

Employment of the disabled in the EU in the framework of Europe 2020 Strategy

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Abstract. The priorities of the "Europe 2020" strategy for intelligent and sustainable development favouring social inclusion (adopted by the European Union in 2010) are based on five headline targets. Their implementation should give the European Union economic and social success in 2020. This article aims to evaluate the situation of people with disabilities in the European Union in light of two headline targets – employment and education.

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INTRODUCTION

The "Europe 2020" strategy for intelligent and sustainable development favouring social inclusion adopted in 2010 puts forward three basic priorities: 1) developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation, 2) promoting a more resource-efficient, greener, and more competitive economy, and 3) fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion ("Europe 2020," 2010, p. 5). These interlinked priorities are based on five headline targets which, when met, will give the European Union an economic and social success in 2020. For the purpose of this article two headline targets are particularly important¹: 75% of the population, aged 20-64, should be employed, the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation (aged 30-34) should have a tertiary degree (Strategy 2010, p. 12). The figures relate to the entire population of the European Union, however – of that population – one fourth aged over 16 years are people with disabilities, for whom education and professional start are much more difficult than for people without disabilities. Therefore, this article aims to evaluate

¹ The other targets include investment into R&D, reduction of CO₂ emission and reduction of poverty

employment of people with disabilities in the European Union in light of the adopted targets. The following problems will be analysed:

- activity, employment rate and unemployment rate among people with disabilities in the European Union,
- early school leaving by people with disabilities in the European Union and tertiary education rate among people with disabilities, aged 30-34, in the European Union². Years 2010-2012 were analysed³.

1. ACTIVITY, EMPLOYMENT, AND UNEMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Before the introduction of the “Europe 2020” strategy, the activity rate of people with disabilities, aged 20-64, in the European Union was approximately 56%. However, in approx. one third of EU states the rate was never higher than 50% and the rate over 60% was recorded only in approx. 20% of EU states⁴. An average activity rate at the time was approximately 80%. After the introduction of the “Europe 2020” strategy, the rates have not improved significantly. The activity rates of people with disabilities in 2010-2012 are presented in Table 1 (Annex).

Table 1

Activity rate by disability status and Member State (age 20-64)

		2010			2011			2012			Difference 2012	2012	
		growth rate (%)			Females +Males			Females +Males				D-N	Females +Males
		Disability			Disability			Disability			Percentage points		Disability
		Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total		Yes	No
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Austria	AT	59.5	77.6	73.6	62.5	78.3	74.8	60.2	78.7	74.7	18.5	101.2	101.4
Belgium	BE	52.2	79.6	74.7	51.8	79.6	74.6	47.4	80.6	75.0	33.2	90.8	101.3
Bulgaria	BG	46.6	84.0	80.5	48.0	83.9	79.9	53.3	83.5	79.9	31.2	114.4	99.4
Croatia	HR				38.6	72.3	64.7	40.7	79.0	73.6	38.3	105.4	109.3
Cyprus	CY				62.0	81.6	78.4	61.4	82.5	79.4	21.4	98.5	101.1
Czech Republic	CZ	49.5	79.4	74.5	49.2	78.8	73.8	50.3	79.4	74.5	29.1	101.6	100.0
Denmark	DK	70.3	84.2	81.0	62.4	84.2	78.7	59.9	81.7	76.0	21.8	85.2	97.0
England	UK	46.6	83.4	77.3	51.6	84.0	78.4	51.3	84.6	79.1	33.3	110.1	101.4
Estonia	EE	58.9	84.5	79.0	58.4	84.2	78.4	56.4	83.9	77.4	27.5	95.6	99.3
Finland	FI	64.0	81.4	76.9	61.9	81.7	76.5	65.5	81.4	76.7	15.9	102.3	100.0
France	FR	60.3	79.0	75.6	60.7	79.7	76.2	63.1	80.2	77.1	17.1	104.6	101.5
Germany	DE	68.2	83.1	79.5	69.7	83.8	80.3	71.5	83.6	80.4	12.1	104.8	100.6
Greece	EL	47.1	75.9	73.5	44.9	75.0	72.2	50.0	75.9	72.7	25.9	106.2	100.0
Hungary	HU	41.7	76.3	68.9	42.3	76.8	69.7	38.3	76.7	69.8	38.4	91.8	100.5
Ireland	IE							41.1	78.2	73.2	32.1		

² The rates presented in this article apply to both people with disabilities and people without disabilities

