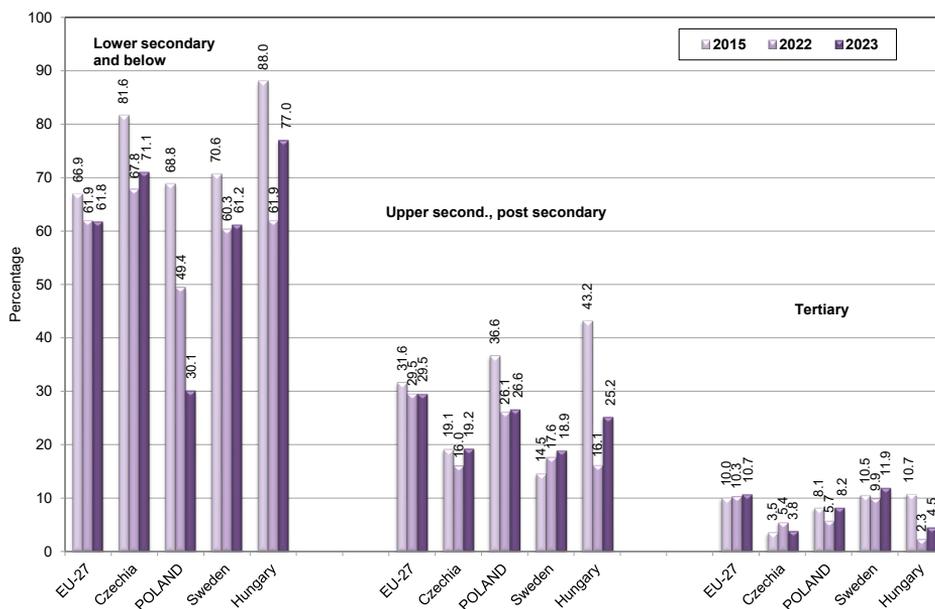
Data compiled by Eurostat show that the risk of poverty or social exclusion in Poland is clearly regionally differentiated.<sup>9</sup> Not surprisingly, it is least prevalent in the Warsaw region and, in the last two years (2022–2023), in Śląskie voivodship (Fig. 2.9c). The inhabitants of Podlaskie, Warmińsko-mazurskie, Kujawsko-pomorskie and Lubelskie voivodships are most at risk of poverty and social exclusion. An unfavourable development is the significant deterioration of this situation in 2022–2023 in Podlaskie voivodship and in 2023 in Kujawsko-pomorskie and Świętokrzyskie voivodships.



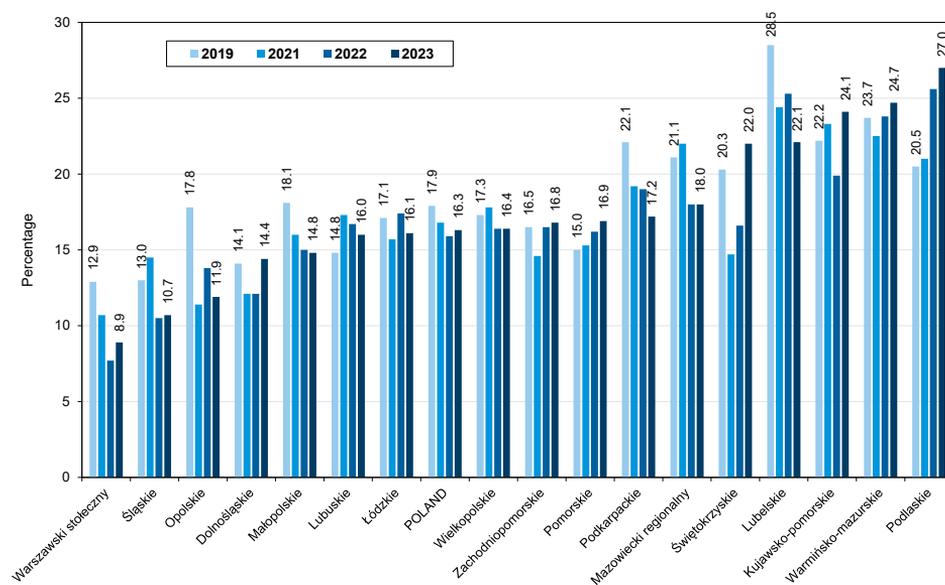
**Fig. 2.9a.** Percentage of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion, total and in the age group under 18 and 65 and over in Poland and in the EU-27 as a whole and in selected countries in 2015, 2022 and 2023 (Eurostat's EU-SILC data)

