

## **Statistical data regarding the situation of elderly people in the databases of the Central Statistical Office – an outline of the issue**

### **Streszczenie**

W zasobach statystyki publicznej znajdują się różnorodne dane pozwalające na monitorowanie a nawet prognozowanie (głównie demograficzne) sytuacji osób starszych w Polsce. Dane te są jednak rozproszone, co wynika z charakteru ogółu badań prowadzonych przez Główny Urząd Statystyczny, jak i specyfiki badań dotyczących seniorów. Interesujące informacje można uzyskać korzystając (między innymi) zarówno z wyników badań dotyczących budżetów gospodarstw domowych, wolontariatu, opieki społecznej, rynku pracy, jak i prognoz demograficznych, czy skali zagrożenia ubóstwem. W referacie przedstawione zostanie zestawienie tych danych wraz z przykładami możliwości analitycznego wykorzystania danych gromadzonych przez polską statystykę publiczną w uwzględnieniu poziomu agregacji danych i zakresu ich udostępniania. Wybrane zagadnienia zostaną omówione na przykładach obrazujących specyfikę niektórych województw.

### **Słowa kluczowe:**

Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Badanie Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności, prognozy demograficzne, starzenie się ludności

### **Abstract**

Among statistical data published by the Central Statistical Office there is a variety of data, that allows for monitoring and even prognosis regarding the (mainly demographic) situation of elderly people in Poland. This data is not unified, though, due to the variety in types of surveys supervised by the Central Statistical Office, and because of the nature of research concerning elderly people. Interesting data can be found in household budget surveys, voluntary work, social care surveys and labour market surveys. This article presents the above-mentioned data and discusses possible analysis thereof, considering its level and range of dissemination. The issues in question are discussed with respect to particular voivodeships.

### **Key words:**

Central Statistical Office, Labour Force Survey, demographic predictions, aging of population

The Central Statistical Office has data and statistical information which allow one to monitor, and even to predict the situation of elderly people in Poland. This data is not unified, due to the variety in types of surveys supervised by the Central Statistical Office, and because of the nature of research concerning elderly people. When analysing statistical data about the situation of elderly people, it is always necessary to be aware of the age of the presented population groups – there is no one, stable age considered in

every survey, and that may lead to some problems in comparing data. The main document, that contains all information about every survey organized by the Central Statistical Office (CSO), is the Agenda of Statistical Surveys of Public Statistics in Poland, which is published every year once it has been accepted by the Prime Minister (*The Agenda of Statistical Surveys of Public Statistics in Poland*). A substantial part of all statistical information gathered by the CSO is published on the CSO website.

Interesting data can be found in household budget surveys, voluntary work surveys, social care surveys and labour market surveys. A good example of a publication in which data from different statistical surveys was used, is the brochure prepared by the Central Statistical Office in 2012 for the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (*Jak się żyje osobom starszym w Polsce? 2012*). What is important is that the information presented therein concerned only the general situation in Poland. It would be very interesting to examine information from different fields of social life in every Polish voivodeship, but it is not possible because of the organisation of particular surveys. That is why it is important to be aware of differences among various statistical data.

We would like to present demographical information about the population of Poland and a few voivodeships in particular, divided into age groups. Data concerning population state and structure are taken from the National General Census of People and Dwellings from 2011. The source of information about the labour activity of the population is a sample Labour Force Survey, which is carried on every quarter. Data from the Social Insurance Institution and the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund allowed us to analyse information about beneficiaries of both social insurance systems and the amount of welfare. Data concerning health can be found in various statistical sources, including the European Health Interview Survey, carried out every five years on a sample of the population; the last one was conducted in 2009. More current medical data is gathered by the CSO from respondents with use of a ZD-3 form (Report on treatment at an outpatients' clinic). It is also worth analysing data from the Polish Ministry of Health from surveys using MZ-29 (Report on general hospital activity) and PS-03 forms (Report of a stationary social care institution). Data about elder people's cultural activity are taken by the CSO from the K-03 (Library report) and K-07 forms (Report of community centre, club or youth club activities). All of this background knowledge is necessary in order to understand the proper way of using this information.

