

Chapter 3

Regional Approaches to Demographic Change in Poland

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3.1 Demographic Changes in Poland

The analysis in Poland was conducted in the regions of Pomorskie, Łódzkie and Małopolska (Fig. 3.1) with the aim of providing guidance on “how to prevent” as well as “how to deal with” an ageing society. The demographic situation in Poland is changing significantly, with each of the study regions facing different and unique challenges in their development, but some common challenges as well:

- low fertility rates
- population ageing, changes to population structure by age, and life expectancy
- internal and external migration
- population growth/decline.

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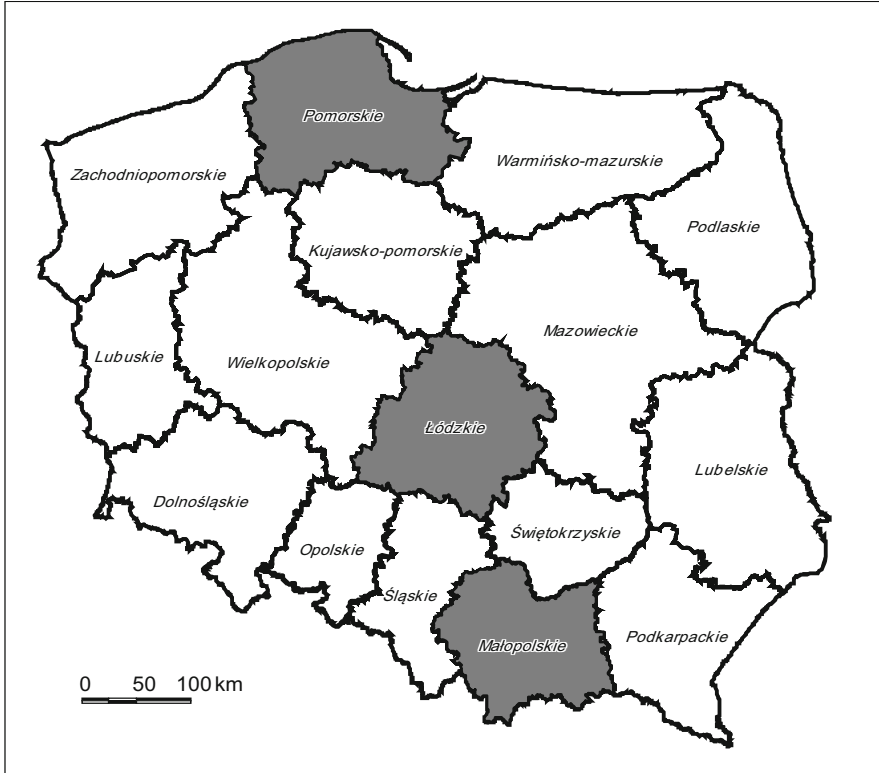


Fig. 3.1 Map of the Polish study regions. *Note:* This map is for illustrative purposes and is without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory covered by this map. *Source:* Martinez-Fernandez, C., et al. (2013), “Demographic transition and an ageing society: Implications for local labour markets in Poland”, *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers*, No. 2013/08, OECD Publishing, Paris. Doi:[10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en)

3.1.1 Fertility

The fertility rate has remained below the replacement rate level for the last two decades, which is a common trend within the three study regions and at the national level, with distinctions across urban and rural areas and in the capitals of the regions analysed (Fig. 3.2).

However, some regions are in a better position than the others. Pomorskie and Małopolskie are in a better situation than Łódzkie, although their fertility rates remain at a low level. This is because the territories of these two regions contain areas that, within the last decade, have been characterised as having the highest fertility rates on the national scale, i.e. in the Małopolskie region: Nowy Sącz, Limanowa, Sucha Beskidzka, Nowy Targ, and Myślenice and Kaszuby in the Pomorskie region. Pomorskie is experiencing a high rural fertility rate in the