Figures 2.10a and 2.10b show the extent of extreme poverty in Poland in two cross-sections important for analysing differences in the health status of the population, i.e. by place of residence (rural areas, towns and cities of various sizes) and by educational attainment of the head of the household.

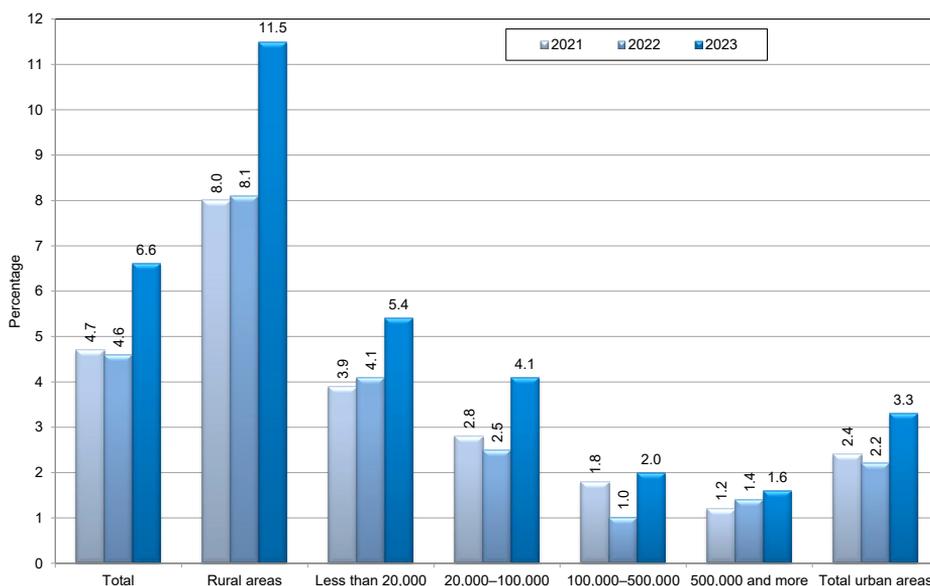
<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc\\_peps11n\\_\\_custom\\_16041775/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_peps11n__custom_16041775/default/table?lang=en)



**Fig. 2.9b.** Percentage of children and young people aged under 18 at risk of poverty or social exclusion by educational attainment of the head of the household in Poland and in the EU-27 in total and selected countries in 2015, 2022 and 2023 (Eurostat's EU-SILC data)



**Fig. 2.9c.** Percentage of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion by voivodship in 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023 (Eurostat's EU-SILC data)



**Fig. 2.10a.** Extreme poverty rates by class of place of residence in 2021–2023 (Statistics Poland data<sup>10</sup>)

The extreme poverty line is established based on the subsistence minimum estimated by the Institute of Labour and Social Studies for a one-person household. The subsistence minimum covers only those needs that cannot be delayed, and consumption below this level makes life difficult and threatens the psychophysical development of the individual.<sup>11</sup>

In 2023, there was a significant increase in the extreme poverty rate, which, as Statistics Poland points out, “took place in a situation of improvement in the average income situation of households (in nominal and real terms).<sup>12</sup> However, a decline in the level of spending in real terms was also observed during this period.<sup>13</sup> In addition, it should be mentioned, which may seem surprising, that the percentage of bad or rather bad subjective assessments of the material situation

<sup>10</sup>Due to the updated generalisation based on the results of the National Population and Housing Census 2021, the results for 2021–2022 differ from those previously published.

<sup>11</sup>Statistics Poland Annex to the report Economic poverty rates in Poland in 2023.

