

Labour market status of the population – preliminary results of the National Census 2021

29 July 2022



17 130.1 thousand

The number of employed persons aged 15 years and more in Poland



643.5 thousand

The number of unemployed persons aged 15-74 years in Poland

The presented news release shows the preliminary results of the National Population and Housing Census 2021 (NSP 2021) the situation of the population in the labour market. The observation period was a week preceding the critical moment of the census, i.e. 25–31 March 2021, while the survey covered persons aged 15 years and more¹. Compared with the results of the census from 2011, there was observed a growth in the number of employed persons by 13.8% and a drop in the number of unemployed persons by 68.6%.

In the last week of March 2021, the number of economically active persons aged 15 years and more comprised 17 773.6 thousand. Within the scope of this population, 17 130.1 thousand constituted employed persons, while 643.5 thousand – unemployed persons. Unemployment rate, determined as the share of unemployed persons in the total number of economically active persons, accounted for 3.6%.

Compared with the results of the NSP 2011, the number of economically active persons increased by 672.9 thousand, i.e. by 3.9%. The considerable changes occurred in the economically active population – the number of employed persons increased by 2 079.5 thousand, i.e. by 13.8%, while the number of unemployed persons decreased by 1 406.6 thousand, i.e. by 68.6%. The changes influenced a decline in unemployment rate from 12.0% to 3.6%.

Also the changes in the number and the structure of the economically active population by age are of a great significance for the labour market and economy. Compared with NSP 2011, a growth in the number of economically active persons was observed for the population aged over 54 years (including also post-working age), with a simultaneous decline observed for the population aged up to 34 years, which jointly indicates ageing of the actual labour resources. Compared with the NSP 2011, the population of economically active persons aged 55 years and more increased by 1 364.6 thousand (to 3 818.8 thousand in 2021), while the economically active population at the age up to 34 years – decreased by 1 326.9 thousand persons (to 5 379.1 thousand). In 2021, the percentage of persons aged up to 34 years constituted 30.3% of the entire presented population (by 9.0 pp. less than in 2011), while in the case of persons aged 55 years and more – 20.4% (by 7.2 pp. more than in 2011).

Employed persons

In the last week of March 2021, the population of employed persons comprised 17 130.1 thousand (9 093.7 thousand men and 8 036.4 thousand women). Almost 60% of the employed population comprised urban residents. Compared with 2011, the number of employed men

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There were observed significant shifts inside the economically active population – the number of employed persons increased, the number unemployed persons decreased.

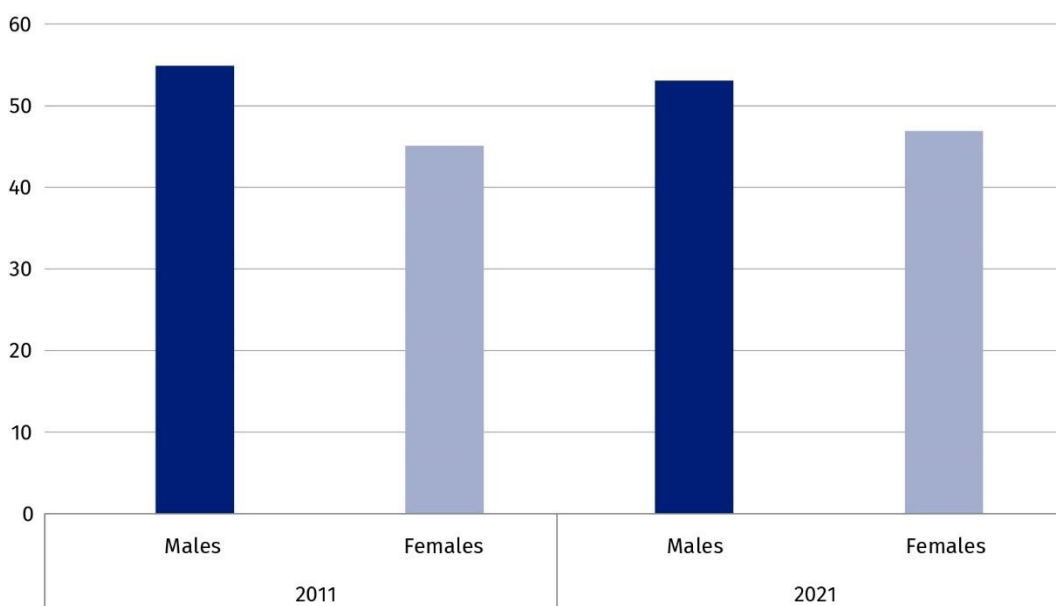
¹ The census results were compiled for the population categories in accordance with the national definition (definitions are presented at the end of the News release)