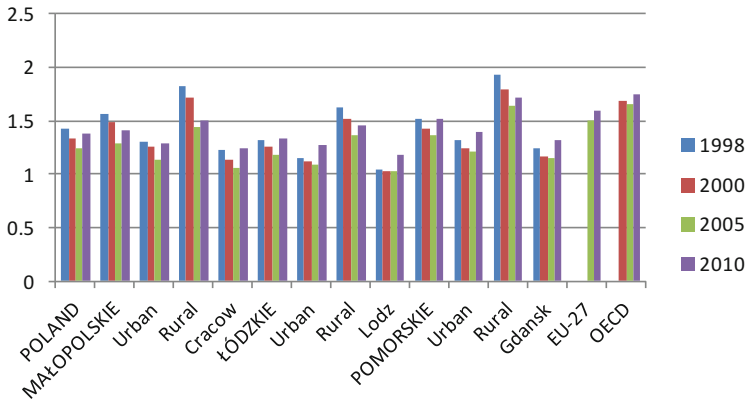


Fig. 3.2 Polish total fertility rates compared with EU27 and the OECD (1998–2010). *Source:* Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

population of the northern part of the region—overall fertility rates of the rural populations of Wejherowo and Kartuszy *poviats* (districts) are close to the replacement level.

It should be emphasised that the problem of low fertility rates is especially serious in the larger cities. All three capital agglomerations of the study regions are characterised by a particularly low fertility rate over a long period of time (from at least the 1960s), and their populations reproduce at below the regional average. As indicated in OECD (2011), the challenge of low fertility tendencies needs a long-term and stable family policy supporting parenting decisions by creating the conditions to ensure that more children are born, and improving the quality of life and reducing poverty among families. Successful family policy requires state-level legislative initiatives to support regional and local efforts to reverse these negative trends.

3.1.2 Population Ageing and Life Expectancy

Population ageing represents common challenges due to the increase in the demand for expensive public services aimed at the elderly and to the decrease in economic vitality (human resources, incomes, individual spending and taxes). The challenges of an ageing population are also directly linked to decreasing fertility. The second main component of the process of population ageing is increasing longevity. The proportion of senior citizens in the study areas has been growing steadily and this trend will continue in the future (Fig. 3.3).

Population ageing trends vary slightly between the three regions under investigation: the Małopolska region is following a similar trend to the national one; the

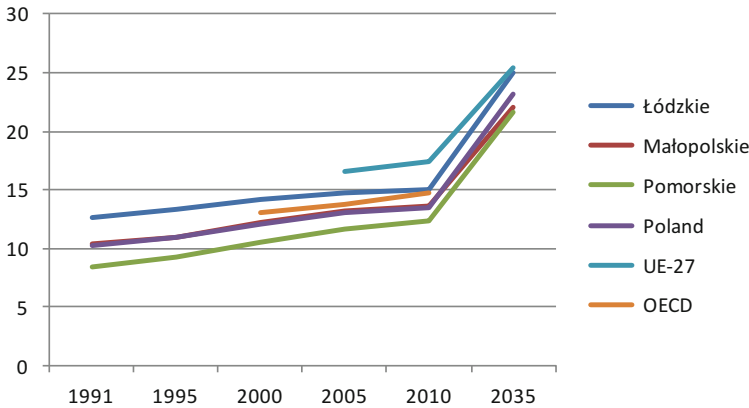


Fig. 3.3 Proportion of citizens aged 65 and over in Poland, EU27 and OECD (1991–2035). *Source:* Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

Łódzkie region has a larger percentage of older persons compared to the national level; and the Pomorskie region is characterised by a lower percentage of elderly than the national trend (Fig. 3.4). This indicates that population ageing is currently the biggest problem in the Łódzkie region. Ageing in Łódzkie is a consequence of long-term low fertility and migration outflow (the first period of outflow was observed in the early 1970s in the north-western part of the region, and was related to migration to industrial cities (Konin, Płock and Włocławek). Distortions in the age structure of the population of that time affect today’s reproduction rates and accelerate population ageing, leaving the city in a situation of “shrinkage” (Martinez-Fernandez et al. 2012). Nevertheless, all the study regions are experiencing a significant rise in the ageing population and need to implement measures focused on addressing needs that are caused by the current and future population ageing process, particularly in terms of the widespread and fast increasing number and share of senior citizens.