³ 2012 is the last year of the period studied because of the availability of comparative data on Europe 2020 & People with disabilities published in the report prepared by Academic Network of European Disability experts, 2014

⁴ Calculations based on Academic..., 2014, p. 38.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Italy	IT	50.8	70.9	68.6	54.9	73.1	70.0	59.4	72.8	70.4	13.4	116.9	102.7
Latvia	LV	60.6	85.2	79.8	60.9	84.3	79.2	61.1	84.8	80.1	23.7	100.8	99.5
Lithuania	LT	43.9	86.1	80.5	43.6	85.0	79.0	44.3	85.1	78.8	40.8	100.9	98.8
Luxembourg	LU	61.3	76.4	73.9	62.6	77.0	74.8	61.8	77.6	75.0	15.8	100.8	101.6
Malta	MT	34.9	65.3	63.0	36.5	65.7	63.6	27.1	67.9	65.5	40.8	77.7	103.9
Poland	PL	42.9	77.5	71.5	43.2	78.7	72.6	45.1	79.6	73.7	34.1	105.1	102.7
Portugal	PT	57.0	85.3	78.9	59.5	85.1	79.9	57.7	84.7	80.0	27.0	101.2	99.3
Romania	RO	40.1	75.2	68.9	40.3	75.8	69.2	41.6	75.3	69.3	33.7	103.7	100.1
Slovakia	SK	60.9	82.0	76.4	60.4	81.6	75.9	58.6	81.3	75.5	22.7	96.2	99.1
Slovenia	SI	64.2	78.7	74.3	62.1	78.3	73.4	64.9	78.0	74.4	13.1	101.1	99.1
Spain	ES	56.5	83.1	78.9	51.5	80.6	76.6	56.1	81.6	78.2	25.5	99.3	98.2
Sweden	SE	67.7	87.2	84.8	68.4	87.8	85.2	69.4	88.0	85.5	18.6	102.5	100.9
The Netherlands	NL	55.9	81.8	76.0	54.8	82.7	76.3	57.7	82.6	76.6	24.9	103.2	101.0
European Union	EU*	56.1	79.7	75.5	56.7	80.2	75.8	58.5	80.5	76.3	22.0	104.3	101.0

D – disability, N – no, X – base year 2011

Source: prepared by the authors on the basis of Academic..., 2014, pp. 38-40.

The analysis of the data has revealed that in 2012 in over 70% of EU states activity rates of people with disabilities increased compared to 2010, but the growth was not great (an average growth rate was 104.3%). In other countries, including the countries which recorded very low rates in the base year, the rates were decreased. Because of this situation in the period under study, average activity rates of people with disabilities did not improve. In 2012 the EU rate was 58.5% and was higher by 2.4 percentage points than in the base year. It seems worth emphasizing that in 2012 some 40% of EU states recorded an activity rate of people with disabilities in the range of 27 to 51% and in approx. 32% of the countries concerned the rate was never higher than 60%.

Since the employment rate of the able was 80.5%, the difference between the rates was 22 percentage points in favour of people with disabilities⁵. The low employment rate of people with disabilities translates directly into a low employment rate of people with disabilities on the labour market of the European Union, which is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Employment rate by disability status and Member State (age 20-64)

	2010			2011			2012			Difference	
	Men + Women			Men + Women			Men + Women			Employment rates N-D	
	Disability			Disability			Disability			2010	2012
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
AT	48.8	73.2	67.7	50.3	73.4	68.3	49.6	74.4	69.0	24.4	24.8
BE	40.7	71.9	66.3	38.4	72.4	66.3	36.1	73.3	66.9	31.2	37.2
BG	32.5	70.8	67.2	33.9	69.4	65.5	41.0	68.1	64.9	38.3	27.1

⁵ In approx. 40% of EU states the difference was from over 30 to 40.8 percentage points (Malta, Lithuania)

