

People over 50 on the labour market in 2019

26.04.2021

32.6%

The employment rate for people aged 50 and over

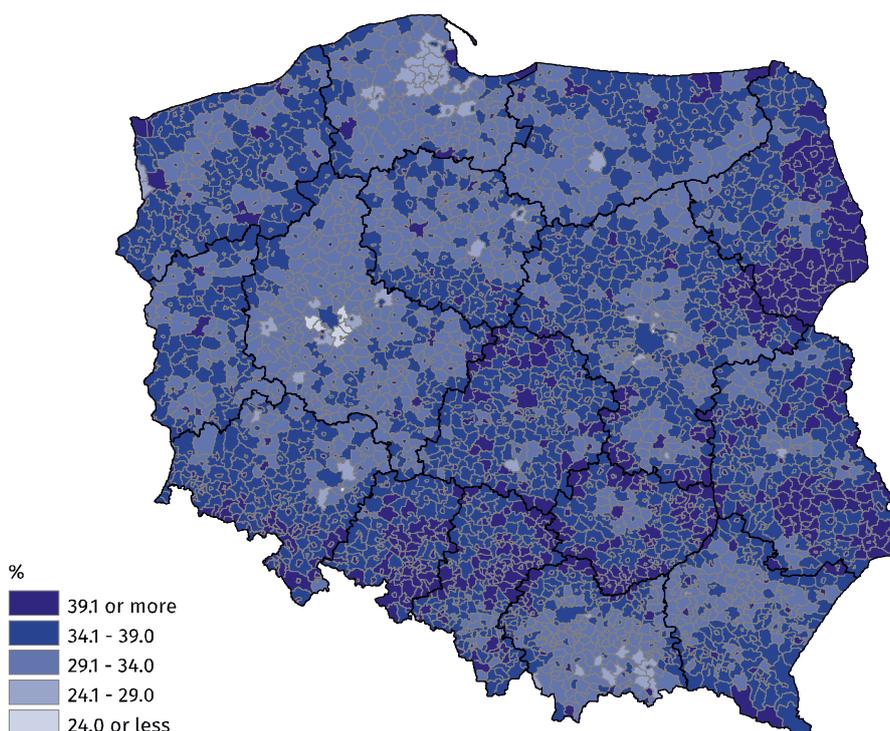
In Poland, in 2019, the economic activity of people aged 50 and over was lower than in the previous year. In this age group, the number of economically active people has decreased while the number of economically inactive people has increased. This translated into a decline in the activity rate. The unemployment rate has decreased, but at the same time there has been a slight decrease in the employment rate.

During the year, the number of employed persons aged 50 and over decreased by 27 thousand

Demographic situation

Demographic determinants such as the extension of Poles' lives, decreasing total fertility, an increase in the average age of women giving birth to children, as well as an increase in the share of elderly people in the total population, have significant consequences for the labour supply, such as the reduction and 'ageing' of labour resources. The specificity of demographic trends and the scale of their impact affect both the size and the age structure of the labour force. The age structure of the Polish population indicates a significant share of people in the late working age and post-working age in the total population, which is directly reflected in the potential of labour resources. In view of the above, in the coming years the processes of inevitable population ageing will continue, the resources of the labour force will be declining, while the burden on people of working age with the population of post-working age will be growing. With the ageing of the Polish population, qualitative changes in the labour market are of particular importance. Therefore, it is important to monitor the population of people aged 50 and over, i.e. in the so-called late working age in terms of their activity on the labour market.

Map 1. The share of people aged 50 and over in the total population
As at 31 December 2019



In 2019, the share of people aged 50 and over in the total population in Poland was 37.4%. The process of population ageing as well as the percentage of people aged 50 and over in the population, vary regionally. The graphic presentation of this phenomenon, with a breakdown by gmina, indicates the formation of clusters of gminas with similar values (Map 1). As regards the spatial layout, the areas of eastern, central and southern Poland had the highest share of people aged 50 and over in the total population. On the other hand, the relatively smallest share of the analysed group was characteristic of gminas located in the Wielkopolskie Voivodship and in voivodships in the northern part of Poland.