There are some basic notions used in public statistics in Poland, that are interesting in the context of the analysed subject, including: population aging – a process during which the percentage of elderly people in a given population increases;

- elderly persons – people who are 60 or 65 and above (which is connected with retirement age and the reception of a pension in Poland);
- economic activity – whether someone is employed, unemployed or economically inactive;

- retirement pay – an amount of money paid to a person who is insured, and from the moment the person fulfils two conditions, namely being 60 (in the case of women) or 65 (in the case of men) and having worked for some period of time while paying an insurance fee;
- social assistance house – an institution that offers care or educational assistance, as well as accommodation for residents;
- cultural institution – an institution that is either public or managed by local authorities and whose main statutory activity is in the field of culture.

In 2012 38 533 300 people were living in Poland (which was 1,0% more than in 2005). Problems related to demographic changes caused by changes in the proportions of age in society and by depopulation can be seen in the entire country. Observed and predicted changes are manifested in an increasing percentage of elderly people in the society, along with a decreasing percentage of persons 0–17 years old.

In 2012 people aged 65 and older constituted 14,2% of the population in Poland (which was about 0,9 points more than in 2005). Children and teenagers (0–17 years old) made up 20,6% (2,3 points less than in 2005), whereas predicted changes indicate that in 2035, in comparison to the end of 2012, the number of citizens in Poland will have fallen by 6,6%, which means that there will be 2 540 400 fewer people. Given this situation, it is simultaneously predicted that the number of people aged 65 and above may increase to 83 575. It is predicted that the percentage of elderly people in the Polish population is going to increase systematically – from 14,2% in 2012 to 23,2% in 2035<sup>1</sup>.

It would be interesting to investigate the economic activity of people in their pre-retirement period, since data obtained from the above-mentioned prognosis suggest that in the next 23 years a shift in the structure of the Polish population may occur where the largest percentage of the population (regarding men and women) will no longer be people aged 25–29, but those aged 50–54. Results of the Labour Force Survey show that among 13 256 000 people in Poland aged 15 and older, those aged 50 and above constituted 42,7% in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2011, which is an increase of roughly 1,2 points from the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010. In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2011, 4468 000 persons among those aged 50 and older were active on the labour market. It was 99 000 more than the year before. At the same time, among people aged 50 and above, 2 609 000 were disabled, only 324 000 (12,4%) of whom were active on the labour market. The majority of disabled people aged 50 and above who were active on the labour market were men – 179 000, i.e. 55,2%.

The percentage of professionally active people aged 50 and above in Poland increased by 33,7% in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2011. Among women it increased by 26,2%, and among the disabled by 12,4%. Among men it increased by 16,0%, which is 6,9 points higher than among women. Economically inactive persons constituted 66,3% of Poles

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<sup>1</sup> All demographic information can be found in the Local Information Database: [http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?p\\_name=indeks](http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?p_name=indeks) [Retrieved March 3, 2013], as well as in the national Demography Database: <http://demografia.stat.gov.pl/bazademografia/> [Retrieved March 3, 2013].

aged 15 years and above in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2011, according to the Labour Force Survey. During 2011, 6 336 000 economically inactive persons retired. Information about the situation of people over 50 on the labour market is prepared by the CSO and the Statistical Office in Bydgoszcz every year (*People over 50 on the Labour Market in 2011*); most data concern the situation in particular voivodeships. Economically inactive people include retired persons and pensioners, thus data concerning their situation are connected with social insurance data. Pensioners can receive their benefits, as was mentioned above, either from the Social Insurance Institution or the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund. In 2012 in Poland there were 7 741 700 pensioners and retired persons, to whom benefits were paid from the non-agricultural social insurance system. Among them, 5 237 000 people received their retirement pay. In comparison with 2011, the overall number of pensioners decreased by 0,7%, while the latter number decreased by 0,1%. Analogous benefits were received by 1 285 700 farmers. Among them were 10 219 000 retired persons, aged 60 years old or above (in the case of women) and 65 and above (in the case of men). It meant a 3,3% decrease from 2011. Retired persons and pensioners made up 23,4% of the population in Poland; a 0,3 point decrease from 2011. The average retirement pay under the non-agricultural social insurance system in 2012 in Poland amounted to 1938,09 zlotys, which was 5,1% more than in the previous year, whereas the average benefit paid to farmers amounted to 1097,75 zlotys, which was 6,7% more than in 2011.