increased by 10.0%, whereas women - by 18.4%. As regards the place of residence, the number of employed urban residents was higher by 12.9%, while the number of the employed in rural areas was higher by 15.3%.

Table 1. Employed persons by sex and place of residence (urban – rural areas) in 2011 and 2021 (NSP results)

Specification	2011		2021	
	in thousand	in %	in thousand	in %
Total	1 5050.6	100.0	17 130.1	100.0
Men	8 264.5	55.0	9 093.7	53.1
Women	6 786.1	45.0	8 036.4	46.9
Urban areas	9 090.5	60.4	10 259.3	59.9
Rural areas	5 960.1	39.6	6 870.9	40.1

Chart 1. Structure of employed persons by sex in 2011 and 2021 (NSP results)



According to the NSP 2021, persons in working age constituted 92.8% of the total number of the employed, in post-working age – 7.1%, while 0.1% were persons aged 15-17 years (pre-working age). In the case of men, these percentages respectively accounted for: 94.9%, 5.0%, 0.1%, while among women: 90.4%, 9.5% and 0.1%. However, these differences are also influenced by the upper threshold of the working age different for men and women, determined by the retirement age.

Compared with 2011, the population of the employed at working age increased (by 6.5% in population men and by 11.6% in population women), there were also observed significant changes characterised by a threefold among men and almost threefold among women increase in the number of the employed at the post-working age, therefore, also an increase in the percentage of persons at this age, considered in respect to the entire population of the employed (among men this percentage increased by 3.2 pp., while among women – by 5.6 pp.).

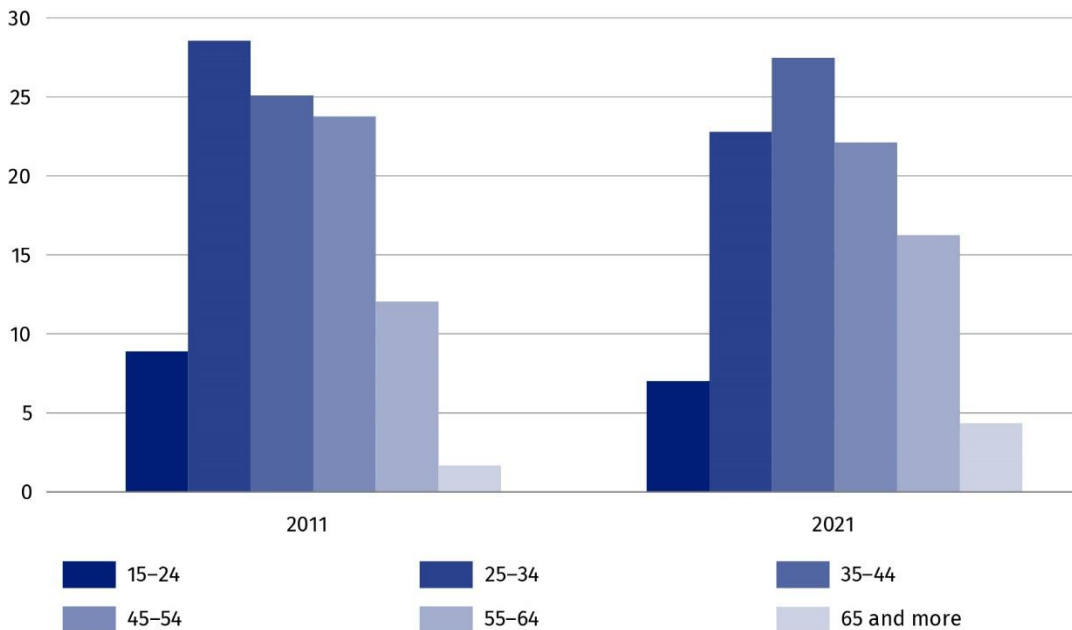
Compared with 2011, the population of the employed at the working age increased by 8.8%, while the number of employed persons aged up to 34 years decreased. In the case of persons at the post-working age, the population increased almost threefold.