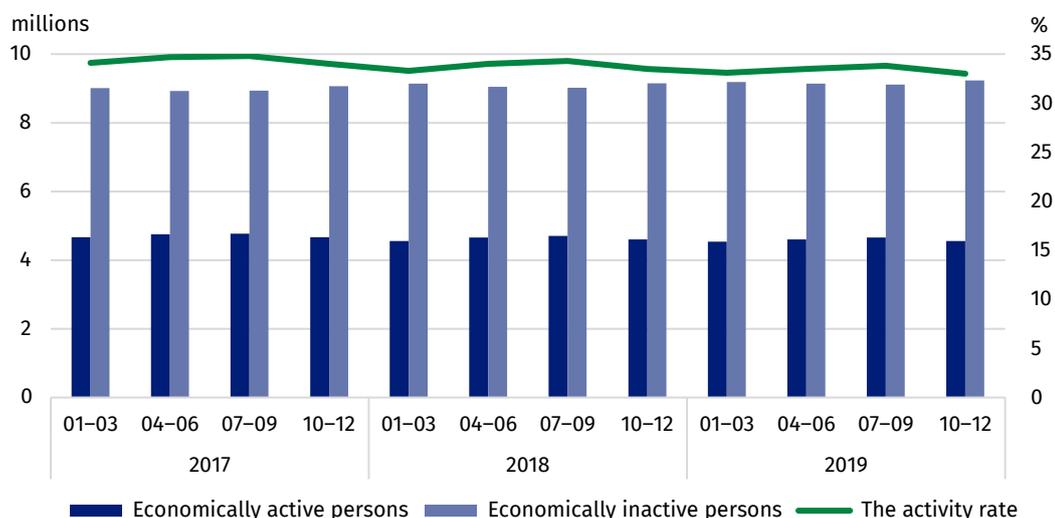
Labour market situation

The demographic changes outlined here are reflected in the age structure of the labour force. Their consequence may be the intention to increase the economic activity of the population aged 50 and over. In 2019, 33.4% of the total population aged 50 and over were employed and unemployed persons. This share, defined as the activity rate, was 22.9 percentage points lower than for the total population and 0.4 percentage points lower than in the previous year. Compared to the previous year, the number of economically active people aged 50 and over decreased by 46 thousand. It was more influenced by a decrease in the number of economically active women, which amounted to 32 thousand. In 2019, every fourth woman aged 50 and over was economically active (26.2%). In the case of men of the same age, the activity rate was much higher and amounted to 42.5%.

The changing labour market situation indicates the need for greater use of the potential of working age employed persons aged 50 and over. This would require measures focused on retaining employees, for whom the risk of retirement is high due to reaching the retirement age.

In Poland, in 2019, every third person aged 50 and over was economically active, with men being more economically active on the labour market than women

Chart 1. Economically active and inactive persons aged 50 and over (left axis) and the activity rate (right axis) for people aged 50 and over



In 2019, the employment rate among men aged 50 and over was 15.9 percentage points higher than for the population of women

In 2019, 4 484 000 people aged 50 and over worked in Poland. Compared to the previous year, the number of employed persons in this age group decreased by 0.6%. There was a decrease among employed women, amounting to 27 thousand, while the number of employed men remained at the same level. At that time, men still predominated among employed persons (56.1%).

As in the case of the total population (Map 1), also in the case of the share of employed persons aged 50 and over in the total number of employed persons¹ (Map 2), spatial diversification of the distribution of this indicator is noticeable. The graphic presentation of this phenomenon by gmina indicates the formation of clusters of gminas with a relatively