CY				55.3	74.4	71.3	50.1	71.3	68.3		21.2
CZ	37.4	72.3	71.7	38.7	71.8	66.2	38.5	73.1	67.2	34.9	34.6
DE	54.4	77.4	73.5	56.9	79.3	73.7	57.9	79.7	73.9	23.0	21.8
DK	56.0	78.9	65.2	53.3	78.4	72.1	49.7	75.3	68.6	22.9	25.6
EE	46.4	70.3	64.2	47.5	74.9	68.7	49.2	75.6	69.3	23.9	26.4
EL	38.2	66.5	62.5	30.2	57.0	54.4	32.9	56.9	54.0	28.3	24.0
ES	41.1	66.5	67.7	35.6	63.7	59.9	36.2	60.1	56.7	25.4	24.9
FI	53.7	72.6	67.3	51.7	74.3	68.3	56.3	74.9	69.4	18.9	18.6
FR	49.9	71.2	59.6	51.6	72.5	68.7	53.6	72.6	69.1	21.3	19.0
HR				19.7	53.0	45.5	24.4	58.1	53.3		33.7
HU	33.5	66.7	71.7	32.0	66.2	59.2	28.3	66.2	59.3	33.2	37.9
IE							27.9	63.0	58.3		35.1
IT	43.2	63.3	61.0	45.9	64.1	61.0	50.1	63.0	60.6	20.1	12.9
LT	35.3	69.5	65.0	32.3	70.9	65.3	33.2	72.3	66.2	34.2	39.1
LU	52.2	72.6	69.1	52.1	72.7	69.5	53.7	72.9	69.7	20.4	19.2
LV	40.5	66.2	60.6	43.2	67.9	62.5	45.8	69.9	65.0	25.7	23.8
MT	25.6	61.7	58.9	31.7	62.3	60.1	21.4	64.4	61.8	36.1	43.0
NL	51.6	79.6	73.3	51.1	80.3	73.6	53.3	79.7	73.4	28.0	26.4
PL	35.8	69.8	63.9	36.6	69.9	64.2	36.8	70.3	64.6	34.0	33.5
PT	42.3	74.4	67.2	45.3	73.9	68.1	42.2	68.5	63.9	32.1	26.3
RO	37.8	71.1	65.1	38.4	71.7	65.5	39.5	71.7	65.9	33.5	32.2
SE	60.1	82.8	80.0	58.7	83.2	80.0	61.4	83.5	80.5	22.7	22.1
SI	49.2	70.3	64.0	47.6	68.7	62.3	46.4	67.4	61.5	21.1	21.0
SK	50.4	71.5	65.9	50.0	71.2	65.4	48.0	71.1	65.2	21.1	23.1
UK	41.9	79.5	73.3	46.4	79.8	74.0	45.9	80.1	74.4	37.6	34.2
EU	46.0	68.3	67.3	46.9	72.0	67.3	47.9	71.5	67.0	26.0	23.4

D - disability, N - no

Source: prepared by the authors on the basis of Academic..., 2014, pp. 13-14.

The analysis of the employment rate of people with disabilities in the European Union reveals that the rate was low and – as in the case of activity – it did not improve significantly in the period under study. The average employment rate of people with disabilities in the European Union in 2012 was 47.9%⁶ (an increase of 1.9 percentage points compared to the base year). However, in over 14% of EU states the employment rate of people with disabilities decreased compared to 2010. At the same time, the employment rate of people without disabilities was 71.5% (a 0.5 percentage point decrease compared to the base year) and the difference between both groups was 23.4 percentage points in favour of people with disabilities⁷. As regards people with disabilities – in approximately 30% of EU states, the headline employment target assumed in the “Europe 2020” strategy was reached as early as 2012 since the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 was higher or close to 75%. In approximately 40% of EU states, the employment rate of people with disabilities was higher or close to 70%. At the same time, the average employment rate of people with disabilities in the European Union was lower than planned for 2020 by only 3.5 percentage points and, therefore, there is no risk that the percentage outlined in the strategy will not be reached. The situation is different when employment of both people with disabilities and people without disabilities is analysed. The

⁶ The rate was lower than the employment rate by 10.6 percentage points

⁷ In about 40% of EU states this difference in 2012 was from over 30 percentage points to 43 percentage points (Malta)

average employment rate of the latter was lower in 2012 than the employment rate of people without disabilities by over 23 percentage points and lower by other 27 percentage points than the 2020 target. Because of such a big difference in the employment rate of people without disabilities and with disabilities, the average employment rate for the European Union in 2012 was 67%, i.e., it was lower than the 2020 target by 8 percentage points. The analysis has also revealed that in the period under study the rate was decreasing. The accomplishment of the headline target adopted in the “Europe 2020” strategy, i.e. 75% average employment rate in the European Union, will require a significant increase of the very low employment rate of people with disabilities in approximately 40% of EU states (Malta 21.4%, Croatia 24.4%, Ireland 27.9%, Hungary 28.3%, etc.), since these low rates significantly affect the average employment rate in the entire European Union. The employment rate of people with disabilities should be increased in approximately 40% of EU states where it is lower than 50%. This does not mean that the accomplishment of the headline target of the “Europe 2020” strategy in the area of employment does not require individual states to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities. However, as revealed by the analysis, a particularly unfavourable situation on the labour market in the European Union relates to people with disabilities and, therefore, special emphasis on increased employment in this particular group is required⁸. The claim about the unfavourable situation of people with disabilities on the labour market is also fully justified by the analysis of the unemployment rate presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Unemployment rate by disability status and Member State (age 20-64)