Table 2. Employed persons by sex and age in 2011 and 2021 (NSP results)

Specification	2011			2021		
	total	men	women	total	men	women
	in thousands					
Total	15 050.6	8 264.5	6 786.1	17 130.1	9 093.7	8 036.4
15-24 years	1 337.3	787.4	550.0	1 199.0	667.3	531.7
25-34	4 299.0	2 373.0	1 926.0	3 904.7	2 074.1	1 830.6
35-44	3 775.6	2 012.1	1 763.5	4 706.9	2 465.7	2 241.1
45-54	3 576.9	1 835.2	1 741.6	3 789.8	1 906.4	1 883.4
55-64	1 812.4	1 105.1	707.3	2 785.0	1 524.3	1 260.8
65 years and more	249.4	151.7	97.7	744.7	455.9	288.8
Of which at the age:						
Working	14 605.2	8 097.8	6 507.4	15 888.5	8 626.4	7 262.1
Post-working	421.5	151.7	269.8	1223.4	455.9	767.5

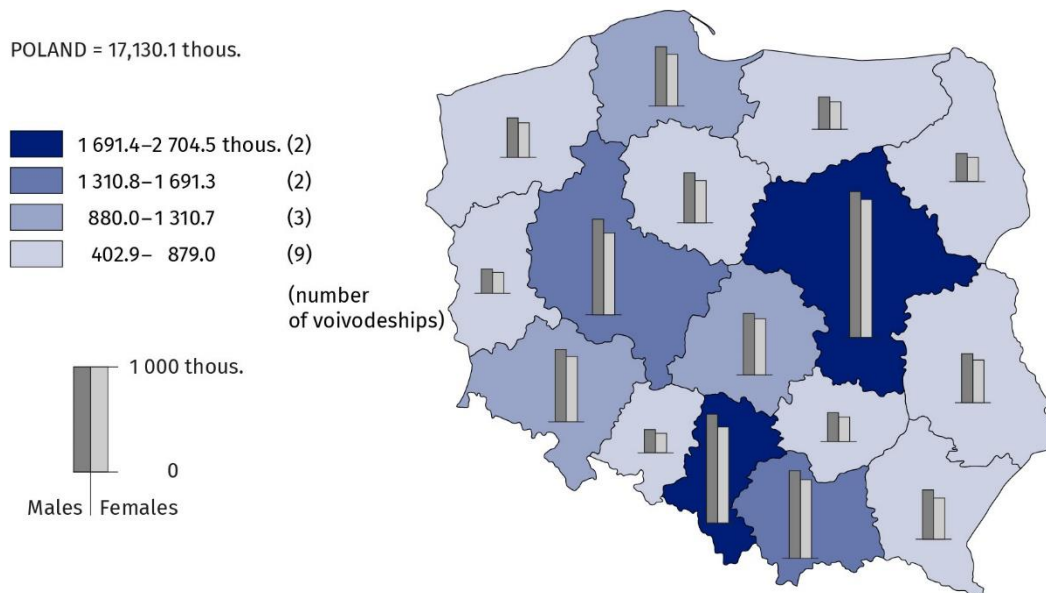
Between 2011 and 2021, the percentage of employed persons aged 15-34 years decreased (by 7.7 pp.), albeit, simultaneously, the share of 35-44 years increased (by 2.4 pp.) as well as the share of employed persons aged 55 years and more (by 6.9 pp.).