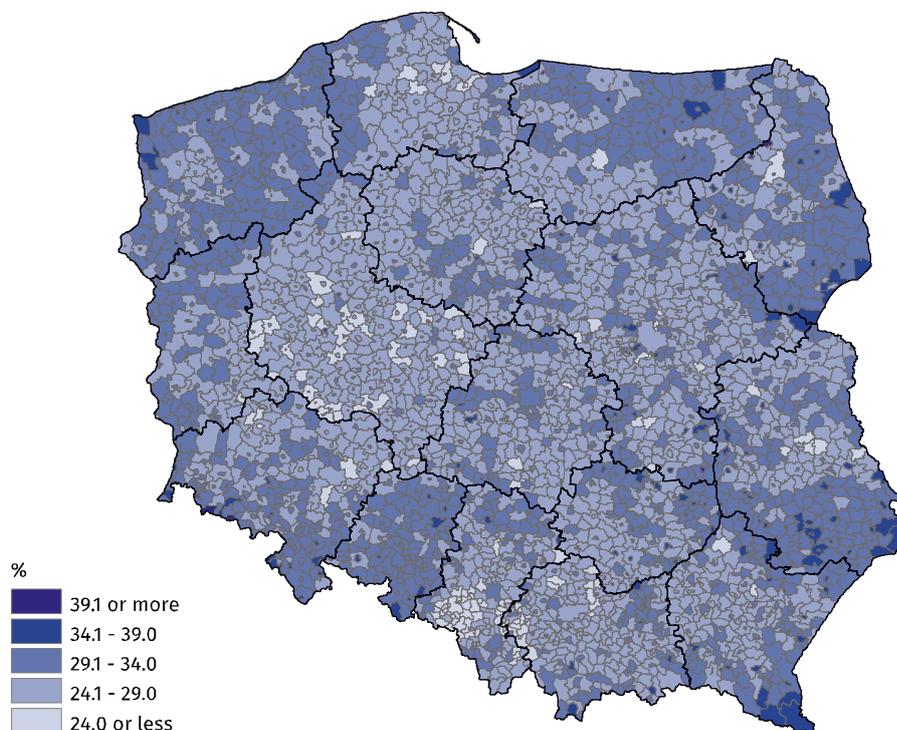
¹ Data on the share of employed persons aged 50 and over in the total number of employed persons by gmina of residence are from administrative data sources.

high share of employed persons aged 50 and over in the total number of employed persons, especially in the eastern part of the country.

Whereas gminas, i.a. in the Wielkopolskie and Pomorskie voivodships, are characterised by a relatively low percentage of employed persons at this age, which, among other things, results from the fact that in these gminas the percentage of people at this age is also relatively low.

Map 2. The share of employed persons aged 50 and over in the total number of employed persons