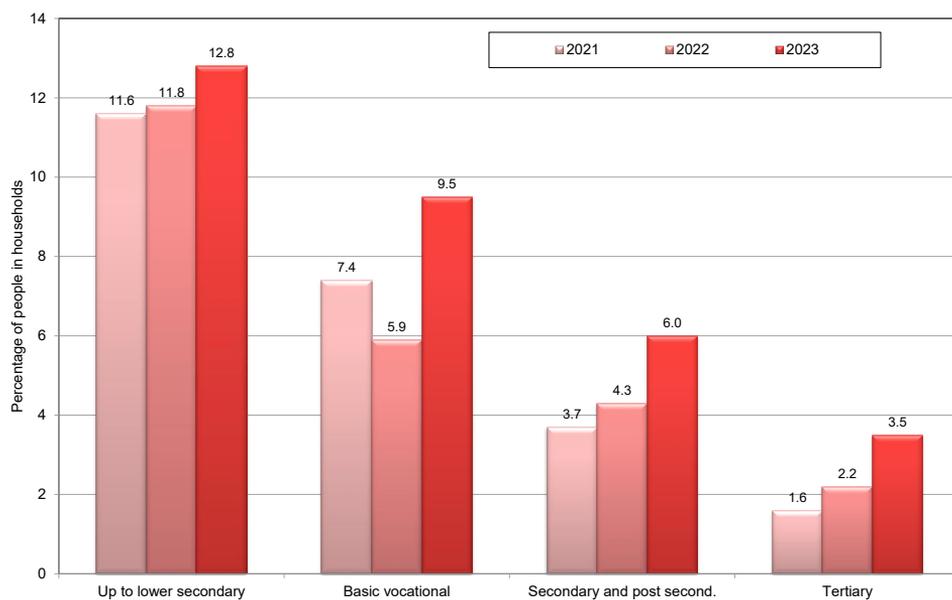
<sup>12</sup> See: News release: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/warunki-zycia/dochody-wydatki-i-warunki-zycia-ludnosci/sytuacja-gospodarstw-domowych-w-2023-r-w-swietle-badania-budzetow-gospodarstw-domowych,3,23.html>

<sup>13</sup> See: News release as above.

among all households has also decreased (year-on-year) in 2023 (from around 6% to around 5% of households)<sup>14</sup>,<sup>15</sup>

There is a clear predominance of extreme poverty among rural populations compared to urban populations, even those in small towns (Fig. 10a). Urban populations have significantly better chances of securing their basic needs than rural populations. Large cities with a population of over 100,000 are the environment most conducive to ensuring living conditions that do not jeopardise psychophysical development.

There is a clear correlation between the educational attainment of the head of household and the risk of extreme poverty in that household (Fig. 2.10b). The proportion of people in households at risk of extreme poverty decreases sharply with increasing level of education. This variation is permanent. It is worth noting that in 2023, the risk of extreme poverty increased compared to 2021 and 2022 in all household groups, regardless of the household head's level of education.



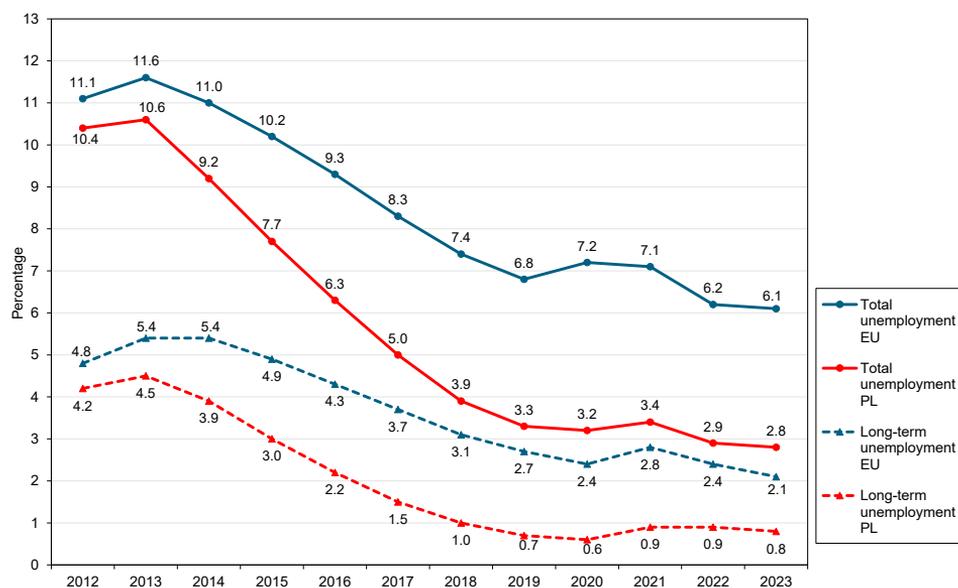
**Fig. 2.10b.** Extreme poverty rates by education level of the head of household in 2021–2023 (Statistics Poland data<sup>16</sup>)