Chart 2. Structure of employed persons by age in 2011 and 2021 (NSP results)



As regards the absolute figures, men prevail among the employed in all voivodship, their share is between about 3 to 9 pp. higher than the share of employed women. The most differentiated in respect to this are voivodships: Opolskie, Podkarpackie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie, the least: Mazowieckie, Łódzkie, Dolnośląskie and Małopolskie.

Map 1. Employed persons by sex and voivodships in 2021 (NSP results)



In 2021, 15.8% of the total number of the employed lived in Mazowieckie Voivodship.

The spatial differentiation in respect to the number of employed persons is closely connected with the size of the population residing in a particular region. In 2021, in the largest in respect to the population size Mazowieckie Voivodship, the number of employed persons amounted to 2 704.5 thousand (1 389.7 thousand men and 1 314.9 thousand women), which accounted for 15.8% of the total number of the employed. Then, in Opolskie Voivodship, the smallest one as regards the size of the population, the employed population comprised: 402.9 thousand (219.5 thousand men and 183.3 thousand women), i.e. 2.4% of the total number of the employed.

Between 2011 and 2021, the number of employed persons increased in each voivodship. However, the increases were so differentiated between voivodships that they had an impact on the change in the structure of the employed by voivodships. The highest increase in percentages of the employed between 2011 and 2021 was observed in voivodships Mazowieckie and Małopolskie (respectively by 1.0 and 0.4 pp.), while the highest drop in voivodships Śląskie and Lubelskie (by 0.5 pp.).

The lowest differentiation in the structure of the employed by sex is observed in Mazowieckie Voivodship, where in 2021 men accounted for 51.4%, while women 48.6%. The highest difference in respect to this occurred in voivodships Opolskie and Podkarpackie (by about 9 pp.).

Unemployed persons

In the last week of March 2021, the number of unemployed persons comprised 643.5 thousand (358.2 thousand men, i.e. 55.7%, and 285.2 thousand women, i.e. 44.3%). Almost 61% of the unemployed population comprised urban residents – 391.4 thousand.

Compared with the NSP 2011 results, the unemployed population decreased by 1 406.6 thousand (from 2 050.1 thousand to 643.5 thousand, i.e. by 68.6%). In the case of unemployed women this population was smaller by 724.4 thousand, i.e. by 70.5% as compared with the

Between 2011 and 2021 the unemployed population decreased by over 2/3.

state at the end of March 2011, while in the case of unemployed men – by 682.2 thousand, i.e. by 66.9%. In urban areas unemployed population decreased by 894.5 thousand (by 69.6%), while in rural areas – by 512 thousand (by 67.0%).

Table 3. Unemployed persons by sex and place of residents (urban – rural) in 2011 and 2021 (NSP results)

Specification	2011		2021	
	in thousands	in %	in thousands	w %
Total	2 050.1	100.0	643.5	100.0
Men	1 082.6	52.8	358.2	55.7
Women	967.4	47.2	285.2	44.3
Urban areas	1 285.9	62.7	391.4	60.8
Rural areas	764.1	37.3	252.1	39.2