As at 31 December 2019



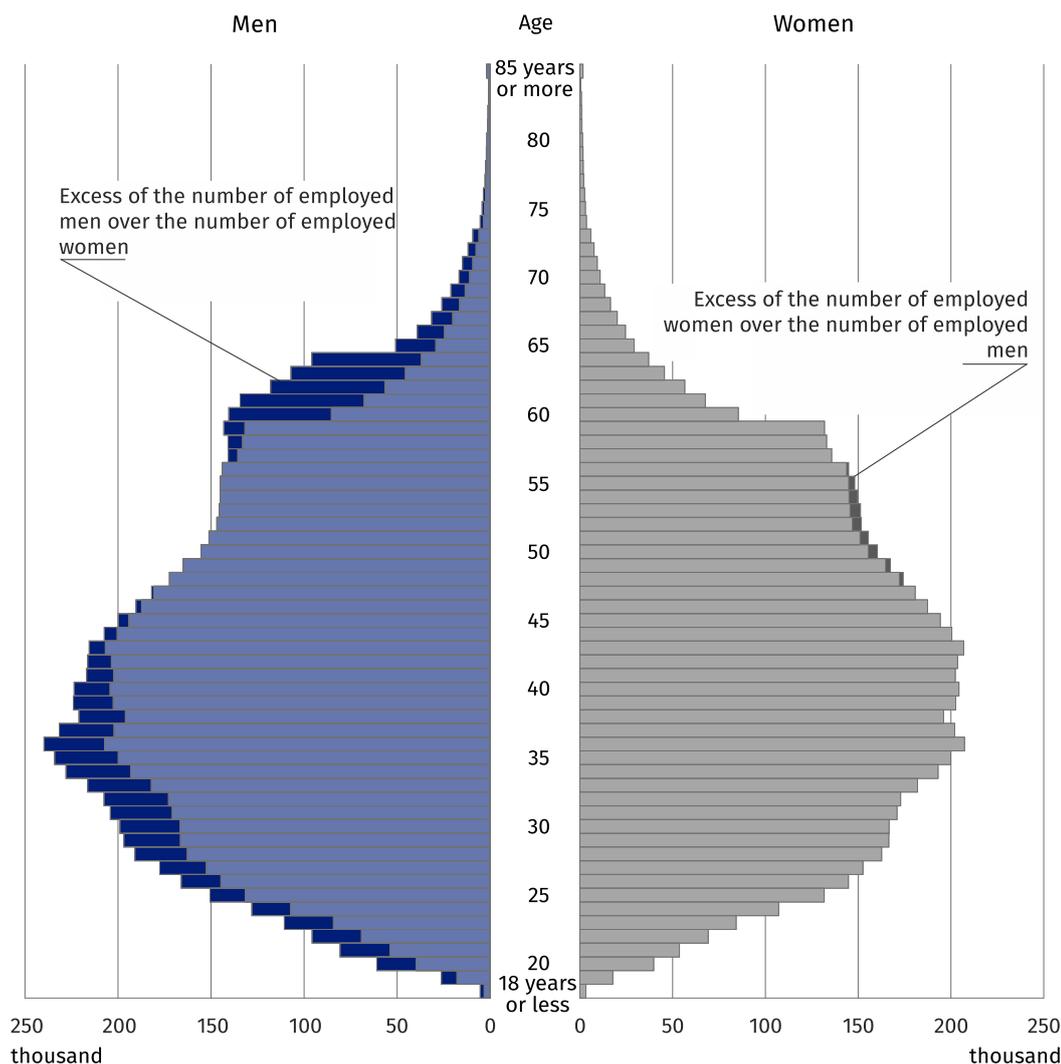
The age pyramid of employed persons is a graphic presentation of the distribution of the employed population by single year of age and sex². When analysing the pyramid, it can be noticed that regardless of sex, an increase in the number of employed persons is visible up to 36 years of age, while from the age of 37, a downward trend in the number of employed persons is observed.

In the population of employed persons aged 50 and over, only among the employed aged 48-56 there is a numerical advantage of employed women over employed men. For employed persons aged 56 this advantage is small. From the age of 57, there is a clear numerical advantage of employed men. This advantage is definitely the highest for those aged 60-65.

² Data on employed persons by single year of age and sex are from administrative data sources.

Chart 2. Age pyramid of employed persons

As at 31 December 2019



Employed persons aged 50 and over in Poland, in 2019, accounted for over 32% of the population of this age, which means that every third person from this age group worked. This share, defined as the employment rate, is one of the basic labour market indicators. As in the case of the activity rate, a higher employment rate for people aged 50 and over was recorded among men (41.5%) and was 15.9 percentage points higher than for the group of women (25.6%).

The employment rate varied depending on the age. In the fourth quarter of 2019, it reached the highest value for men and women aged 50–54 (81.6% and 73.8%, respectively). Among men, an increase in this indicator by 3.0 percentage points was recorded, while among women a decrease of 1.3 percentage points compared to the corresponding period of 2018. At the same time, the employment rate among women increased only in the 55–59 age group (by 1.9 percentage points). Among men, the share of the employed increased in all age groups, but the highest increase was in the 60–64 age group (by 3.2 percentage points).

In the fourth quarter of 2019, the employment rate reached the highest value for men and women in the 50–54 age group