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/warunki-zycia/dochody-wydatki-i-warunki-zycia-ludnosci/sytuacja-gospodarstw-domowych-w-2023-r-w-swietle-badania-budzetow-gospodarstw-domowych,3,23.html>

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Poland, Economic poverty rates in Poland in 2023. 28 June 2024.

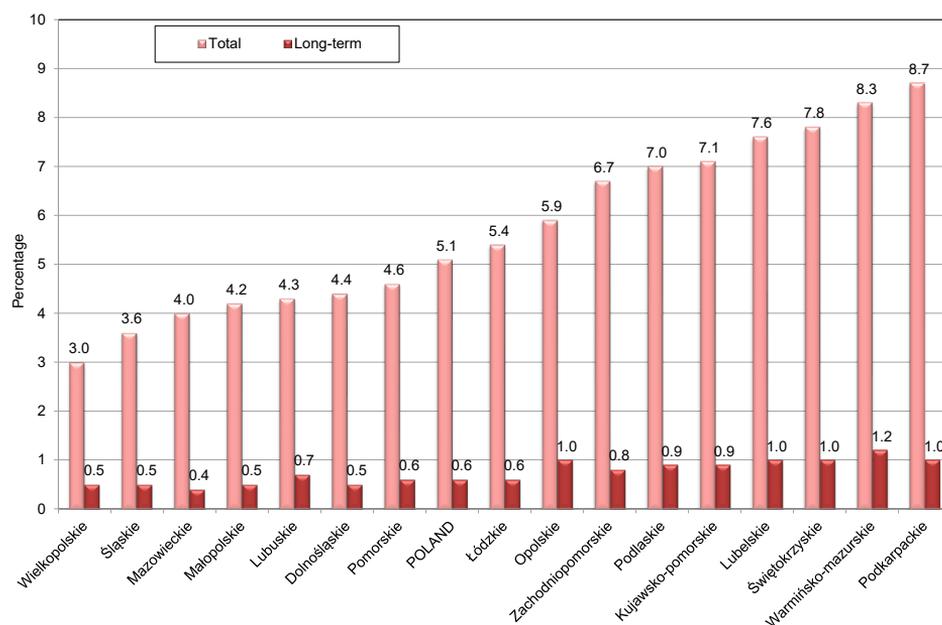
<sup>16</sup> Due to the updated generalisation based on the results of the National Population and Housing Census 2021, the results for 2021–2022 differ from those previously published.

Poland's unemployment rate has clearly improved compared to previous years. It is not only lower than the EU-27 average but also one of the lowest in the EU. According to the *Labour Force Survey* (LFS) conducted in these countries, in 2023, the unemployment rate in Poland for the population aged 15–74 was 2.8% (lower only in the Czech Republic, at 2.6%), while the EU-27 average was 6.1%. (Fig. 2.11). Furthermore, Poland enjoys a very low long-term unemployment rate, i.e. unemployment lasting longer than 12 months, which in 2023 was only 0.8% of the working population, while the EU28 average was 2.1%. Only in Denmark (0.5%) and the Netherlands (0.5%) was it lower than in Poland.