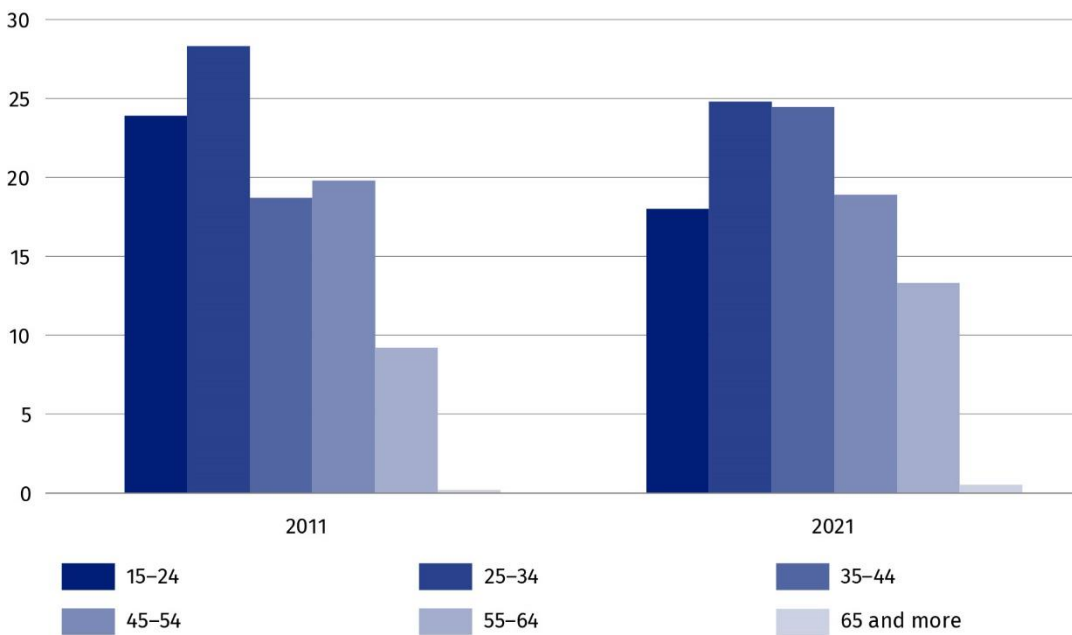
According to the NSP 2021, persons at the working age accounted for 99.0% of the total number of the unemployed, while at the post-working age – 0.9% (in 2011 it was respectively 99.4% and 0.5%). Over 2/3 of the unemployed are persons aged up to 44 years (67.2% in 2021 vs 70.8% in 2011), while significant differences are observed in the age structure by sex. In the population of unemployed men, the percentage of persons aged up to 44 years comprised 62.6%, while among women – 73.1% (in 2011 – 69.0% and 72.9%).

Table 4. Unemployed persons by sex and age in 2011 and 2021 (NSP results)

Specification	2011			2021		
	total	men	women	total	men	women
	in thousands					
Total	2 050.1	1 082.6	967.4	643.5	358.2	285.2
15-24 years	489.2	263.7	225.5	115.9	60.8	55.1
25-34	580.5	295.8	284.7	159.5	80.9	78.7
35-44	382.4	187.1	195.3	157.3	82.6	74.7
45-54	405.5	207.6	197.9	121.6	69.1	52.5
55-64	188.4	126.0	62.4	85.7	62.2	23.5
65 years and more	4.0	2.5	1.6	3.4	2.6	0.7
of which at the age:						
Working	2 037.2	1 078.4	958.8	637.1	355.1	282.0
Post-working	9.5	2.5	7.1	5.6	2.6	2.9

The analysis on census data over time indicates that a decrease in the number of unemployed persons occurred in each 10-yearly age group, regardless of sex. However, a varied scale of these changes influenced the significant change in the structure of the unemployed by age compared with 2011. Within the scope of the entire unemployed population, there was a decrease observed in percentages of persons in the age groups 15-24 years (from 23.9% to 18.0%), 25-34 years (from 28.3% do 24.8%) and 45-54 years (from 19.8% to 18.9%), while an increase was recorded in the shares of the unemployed aged 35-44 years (from 18.7% to 24.4%) and 55-64 years (from 9.2% to 13.3%) and 65 years and more (from 0.2% to 0.5%).

Chart 3. Structure of unemployed persons by age in 2011 and 2021 (NSP results)



Unemployment rate decreased from 12.0% at the last week of March 2011 to 3.6% at the last week of March 2021.

Unemployment rate, measuring the intensity of unemployment in the total economically active population, accounted for 3.6% at the last week of March 2021. The indicator was slightly higher among men (3.8%) than among women (3.4%). Unemployment rate in urban areas in accounted for 3.7%, while in rural areas – for 3.5%.