The average retirement pay varied with respect to voivodeships. The highest one was paid in the Silesian Voivodeship, where benefits under the non-agricultural social insurance system in 2012 amounted to 2271,93 zlotys and was 4,5% higher than in 2011. The same benefits paid in 2012 in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship amounted to 1549,66 zlotys. Farmers in the Silesian Voivodeship also received the highest benefits (1307,80 zlotys; a 5,5% increase from 2011), whereas those in the Masovian Voivodeship received the lowest (1014,74 zlotys). This was an obvious reason for differences in lifestyle and material situation among retired people in Poland. What is more, the level of retirement pay was significantly lower than the average salary. The last available data about salaries in Poland date from 2011. The smallest difference between salary and retirement pay was noticed – again – in the Silesian Voivodeship: retirement pay there amounted to 0,6 of an average salary. The most significant difference was noted in the Mosovian Voivdeship, where retirement pay amounted to 0,4 of an average salary.

It can be noticed that there are systematically fewer people in Poland who gain their pension because of disability, and more who are paid a pension after reaching an established age threshold. It can be connected with the state of health of the population as a whole. According to results of the European Health Interview Survey, 16,1% of the Polish population (5,3 million people) is disabled. One of the highest percentages of disability people was noted in the population of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship,

where it was 16,1%. Among people aged 50–69 this percentage increased by 25,0% in 2009, whereas among people aged 70 and above it increased by 45,2%. 38,5% of respondents aged 50 to 69 assessed their health condition as very good. Among respondents aged 70 and above, the number is 14,6%. It needs to be emphasized that 69,9% of respondents aged 50–69 stated that they have long-term health problems, and 76,9% of them report suffering from various chronic diseases. Among respondents aged 70 and above those numbers were 91,3 and 93,2% respectively. The most often indicated diseases or complaints were high blood pressure (indicated by 48,2% of persons 50–69 years old who suffer from chronic diseases or complaints and 58,5% of respondents aged 70 and above) and backache (42,0% of persons aged 50–69 who suffer from chronic diseases or complaints and 41,9% of respondents aged 70 and above). The results of the quoted survey show that people in their 50s constitute the most significant number of patients of hospitals in Poland. The oldest group of respondents, aged 70 and above, constituted 21,8% of patients of Polish hospitals (The State of Health of the Polish Population 2011). Nevertheless, elderly people very rarely make use of the care provided in social assistance houses. In 2012 in Poland there were 876 centres of this kind (including branches of those houses), in which 19 700 elderly people lived. The Masovian Voivodeship had the highest number of residents of social assistance centres, but proportionally, the Opolskie Voivodeship had the highest number of such residents per 10 000 citizens (10 people for every 10 000 citizens), whereas in the Masovian Voivodeship this number was 7 people for every 10 000 citizens. People making use of the services provided by social assistance houses are not strongly represented among people aged 60 and above. In Poland in 2012 they constituted 0,2% of the population; the number being higher only in the Masovian and Silesian Voivodeships at just over 0,3%.

These observations suggest that the majority of elderly people in Poland live independently, and – among various fields of a social life – participation in cultural events can prove this inference. For example, in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship in 2012, registered users of public libraries included 38 200 people aged 45–60 (in 2011 there very 37 800 readers in this age group) and 26 200 people aged 60 and above (in 2011 that number was 24 600). These readers respectively constituted 13,1% and 9,0% of all readers of public libraries in the voivodeship (in 2011 the numbers were 12,6% and 8,1% respectively). 4 600 persons in the voivodeship aged 55 and above were members of various artistic bands and groups attached to cultural institutions or clubs (in 2011 there were 2 000 people involved in similar activities). 8 400 people in the above-mentioned age group were members of various clubs, which constituted 49,2% of all members of such clubs in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship (in 2011 the number was 48,0%). In 2012, nearly 500 persons aged 55 and above completed courses and training of many kinds offered by cultural institutions in the voivodeship. They made up more than 15,0% of all people who had completed those courses (in 2011 the number was 16,2%) (*Culture in 2012*).

Despite different limits which delineate old age and differences among presented data (and other statistical data), a significant degree of population ageing can be observed in Poland. This phenomenon is characteristic of the majority of nations in Europe. Given this situation, further research based on statistical data concerning the situation of old people is inevitable. Nevertheless, it need to be emphasized that the data regarding this subject are not unified and there is a strong necessity to analyse them very consciously.

## References

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