Generally, population ageing is the fastest in the south-west and northern parts of Poland (Fig. 3.5), mostly due to negative migration balance. But different factors are dominant in specific regions. Although Pomorskie is ageing faster than Łódzkie, its population is relatively stable due to high and stable fertility rates and a relatively positive migration balance. Of significance is the fact that even though Łódzkie currently has the highest percentage of older population, the other study regions have a high pace of ageing, which is very significant for those regions not only now, but also in the future. Their self-governments will be “hit” by the cohort effect if they do not, in an extremely short period, reshape their strategies and politics to include an increased demand for senior-focused public services as a basic foundation of their activities.

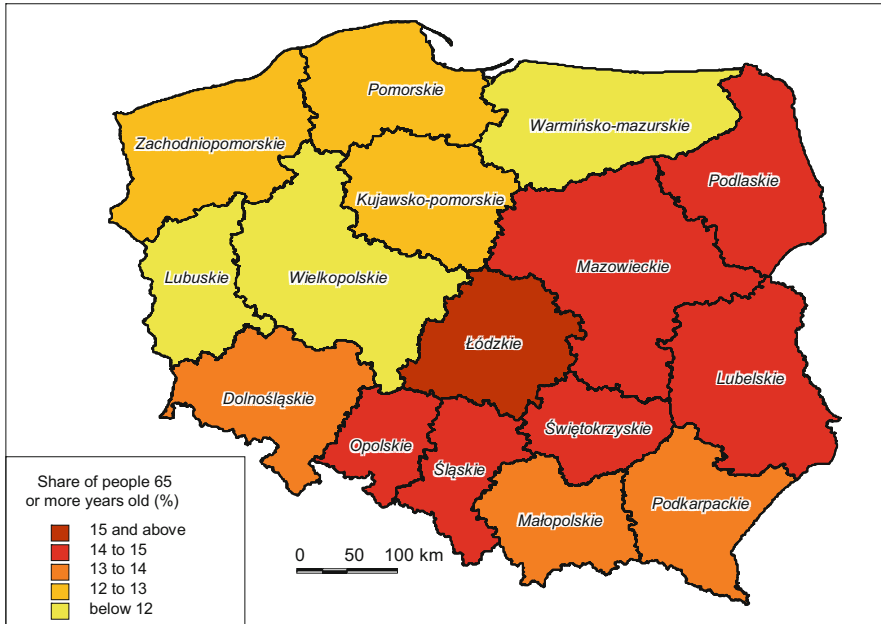


Fig. 3.4 People aged 65 and over in Polish regions (2009). *Notes:* The legend refers to percent of population 65 years old and over. This map is for illustrative purposes and is without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory covered by this map. *Source:* Martinez-Fernandez, C., et al. (2013), “Demographic transition and an ageing society: Implications for local labour markets in Poland”, *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers*, No. 2013/08, OECD Publishing, Paris. Doi:[10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en)

Within the past two decades, the death rates in the study regions show some slight differences. In the case of Małopolska, the death rate is significantly lower than the national average, which translates into a longer life expectancy in relation to the average values recorded for Poland. Moreover, the difference between the national average and the value recorded for Małopolska is more or less constant over time. In the case of Pomorskie, initially the death rate for both genders was slightly higher than the national average. However, the situation has been improving over time, and currently the death rate remains at a significantly lower level (males) or slightly lower level (females).