	2010			2011			2012			2012
	Men + Women			Men + Women			Men + Women			Difference N-D
	Disability			Disability			Disability			percentage points
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
AT	18.0	5.7	7.9	19.5	6.3	8.8	17.7	5.5	7.6	12.2
BE	22.0	9.7	11.2	26.0	9.1	11.2	23.8	9.1	10.7	14.7
BG	30.3	15.7	16.5	29.4	17.2	18.0	23.2	18.4	18.8	4.8
CY				10.8	8.8	9.1	18.0	13.8	14.1	4.4
CZ	24.5	9.0	10.7	21.4	8.9	10.3	23.8	8.0	9.8	15.6
DE	20.2	6.9	9.7	18.4	5.4	8.2	19.0	4.7	8.1	14.3
DK	20.4	6.3	9.2	14.6	6.9	8.4	17.1	7.9	9.8	9.2
EE	21.2	16.8	17.5	18.6	11.1	12.4	12.8	9.9	10.4	2.7
EL	19.0	12.4	12.7	32.6	24.0	24.6	34.1	25.0	25.8	9.1
ES	27.3	20.0	20.8	31.0	20.9	21.9	37.3	26.4	27.5	10.9
FI	16.0	10.9	12.0	16.6	9.1	10.7	14.1	8.0	9.5	6.1
FR	17.2	9.9	11.0	15.1	9.1	9.9	15.0	9.5	10.3	5.5
HR				49.0	26.8	29.7	40.1	26.5	27.6	13.6
HU	19.7	12.6	13.5	24.2	13.8	15.1	26.1	13.7	15.0	13.4
IE							32.0	19.4	20.4	12.6
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
IT	15.0	10.7	11.1	16.4	12.3	12.8	15.6	13.6	13.9	2.0

⁸ It also follows from the analysis that in EU states in which the lowest employment rates of people with disabilities are recorded – employment rates of people without disabilities were much more favourable, i.e. from about 57% to 72%.

LT	19.5	19.2	19.3	26.1	16.6	17.3	25.1	15.1	15.9	12.0
LU	14.8	5.1	6.4	16.8	5.7	7.1	13.1	6.1	7.1	7.0
LV	33.1	22.3	24.1	29.1	19.6	21.2	25.2	17.6	18.8	7.6
MT	26.7	5.5	6.4	13.2	5.2	5.5	21.0	5.2	5.6	15.8
NL	7.7	2.8	3.6	6.6	2.9	3.5	7.6	3.4	4.2	4.2
PL	16.4	10.0	10.7	15.2	11.2	11.6	18.4	11.7	12.4	6.7
PT	25.8	12.8	14.9	23.9	13.1	14.8	27.0	19.1	20.1	7.9
RO	6.3	5.5	5.6	4.9	5.4	5.3	4.9	4.8	4.9	0.1
SE	11.3	5.1	5.7	14.2	5.3	6.2	11.7	5.1	5.8	6.6
SI	23.3	10.7	14.0	23.5	12.3	15.2	28.8	13.6	17.2	15.0
SK	17.3	12.9	13.8	17.3	12.8	13.7	18.1	12.6	13.7	5.5
UK	10.1	4.7	5.2	10.1	5.1	5.7	10.5	5.4	5.9	5.1
EU	18.0	9.8	10.9	17.4	10.2	11.2	18.1	11.2	12.2	6.9