Changes in the population of the employed and the unemployed between 2011 and 2021 had also a significant impact on the changes in unemployment intensity. Unemployment rate total decreased by 8.4 pp., among men it decreased by 7.8 pp., while among women – by 9,1 pp. In the case of urban areas, a drop in this indicator comprised 8,7 pp., while in rural areas – 7,9 pp.

The highest unemployment rate – 8.8% (over twice higher than the rate for the overall population) – was recorded in the group of persons aged 15-24 years. Even more difficult was the situation of women at this age, whose unemployment rate accounted for 9.4%. The intensity of unemployment in successive age groups, with the exception of the group of persons aged 65 years and more, was similar – the total unemployment rate stayed between 3.0% – 3.9%.

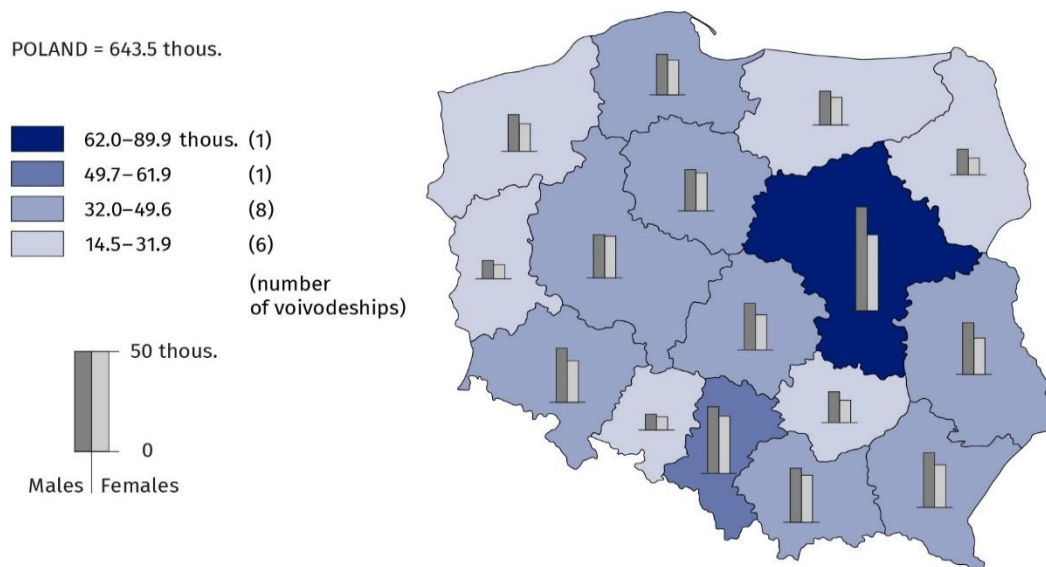
The highest unemployment rate – 8.8% – was recorded in the group of persons aged 15-24 years. Even more difficult was the situation of women at this age, whose unemployment rate accounted for 9.4%.

Table 5. Unemployment rate by age, sex and place of residence in 2021 (NSP results)

Specification	Total	Age						working	post-working
		15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 years and more		
	w %								
Total	3.6	8.8	3.9	3.2	3.1	3.0	0.4	3.9	0.5
Men	3.8	8.3	3.8	3.2	3.5	3.9	0.6	4.0	0.6
Women	3.4	9.4	4.1	3.2	2.7	1.8	0.2	4.7	0.3
Urban areas	3.7	9.3	3.9	3.4	3.4	3.1	0.4	4.0	0.5
Rural areas	3.5	8.3	4.0	3.0	2.8	2.9	0.5	3.7	0.4