However, in Łódzkie, a slightly higher death rate was recorded in the early 1990s in comparison to the national average, which was then replaced by a significantly higher death rate, which mainly resulted from a high death rate among people in their prime age (i.e. aged 20–50 years old). As a result, Łódzkie is characterised by an approximately 8–10 year delay in life expectancy in relation to the national average, i.e. today’s life expectancy in the Łódzkie region was attained ca. 8–10 years ago at the national level. This position is mainly the result of its capital city being particularly neglected in terms of health and safety behaviours. The relatively

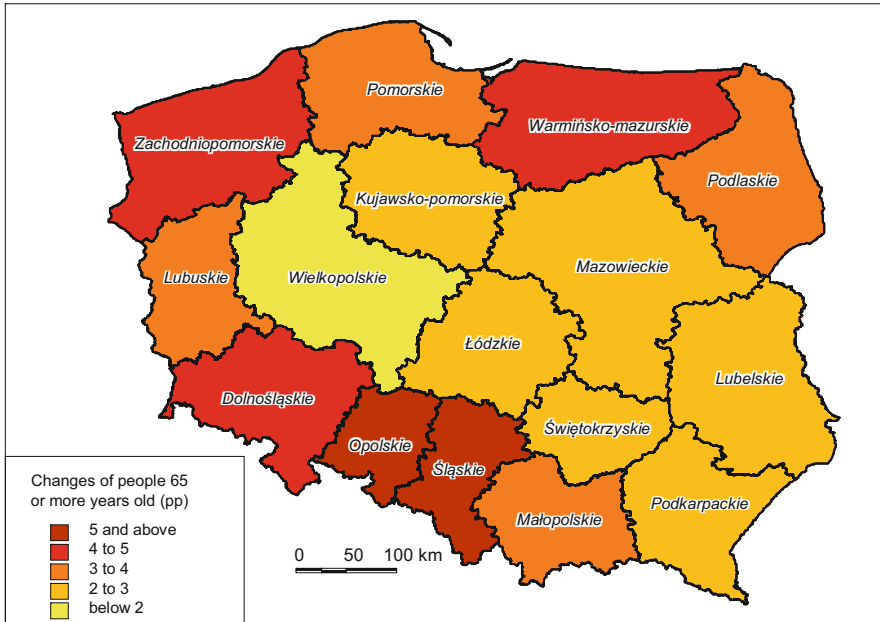


Fig. 3.5 Changes in the ratio of people aged 65 and over in Polish regions (1991–2009). *Note:* The legend refers to percent change in the share of people over 65 years old. This map is for illustrative purposes and is without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory covered by this map. *Source:* Martinez-Fernandez, C., et al. (2013), “Demographic transition and an ageing society: Implications for local labour markets in Poland”, *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers*, No. 2013/08, OECD Publishing, Paris. Doi:[10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en)

worse-off position of the city in terms of unemployment, lower incomes (wages, salaries and pensions), and lower education levels compared to other regions (especially within the older population, who lack the skills needed in today’s society) are also all social reasons for this neglect. People that are not educated about a healthy lifestyle and who lack financial resources are more prone to leave the responsibility for their health to “specialists” and deny the importance of lifestyle for good health. The best counteractions to this are health promotion campaigns and actions aimed at providing affordable health screening.

Population ageing is strongly associated with two other demographic processes: “feminisation” and “singularisation” of elderly population groups. Feminisation (decrease in the sex ratio due to higher male mortality rates) and singularisation (living alone and forming a one-person household) are intertwined. Most senior one-person households are formed by widows, having on average lower incomes, living in spacious apartments and as a consequence often affected by energy poverty, with very limited access to everyday support from their families and acquaintances. The phenomena creates new social environments and at the same

time, new challenges to regional and local policies to deal with this specific social structure. Local and regional authorities must be aware of the new social structure, which will be a consequence of the ageing process.

3.1.3 Migration

There are large differences between the regions concerning migration-related attractiveness, which may be evaluated in terms of the subjective assessment performed by potential migrants, of the living standards in the study regions (Table 3.1). In the case of internal migration, the Łódzkie region was assessed as the place of residence with the lowest attractiveness level, which was demonstrated by the continuous negative migration balance. One of the reasons for this is that Łódzkie is in close proximity to Warsaw, as a high number of emigrants from the Łódzkie region move to Mazowsze and its capital city. A solution to this problem could be creating a place to live for people with relatively high incomes (high enough to rent/buy an apartment in Łódź, but not rich enough to live in Warsaw), who have no requirement to commute daily, such as some public servants (like teachers), but also journalists and other representatives of the so-called learned professions. The two other regions were characterised by a strong force of attraction of potential settlers due to their relatively good situation in terms of labour markets and lack of a “competitor” at the regional level in their closeness.