D - disability, N - no

Source: prepared by the authors on the basis of Academic..., pp. 26-27

It can be generally stated that in the period under study (in the majority of EU states) the situation on their respective labour markets was unfavourable, which was reflected in the total unemployment rates recorded in individual years. In 2012, the unemployment rate of up to 10% was recorded in approximately 39% of EU states while, in over 60% of them, the unemployment rate was from over 10% to 28%. The average total unemployment rate in the European Union was growing and increased from 10.9% in the base year to 12.2% in the final research period. Against the background of the supply imbalance, a particularly unfavourable situation on the EU labour markets was recorded in the case of people with disabilities. The unemployment rate in this population group in over 32% of EU states was from over 25% to over 40%, and – in 14% of the EU states – it was from over 20% to 25%. In only 7% of EU states, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities was lower than 10%. The average unemployment rate of people with disabilities in the European Union in 2012 was 18.1% and was lower by 7 percentage points than the average unemployment rate of people with disabilities and lower by 6 percentage points than the average total unemployment rate⁹. It is worth emphasizing that the high (or very high) unemployment rate of people with disabilities was recorded not only in EU states, where the unemployment rate of people with disabilities was also very high, which translated to a very high total unemployment rate. These states included, for example, Croatia with the unemployment rate of people with disabilities in 2012 equal to 40.1%, unemployment rate of people with disabilities equal to 26.5% and the total unemployment rate equal to 27.6%; Spain with the respective unemployment rates of 37.3%, 26.4%, and 27.5%; Greece – 34.1%, 25.0%; and 25.8%, and Portugal – 27.0 %, 19.1%, and 20.1%; and Bulgaria (23.2%, 18.4%, and 18.8%). However, a high unemployment rate of people with disabilities population was also recorded in the states in which the unemployment rate of people with disabilities was not higher than 10% and the total unemployment rate was lower than the average total rate. These states included, for example, Germany where, in 2012, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities population was 19%, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities was 4.7%, and the total unemployment rate was 8.1%; Malta with the respective rates of 21%, 5.2%, and 5.6%; Belgium – 23.8%, 9.1%, and 10.7%; Czech Republic – 23.8%, 8.0%, 9.8%; and Denmark – 17.1%, 7.9%, and 9.8%. High differences between the unemployment rate of people with disabilities and the unemploy-

⁹ In 2012 the lowest unemployment rate of people with disabilities was 4.9% (Romania) and the highest 40.1% (Croatia). In the case of people without disabilities, the lowest unemployment rate was 3.4% (the Netherlands) and the highest 26.5% (Croatia)

ment rate of people with disabilities population to the detriment of the latter existed in approximately 40% of EU states, i.e., from 12 percentage points to approximately 16 percentage points. Small differences between the rates, up to 5 percentage points, existed in approximately 24% of EU states. Large disproportions between the unemployment of people without disabilities and with disabilities and high (and very high) unemployment rate of people with disabilities in approximately 70% of EU states are indications of the low effectiveness of the vocational integration of people with disabilities in those countries¹⁰. In the period under study, the “Europe 2020” strategy introduced in the European Union did not significantly benefit people with disabilities and did not improve their employment situation.

2. EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING RATE AND TERTIARY EDUCATION RATE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

In addition to the headline target of increased employment in the European Union, the “Europe 2020” strategy also outlines headline targets connected with education, which have a direct impact on the increase of competitiveness for individuals on the labour market. Reduction of people with the lowest level of education and increase of the number of people with tertiary education can positively impact increased competitiveness of EU employees and – in this way – contribute to the reduction of unemployment and increase of the education level. The analysis of the early school leaving rate by young adults aged 18-24 reveals that the reduction of this rate in the European Union to 10% by 2020 is possible. In the period under study, the rate was decreasing and in 2012, it was higher by only 1.2 percentage points than the strategy target. However, this claim is based mainly on the analysis of the early school leaving rate for people without disabilities. In the case of people with disabilities, the rate is very unfavourable, which is presented in Table 4.

The analysis of the data in Table 4 revealed that in the case of people with disabilities in the European Union the 2020 strategy target for the early school leaving rate was reached in 2012. It is worth emphasizing that, in the final year, of our study, in over 60% of EU states the rate was lower or much lower than the 10% strategy target.

Table 4

Share of end school leavers (age 18-24) (%)

	2010			2011			2012			Difference N-D 2012 percentage points
	Men + Women			Men + Women			Men + Women			
	Disability			Disability			Disability			
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
AT	17.6	10.1	10.7	10.8	13.4	13.2	27.4	9.7	11.2	17.7
BE	17.5	12.8	13.1	18.8	9.2	9.7	32.5	9.2	10.8	23.3
BG	44.1	18.1	18.6	16.9	18.0	18.0	30.6	14.7	15.6	15.9
CY				15.3	6.7	7.1	20.5	8.3	8.9	12.2
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

¹⁰ This policy is introduced in the European Union as part of the social policy. The policy is discussed in, for example, Marska-Dzioba, 2013.