**Fig. 2.11.** Total unemployment rate and long-term unemployment rate among persons aged 15–74 in Poland and the EU-27 average in 2012–2023 (Eurostat's LFS)

The total risk of unemployment and long-term unemployment varies significantly across voivodships (Fig. 2.12). In 2023, the most favourable situation in terms of total unemployment was in Wielkopolskie voivodship, while long-term unemployment was lowest in the Mazowieckie voivodship. The highest total unemployment rate is observed in Podkarpackie voivodship, while long-term unemployment is highest in Warmińsko-mazurskie voivodship. This challenging situation in Warmińsko-mazurskie and Podkarpackie has persisted for many years.



**Fig. 2.12.** Total and long-term unemployment rate by voivodship in 2023 (Statistics Poland data)

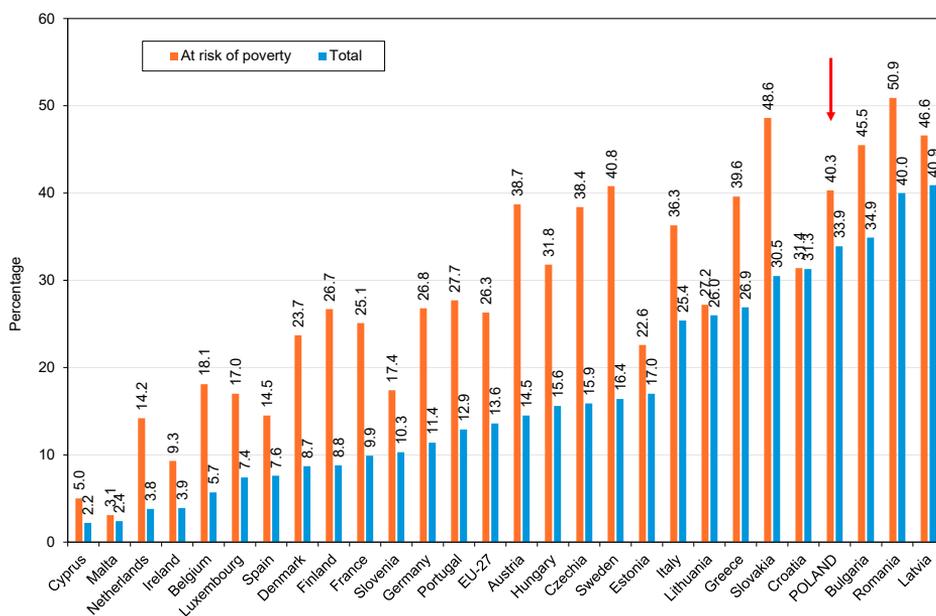
An important aspect of employment from a social and public health perspective is the opportunity to work part-time, which makes it easier to balance family responsibilities, including those related to health, such as caring for children or the elderly. For years, the situation in Poland has been clearly unfavourable compared to the average in OECD and EU countries, both female and male employees, but especially women, are much less likely to be employed part-time. In 2023, in Poland, the percentage of part-time male employees in relation to the total number of employed persons aged 20–64 was 3.2%, while in the EU-27, it was 7.7%. For women, the corresponding figures were 8.3% and 27.9%.<sup>17</sup> However, it is worth noting that while 18.2% of EU women of this age who were employed part-time did not choose this option on their own, the figure was lower for Polish women, at 11.5%.<sup>18</sup>

The housing conditions of Poles are in some respects worse than the average in the European Union. This is particularly evident with regard to overcrowding.

<sup>17</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa\\_eppga\\_\\_custom\\_16033839/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_eppga__custom_16033839/default/table?lang=en)