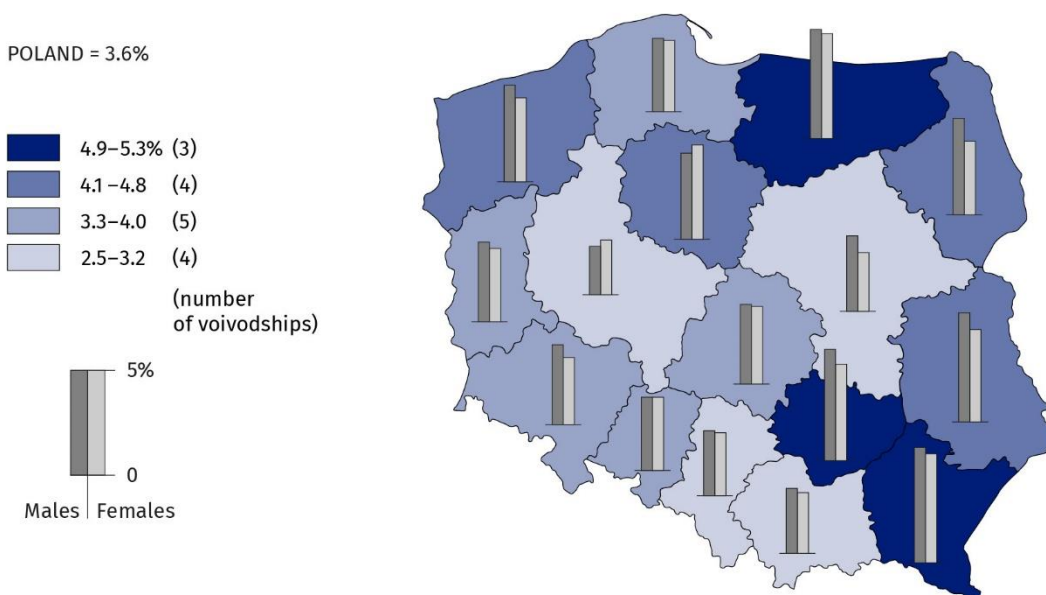
In 2021, there were observed significant differences in unemployment between voivodships, measured by both: absolute figures, as well as unemployment rate. The highest number of unemployed persons was recorded in Mazowieckie Voivodship, while the lowest one in Opolskie Voivodship (respectively about 14.0% and 2.3% of the total number of unemployed persons), which is obviously closely connected with the number of population in a particular voivodship.

Map 2. Unemployed persons by sex and voivodships in 2021 (NSP results)



The highest intensity of unemployment occurred in voivodships: Podkarpackie (5.3%), Warmińsko-Mazurskie (5.0%) and Świętokrzyskie (5.0%). The lowest unemployment rate was observed in voivodships: Wielkopolskie (2.5%), Małopolskie (3.0%) and Śląskie (3.1%).

Map 3. Unemployment rate by sex and voivodships in 2021 (NSP results)



The highest intensity of unemployment occurred in voivodships: Podkarpackie (5.3%), Warmińsko-Mazurskie (5.0%) and Świętokrzyskie (5.0%). The lowest - in voivodships: Wielkopolskie (2.5%), Małopolskie (3.0%) and Śląskie (3.1%).

General comment to tables

Due to data rounding off, in some cases the sums of components may differ from the given figures “total”. Relative figures (percentages) were calculated on the basis of the absolute data expressed with higher accuracy than the one given in the tables.

Methodological notes

National Population and Housing Census 2021 was carried out on the territory of the Republic of Poland in the period between 1 April and 30 September 2021, as of the state on 31 March 2021.

The information scope of the census and principles of its implementation were provided for in the Act of August 9, 2019 on the National Population and Housing Census 2021 (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1775, of 2020, item 1486, of 2021, item 615, of 2021, item 1143) and Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on population and housing censuses (Official Journal of the European Union, L 218, 13.8.2008, p. 14) – with its implementing acts.

The information scope was consulted with the key data recipients, in particular with the units of public administration and the scientific-research centres, which use statistical data for carrying out their statutory tasks.²

The census survey was carried out as a full survey and its scope covered:

- natural persons residing permanently and temporarily living in dwellings, buildings, and other inhabited premises which are not dwellings,
- natural persons without the place of residence,
- dwellings, buildings, collective living quarters and inhabited premises other than a dwelling.