In the case of external migrations, a growing settlement-related attractiveness of Polish regions has been observed, and among these regions, it is mainly Małopolska and Kraków that have become magnets for attracting more immigrants in comparison to the volume of emigration recorded in these regions. This is mainly because there are a lot of job/work opportunities in Kraków in various branches and sectors (including dynamic developing IT, new technologies and outsourcing businesses), which is confirmed by it having one of the lowest unemployment rates among the cities within the analysed regions. In 2011, the unemployment rate in Kraków was 4.8, in Gdańsk 5.4, in Gdynia 5.5, Sopot 4.0, while in Łódź it was 11. At the same time, in Poland this indicator equalled 12.5 (Central Statistical Office Database

Table 3.1 Internal and external migration balance (1995–2010)

Region	Internal migration				External migration			
	1995	2000	2005	2010	1995	2000	2005	2010
Łódzkie	−1113	−1107	−1564	−1757	−59	−188	−201	−23
Małopolskie	571	2376	3153	3673	−81	−332	30	735
Pomorskie	1054	1651	2270	2749	−1427	−1233	−1197	−100
Poland	×	×	×	×	−18,223	−19,668	−12,878	−2114

Note: ×: Data is not applicable because the category does not apply

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

2012). It seems that due to their improving living standards and job prospects, some regions of Poland could be characterised as having a positive external migration balance. Therefore, the regions should start developing strategies to attract immigrants and facilitate their settlement within their respective territories. It seems that such a strategy is crucial for the development of the Łódzkie region due to its less favourable demographic situation.

Effective systems of national state law are fundamental to utilise the profits from the positive external migration balance in the regional labour markets. Yet, the regions should also be prepared to confront new social problems caused by the influx of people of different nationalities. It very soon might be a daily issue of regional policy. Due to the population ageing in the next 10 years, the workforce will diminish and a shortage could be observed in a “low skills” sub-segment. Immigration could be seen as a solution but it is followed by many issues related to methods of social integration and social participation of the immigrants in Poland. Public institutions should be prepared to provide immigrants with independent social services to improve the linguistic competencies of the immigrants and their offspring.

3.1.4 Population Size Changes

The unfavourable situation in Łódzkie is most clearly demonstrated by changes in the number of inhabitants residing in the study regions within the past two decades, and related forecasts performed by Statistics Poland¹ (Fig. 3.6 and Table 3.2).

While increases in population size for Małopolskie and Pomorskie can be observed, in Łódzkie, the population size continuously declined throughout the study period. Moreover, the changes predicted in the forecast period are envisaged to be of a similar nature. While Małopolskie and Pomorskie are characterised by a small increase in the population size, the Łódzkie region is predicted to be characterised by depopulation (Table 3.2).

In summary, in a country that is homogeneous in terms of its ethnic and cultural aspects such as Poland is, and in conditions where the demographic behaviours are becoming similar, the individual regions will experience various population-based issues.

The population ageing process, which is a key issue of the analysis, is of great importance and requires that new growth drivers be “invented”, in the areas of the silver and white economies. Some of these issues will differ—health conditions measured against indirect life expectancy significantly differentiates the study regions, just like other non-demographic factors influence their settlement-related

¹This forecast was developed in 2009 for the period to 2035. Statistics Poland is currently working on developing the next version of the population forecast, which is based on the data obtained under the national census 2011.