CZ	23.0	6.2	7.2	25.6	6.2	7.2	11.2	4.4	4.8	6.8
DE	23.5	7.5	8.9	20.6	6.9	8.1	19.0	7.5	8.5	11.5
DK	38.2	18.6	22.1	31.9	14.0	17.2	15.3	9.9	10.8	5.4
EE	15.7	13.0	13.2	24.2	11.3	12.5	27.0	11.4	13.2	15.6
EL	5.0	5.4	5.4	33.6	4.6	4.9	37.2	6.0	6.3	31.2
ES	38.1	28.6	29.2	37.7	23.2	23.9	37.4	23.1	23.7	14.3
FI	10.9	4.5	5.5	8.4	6.2	6.6	11.1	3.9	5.1	8.0
FR	16.9	10.4	10.9	18.6	9.7	10.4	20.5	10.0	10.8	10.5
HR				17.6	2.3	2.8	22.3	2.4	3.1	19.9
HU	18.1	11.1	11.4	20.9	10.3	10.8	28.0	10.9	11.6	17.1
IE							16.5	6.6	7.1	9.9
IT	22.7	18.0	18.2	30.3	18.0	18.4	23.8	14.5	15.2	9.3
LT	34.8	9.3	10.2	47.6	7.8	9.8	51.1	6.7	9.2	44.4
LU	12.9	15.4	15.2	26.4	13.4	14.2	15.3	13.2	13.3	2.1
LV	27.8	16.8	17.7	31.3	15.5	16.7	18.4	11.6	12.2	6.8
MT	41.1	29.3	29.4	44.4	30.1	30.4	69.3	27.1	27.5	42.2
NL	15.3	9.2	9.9	12.8	13.4	13.4	18.4	9.9	11.0	8.5
PL	18.1	4.8	5.6	7.3	4.6	4.8	12.2	4.3	4.8	7.9
PT	39.5	24.5	25.9	34.0	24.4	25.0	35.1	21.4	22.1	13.7
RO	31.8	15.7	16.3	50.5	15.7	17.0	42.6	17.0	18.4	25.6
SE	9.9	5.6	5.8	4.9	4.7	4.7	14.8	4.1	4.9	10.7
SI	5.2	2.9	3.3	5.9	4.3	4.6	11.2	4.6	5.5	6.6
SK	5.4	3.6	3.7	6.1	3.2	3.4	5.1	3.5	3.6	1.6
UK	18.0	7.7	8.6	9.2	5.0	5.4	20.6	6.0	7.2	14.6
EU	21.6	12.0	12.7	18.9	11.0	11.6	21.8	10.3	11.2	11.5

D - disability, N - no

Source: prepared by the authors on the basis of Academic..., pp. 54-55

High (over 20%) early school leaving rates by people without disabilities were recorded in three EU countries – Portugal, Spain, and Malta¹¹. The education level of people with disabilities in the European Union, measured with this rate, can be considered satisfactory. The situation looks different in the case of people with disabilities. In the period under study, in approximately 30% of EU states the early school leaving rates by people with disabilities were higher than 30% (from 30.6% to 69.3%) and in over 30% EU states they were from 20% to 30%. Consequently, in over 60% of EU states, the rates for this population group were two or more times higher than the 2020 target¹². Rates lower or close to 10% were recorded in three EU states only (about 11%). An average rate of disabled early school leavers in the European Union in 2012 was approximately 22% and it was twice as high as the 2020 target. Moreover, in the period under study it showed a growing trend, contrary to the trend observed in the case of people without disabilities. This high percentage of people with disabilities leaving school after a few years of education is a serious problem – the 2020 target will not be reached but, more importantly, the quality of human capital will be very low, which, in turn, will make people with disabilities less competitive on the labour market in comparison to people without disabilities. It must also

¹¹ In 2012 the lowest early school leaving rate of people without disabilities was 2.4% (Croatia) and the highest 27.1% (Malta).

¹² For example, in 2012 the early school leaving rate of people with disabilities in Malta was nearly 7 times higher than the 2020 target, in Lithuania – over 5 times higher, in Romania – over 4 times higher, in Greece and Spain – about 4 times higher, etc. The lowest rate, 5.1%, was recorded in Slovakia

be added that in over 40% of EU states, there were very high and high differences between early school leavers with disabilities and without disabilities, from approximately 20 percentage points to over 44 percentage points to the detriment of the latter, which additionally shows how significant the problem is¹³.