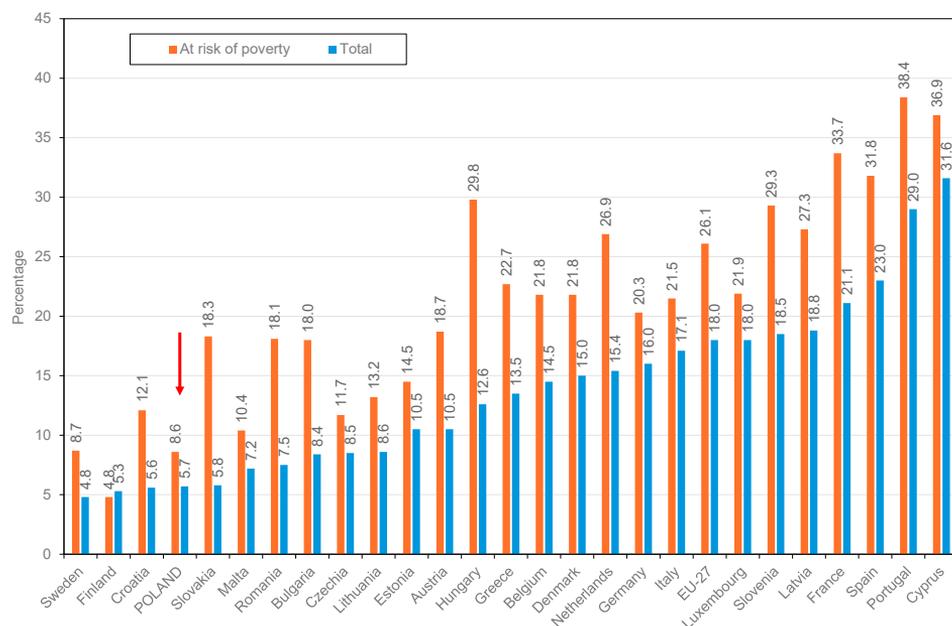
<sup>18</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa\\_eppgai\\_\\_custom\\_16034272/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_eppgai__custom_16034272/default/table?lang=en)

According to the Eurostat definition, a person is considered as living in an overcrowded household if the household does not meet any of the following conditions: (a) one room for the household, (b) one room per couple in the household, (c) one room for each single person aged 18 or more, (d) one room per pair of single people of the same gender between 12 and 17 years of age, (e) one room for each single person between 12 and 17 years of age and not included in the previous category, (f) one room per pair of children under 12 years of age. As Figure 2.13 shows, according to this definition, 40.3% of the Polish population lives in overcrowded households, while the EU average is only 13.6%. Currently, the situation is worse in only three countries: Bulgaria, Romania and Latvia. The data do not include single-person households. Overcrowding depends heavily on income, so people at risk of poverty, i.e. those living in households with disposable income below 60% of the median income in a given country, taking into account comparability, are much more likely than the general population to live in overcrowded housing (40.3% in Poland). It should be noted that this unfavourable difference is much smaller in Poland than the average for the EU-27 countries (Fig. 2.12).



**Fig. 2.13.** Percentage of the total population and of the population at risk of poverty living in overcrowded households in Poland and other EU countries in 2023 (Eurostat's EU-SILC data)

However, the situation in Poland is better than the EU-27 average when assessing housing conditions in terms of the quality of dwellings and the presence of any of the following indicators of poor quality: leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor (Fig. 2.13). People at risk of poverty are more likely to live in poor conditions than the general population, but even within this group, the situation in Poland is currently much better than the EU-27 average. Furthermore, the difference between people at risk of poverty and the general population is smaller in Poland than the EU average.



**Fig. 2.14.** Percentage of the total population and of the population at risk of poverty living in poor-quality dwellings in Poland and other EU countries in 2023 (Eurostat's EU-SILC data)

One summary measure of a country's overall social situation is the synthetic Human Development Index (HDI), which the United Nations proposed for international comparisons. It is based on the average of indicators across three fundamental areas of life. These are health (assessed by the average life expectancy), education (average number of years of schooling for people aged 25 and over, and the expected number of years of schooling for children starting school), and wealth, i.e. income (specifically its logarithm) per capita, taking into account purchasing power parity (PPP) (Gross National Income). The index structure

defines target values in each of the areas listed. According to the latest UN data for 2023, Poland, with an index of 0.906 (the index for all OECD countries is 0.916), is among the countries with the highest HDI and ranks 18th in the European Union and 35th globally<sup>19</sup>. In the years 2010-2022, the average annual increase in the HDI value for Poland was 0.35% and was higher than for all OECD countries (0.26%).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> HDR25\_Statistical\_Annex\_HDI\_Table.xlsx

<sup>20</sup> <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2023-24reporten.pdf>