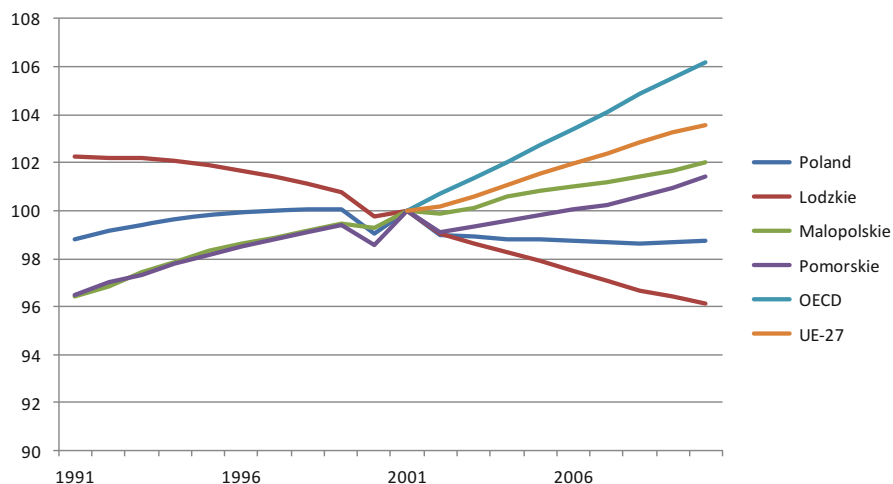


Fig. 3.6 Population growth/decline in Poland, EU27 and the OECD. *Note:* Year 2001 = 100; Small distortions in the early 2000s are related to statistical adjustment to the census data. *Source:* Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

Table 3.2 Population size of the study regions (2000–2035)

Region (thousands)	2000	2005	2010	2020	2035
Łódzkie	2627.8	2577.5	2541.8	2419.2	2188.0
Małopolskie	3229.1	3266.2	3298.3	3364.7	3328.7
Pomorskie	2172.3	2199.0	2230.1	2285.1	2262.8
Poland	38,254.0	38,157.1	38,167.3	37,829.9	35,993.1

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

attractiveness. Considering the present statistics, the Łódzkie region is in the worst demographic situation: apart from the low fertility rate and high death rate, it has to cope with the “magnetic” attraction of Warsaw. This close proximity “sucks out” the young adults from the region (thus lowering the reproductive capacity of the region), as well as reducing the attractiveness of the Łódzkie region to immigrants from other countries. In the mid-1990s, there was a proposal to create a “duopolis” type functional connection between Warsaw and Łódź (where Łódź would have an auxiliary function); however, the proposal was not fulfilled and is still not in operation. A railway reconstruction and a new highway connecting Warsaw and Łódź may change the situation and transform this proximity into an opportunity, however, this transformation will probably relate to the creation of new and cheaper “bedroom” and recreation areas than to equiponderant economic co-operation.

The processes of population ageing are both the result of and the incentive for socio-economic change occurring in the country. Therefore, challenges associated with the discussed demographic trends require systemic, sustainable policy,

simultaneously conducted at all administrative levels of governance: state, regional and local. Regions should take advantage of their regional and local resources in light of their demographic transition.

3.2 Regional Resources for Demographic Transitions

There are several aspects to regional resources, including location and transport and human capital. Each region differs in its availability and accessibility to regional resources to manage its territorial demographic transitions.

3.2.1 Location and Transport Connections

The advantages and disadvantages of location between the three study regions are quite different. Transport accessibility is a necessary condition in order to increase the attractiveness of a region to migrants. The Łódzkie and Małopolskie regions are ideally located, with highways and motorways connecting to the rest of Europe. The worst transport accessibility is the Pomorskie region, having only an under-construction part of the A2 highway which will allow connection between Gdańsk and Łódź and in the future join the system of European highways (Generalna Dyrekcja Dróg Krajowych i Autostrad 2012; Fig. 3.7). The transport accessibility from Gdańsk to the capital of the country, Warsaw, is the worst amongst all three regions, as the distance is about 340 km (about 5 hours by car). Better access to Warsaw is available from Kraków (290 km or about 4 hours by car) and from Łódź, which is the nearest to Warsaw and has the best car connection (140 km or about 2.5 hours by national fast road and about 1 hours by the recently opened highway A2).