The situation of people with disabilities is satisfactory in terms of the “Europe 2020” strategy targets related to tertiary education. The relevant data is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Percentage of persons aged 30-34 who have completed a tertiary or equivalent education
by Member States

	2010			2011			2012			2012
	Men + Women			Men + Women			Men + Women			Difference N-D 2012
	Disability			Disability			Disability			percentage points
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
AT	16.0	27.67	26.3	22.8	27.0	26.4	19.3	29.4	28.1	10.12
BE	27.1	49.5	47.2	38.8	47.7	47.0	40.9	46.6	45.9	5.7
BG	15.4	26.8	26.2	15.3	26.4	25.8	27.6	26.9	26.9	-0.7
CY				38.4	52.7	51.3	29.8	51.7	50.0	21.9
CZ	9.2	20.8	20.0	16.4	25.3	24.5	16.0	27.4	26.4	11.4
DE	13.1	35.2	32.1	18.6	32.7	30.8	19.3	36.5	33.9	17.2
DK	43.2	46.6	46.1	41.5	47.8	46.4	37.0	57.2	52.8	20.0
EE	37.6	39.3	39.1	23.1	45.3	42.5	33.9	43.4	42.2	9.5
EL	8.7	35.5	34.9	33.5	34.4	34.3	30.8	35.4	35.2	4.8
ES	27.9	48.2	44.5	33.4	43.2	42.5	26.0	43.0	42.0	17.0
FI	43.6	47.0	46.3	38.5	49.8	47.7	52.2	50.2	50.6	-2.0
FR	37.5	46.6	45.6	35.6	46.5	45.3	34.2	48.2	46.7	14.0
HR				4.8	23.3	21.3	4.6	24.0	22.8	19.4
HU	14.5	25.5	24.5	14.6	24.8	24.0	19.6	29.5	28.9	9.9
IE							29.8	61.7	59.3	31.9
IT	19.6	20.8	20.7	17.5	20.4	20.2	18.5	22.0	21.7	3.5
LT	34.3	47.8	46.9	21.9	50.0	48.1	26.4	54.4	53.5	28.0
LU	19.3	40.5	38.4	29.6	37.4	38.7	30.7	40.5	39.6	9.8
LV	24.1	32.9	31.8	22.4	34.7	33.4	28.3	38.2	37.2	9.4
MT	21.3	23.0	22.9	13.5	24.6	24.3	11.7	26.4	26.1	14.7
NL	21.9	48.8	44.6	32.8	49.8	47.0	46.9	50.5	49.8	3.6
PL	28.2	37.4	36.6	26.9	37.7	38.9	27.8	41.1	40.0	13.3
PT	8.9	22.5	20.8	13.2	24.1	22.9	20.9	23.9	33.6	3.0
RO	10.9	21.1	20.5	7.5	24.3	23.4	15.6	24.9	24.2	9.3
SE	33.3	47.0	46.9	30.8	47.5	46.0	48.0	52.0	51.7	3.1
SI	20.9	34.4	31.6	33.9	34.3	34.2	28.5	36.5	35.0	8.0
SK	21.3	29.2	28.3	28.5	31.8	31.3	20.8	32.2	30.9	11.4
UK	20.5	51.2	47.8	39.5	51.2	49.9	36.0	53.1	51.4	17.1
EU	22.8	37.0	35.5	27.1	36.9	36.0	27.8	39.3	38.1	11.5

D – disability, N – no

Source: prepared by the authors on the basis of Academic..., pp. 64-65.

¹³ For example, the difference between the rate to the detriment of people with disabilities was 44.4 percentage points in Lithuania, 42.2 percentage points in Malta, 31.2 percentage points in Greece and 25.6 percentage points in Romania