Chart 3. The employment rate for people aged 50 and over by sex and age group

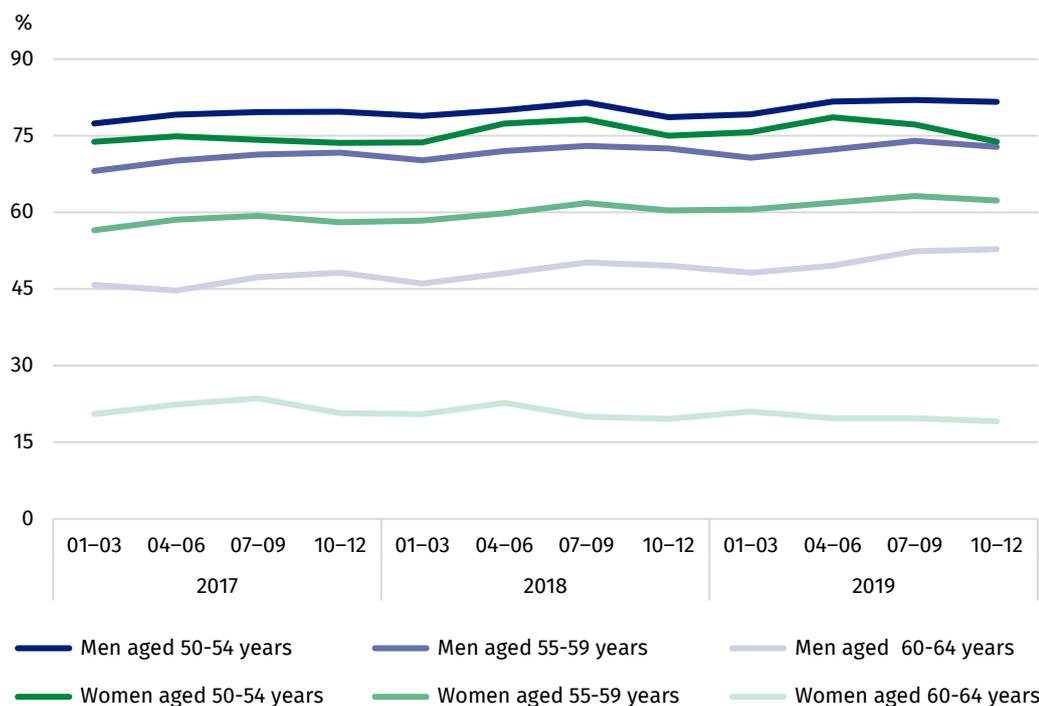
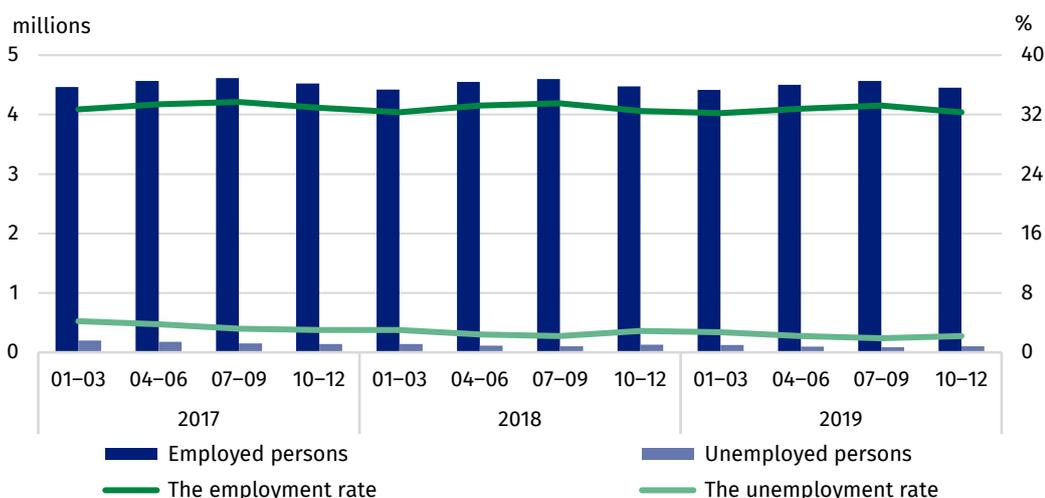


Chart 4. Employed and unemployed persons aged 50 and over (left axis) as well as the employment rate and the unemployment rate (right axis) for people aged 50 and over