The census did not include:

- heads and foreign staff of diplomatic representations and consular offices of foreign countries, their family members and other persons enjoying privileges and immunities under the laws, international agreements or generally recognized international customs,
- apartments, buildings, facilities and premises owned by diplomatic representations and consular offices of foreign countries.

Participation in the census was mandatory, while Polish residents were obliged to provide accurate, comprehensive and truthful answers (Art. 28 p.1 of the Census 2021 Act).

Sources of data

In accordance with the provisions of the Census Act 2021, population and housing census was implemented via a mixed method, i.e. with the use of the data from administrative registers and the data collected from respondents.

The data embraced with the information scope of the census were obtained from the population covered by the survey through electronic census form and with the use of the following data collection channels:

- online self-enumeration (CAWI);
- telephone interview carried out via census helpline (the so-called enumeration on demand);
- telephone interview carried out by census enumerators (CATI);
- direct interview carried out by census enumerators (CAPI), which due to the pandemic situation in the country could be only carried out in the period between 21 June and 30 September 2021.

² The detailed report on the carried out public consultations is included on the GUS website: <https://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechne/nsp-2021/konsultacje-spoleczne/> - access: 25.07.2022

Selected census terms and definitions

The selected census terms and definitions directly relate to the presented research topic.

Resident population by the national definition – it comprises permanent residents of Poland, including persons who are temporarily abroad (regardless of the period of their stay), but have maintained registering for permanent residence in Poland. Immigrants temporarily staying in Poland are not included among the resident population.

Age of individuals is determined by the number of years completed as determined by comparing the full date of birth to the date of the census (the so-called critical moment, 31 March 2021).

The definitions of economic activity of the population recommended by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Statistical Office (Eurostat) were applied to the census. In accordance with these recommendations, the survey objective was the fact of performing/having a job during the reference week (in Poland it was the week directly preceding the census critical moment, i.e. the period from 25 March to 31 March 2021) or the fact of seeking a job and availability to take up work. The applied principle of specifying the categories ensures that each person will be ranked among only one of the three categories: the employed, the unemployed and economically inactive persons (the actual not formal-legal labour market status of surveyed persons).

Economically active population includes all persons who are considered as employed or unemployed in accordance with the definitions presented below.

Among **employed persons** were included all persons aged 15 years and more who during the reference week:

- performed for at least 1 hour any work generating earnings or income,
- did not perform work but formally had a job, while a reason for temporarily not performing work was, e.g. sickness, holiday leave or leave related care of a child or an adult, economic down-time of a company.

Unemployed persons are persons aged 15-74 years, who simultaneously met three conditions:

- 1) during the reference week were not employed persons,
- 2) were actively seeking a job, i.e. undertook particular actions targeted at finding work during the period between 1 and 31 March,
- 3) were available / ready to start work during the reference week and the following one.

Among the unemployed were also included persons who had found a job and were waiting to start work in the period no longer than 3 months and were available to take up this work.

Unemployment rate is calculated as the percentage share of unemployed persons (total or of a particular group) in the number of economically active population (total or of a particular group).

Dissemination of the NSP 2021 results

The census results will be disseminated in accordance with the [timetable](#) publicly available for information recipients. Preliminary data including the division by voivodships will be successively disseminated from April and July 2022. The data at lower levels of the administrative division of the country, including gminas, will be available from September 2022. The census results will be published on the [Information Portal GUS](#) (news release and publications) and in [Local Data Bank](#). The modernised [Geostatistics Portal](#) will be used for the cartographic data presentation of the in spatial terms.

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Related publications

- [Preliminary results of the National Population and Housing Census 2021. News release](#)
- [National Population and Housing Census 2021. Research methodology and organization.](#)
- [National Census of Population and Housing 2021. Report on preliminary results.](#)

Main terms available in glossary

- [Population](#)
- [Age](#)
- [Post-working age](#)
- [Working age](#)