In the period under analysis, the percentage of people with disabilities with tertiary education showed a constant growing trend and the growth rate (over 120%) was the highest of all the rates analysed. The rate increased from 22.8% in the base year to 27.8% in 2012, i.e., by 5 percentage points. In the final year of our study, in approximately 14 EU states, the rate of people with disabilities with tertiary education, aged 30-34, was over 40%, which is more than the “Europe 2020” strategy target. In approximately 25% EU states, the rate was from over 30% to 37%. The lowest rates, i.e., a maximum of 25% of people with disabilities with tertiary education were recorded in approximately 25% of EU states. The tertiary education rates of people with disabilities, compared to the tertiary education rates of people without disabilities, were in favour of the former. Yet, the tertiary education rates are higher in the case of people without disabilities. The 40% target of tertiary education for persons aged 30-34 in 2020 was achieved by people without disabilities in 2012; in fact, it was higher than 40% in half EU states. The average rate in this group was 39.3%, i.e., it was only lower by 0.7 percentage points than the “Europe 2020” target. Likewise, the differences existing in individual states between tertiary education of people without disabilities and people with disabilities to the detriment of the latter are not as high as in the case of other rates. In 2012, in 50% of EU states, these differences were not higher than 10 percentage points, and in three countries only, i.e., Ireland, Lithuania, and Cyprus, the differences were higher than 20 percentage points. In the period under study, the average difference in the European Union between the rates in question was reduced from 14.2 percentage points in the base year to 11.5 percentage points in 2012. Consequently, the employment situation of people with disabilities can be evaluated as fairly favourable. As more and more disabled persons want to obtain tertiary education, their competitiveness on the labour market will be higher and the overall quality of the human capital will be better. It is very likely that 40% target of the younger generation (aged 30-34) having a tertiary degree assumed in the “Europe 2020” strategy will be achieved or, at least, it will be close to the target.

CONCLUSION

As assumed in the strategy adopted in 2010 by the European Union, “Europe 2020 sets out a vision of Europe’s social market economy for the 21st century” (Strategy, p. 5) and the vision will be accomplished through the accomplishment of five headline targets of which two – related to people with disabilities – were analysed in this article. Based on the analysis, it can be generally stated that in the first years of the “Europe 2020” strategy, the activity of people with disabilities in the European Union did not significantly improve and continued to be definitely worse than the situation of people without disabilities¹⁴. The employment rate of people with disabilities in the European Union was below 60% and the unemployment rate revealed a constant growing trend. Based on the analysis of the employment rate, it can be concluded that achievement of the 75% employment rate of people aged 20-64 is possible in the case of people without disabilities. When, in some EU states, the growth trend of the employment rate for people without disabilities and people with disabilities is maintained, the target of the total employment rate can also be achieved. However, low employment rate among people with disabilities continues to be a significant problem¹⁵. In the period under study, low and very low employment rates of people with disabilities from 21.4% to 41% were recorded in approximately 43% of EU states. In 29% of EU states, the rates were below 50%. A con-

¹⁴ Discrimination against people with disabilities, including on the labour market, is discussed in documents prepared by the European Community, 2005, World Report 2011, International Labor 2010, etc. The Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) was established at the initiative of the European Commission and Leeds University, where reports on occupational integration and activity of people with disabilities in EU countries are prepared

¹⁵ Employment of people with disabilities in the European Union prior to the adoption of the “Europe 2020” strategy is discussed in Kopycińska D., 2015.

siderable growth in the employment of people with disabilities, as stipulated in the “Europe 2020” strategy, will require radical improvement of the effectiveness of the vocational integration policy in over 80% EU states. A similar situation is observed in the case of the early school leavers aged 18-24. The “Europe 2020” strategy target of early school leavers under 10% can be achieved by people without disabilities; it will also be achieved if the average rate for the entire European Union is taken into account. As early as 2012, the percentage of early school leavers without disabilities was 10.3%. However, if the present growing trend in the case of the early school leaving rate by people with disabilities is maintained, achievement of the target by that population group by 2020 seems unlikely. In the period under study, in approximately 60% of EU states, these rates were from over 20% to over 69%. Lower rates close to 10% were recorded in 11% of EU states. An average early school leaving rate by people with disabilities in the European Union was over twice as high as the 2020 target. A change of this unfavourable situation requires, as in the case of employment, a radical improvement of the effectiveness of the integration policy of people with disabilities in the majority of EU states. The 40% target of tertiary degree for young adults aged 30-34 can be achieved by both people without disabilities and with disabilities. The average rate of tertiary education among people without disabilities was 39.3% in 2012. In the case of people with disabilities this rate was 27.8% and revealed a growing trend; therefore, it is likely that the target will be reached.

In conclusion, it can be generally stated that the headline targets set out in the “Europe 2020” strategy related to employment and education can be reached in the European Union treated as a single population. However, when the actual situation and division of EU population into people without disabilities and with disabilities are taken into account, significant improvement of the employment situation of people with disabilities is required to reach the 2020 strategy target.

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