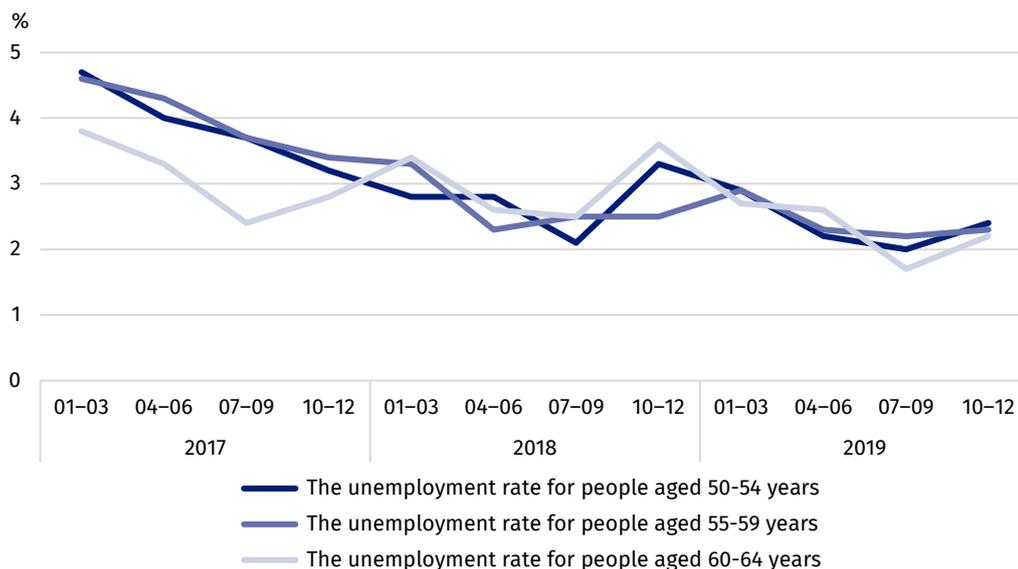
The employment rate for people aged 50 and over in the fourth quarter of 2019 was 41.7% for men and 24.9% for women

The low supply of labour observed in the last few years could potentially be offset by the unused resources of the labour market, such as in the subpopulation of unemployed persons aged 50 and over. In the face of population ageing, increasing the employment of older unemployed persons and their professional activation may be a key priority of the labour market policy. This is one of the reasons why, in the Act of 20 April 2004 on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions, the group of people in a special situation on the labour market includes unemployed persons aged 50 and over.

Among economically active people aged 50 and over, there were 102 thousand unemployed persons. Most of them were men - their share was 57.9%. Over the year, the number of unemployed persons decreased by 15.8%. It was influenced to a higher degree by a decrease in the number of unemployed men, which amounted to 15 thousand. The unemployment rate for people aged 50 and over in Poland, in 2019, was 2.3%. As regards data by sex, the unemployment rate was slightly higher among men than among women (2.3% compared to 2.1%).

When looking at data broken down by five-year age group, it can be noticed that in the fourth quarter of 2019, the highest unemployment rate in the surveyed population was among people aged 50-54 (2.4%). For all age groups, the unemployment rate decreased compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. However, in relation to the previous quarter, the unemployment rate increased in each of the analysed age groups.

Chart 5. The unemployment rate for people aged 50 and over by age group



The largest decrease in the unemployment rate compared to the corresponding period of the previous year was observed among people aged 60-64 (1.4 percentage points)

The phenomena presented above do not exhaust the topic of elderly people on the labour market, they signal basic trends in this respect. In a situation of ongoing demographic changes indicating a progressive population ageing and the shrinking of labour supply, maintaining economic activity of people in the so-called late working age could mitigate their effects. In the face of the ageing of the Polish population, it is essential to research and analyse further the behaviour of this group of people on the labour market.

The source of data for the analysis of the situation on the labour market is the Labour Force Survey, whereas in the case of the share of employed persons aged 50 and over in the total number of employed persons by gmina of residence as well as age pyramids – administrative data sources.

In the case of quoting Statistics Poland data, please provide information: "Source of data: Statistics Poland", and in the case of publishing calculations made on data published by Statistics Poland, please provide information: "Own elaboration based on Statistics Poland data."

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Data available in databases

[EUROSTAT](#)

[Local Data Bank](#)

Terms used in official statistics

[Economically active population](#)

[Economically inactive population](#)

[Employed persons](#)

[Unemployed persons](#)