The railway from Gdańsk-Warsaw when was modernised, with the travel by train to the centre of Poland even worse than travelling by car, taking approximately 6–7 hours. Already in 2015, it was much better with about 3 hours of train travel. It is much quicker to reach Warsaw from Kraków, although the railway tracks were built a long time ago, but trains only take about 2.5 hours. To travel by train from Łódź to Warsaw can take 1.5–2 hours (www.pkp.pl).

Much faster than the road infrastructure is the air infrastructure. The important international airports are located in Warsaw, Kraków and Gdańsk. Due to Łódź's location so close to Warsaw (130 km), the airport in Łódź covers only 2% of the total passengers (Urząd Lotnictwa Cywilnego 2011). Besides air transport, in the case of the Pomorskie region, the important and additional means of transport is via the Baltic Sea. Two of the three main Polish ports are located in the region: in Gdańsk and in Gdynia. In Gdańsk, the deepwater container terminal is more often used to ship products and goods, while Gdynia focuses on (and is further developing) passenger transport, from which the ships to Sweden quite often operate.

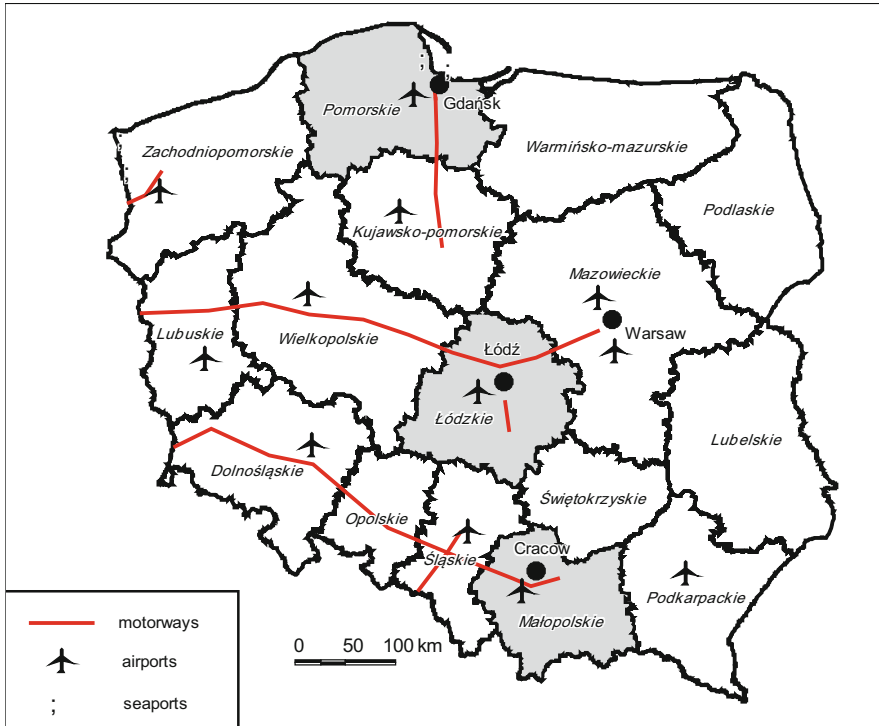


Fig. 3.7 Transport infrastructure in Poland (2012). *Note:* This map is for illustrative purposes and is without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory covered by this map. *Source:* Generalna Dyrekcja Dróg Krajowych i Autostrad (2012), www.gddkia.gov.pl. Accessed July 2012

Transport accessibility is essential to improving the residential attractiveness of the regions. It also increases the availability of the regional labour market. As a result, transport accessibility stimulates the inflow of migration, which may compensate for the low fertility rate of the regions. It is important to emphasise the transport accessibility of the study regions—that increases and promotes the current inter-linkages affecting the improvement of their strategies. Łódzkie benefits from road access (highway/motorway) from the capital and connections with Europe. Małopolskie benefits from air and road transport linkages and, to an extent, rail, particularly to Warsaw.

3.2.2 Human Capital Potential and Skills for Developing the “White Economy”

The three regions differ in their potential for human capital, which is crucial for the future of the *voivodships* (provinces). There was a significant increase in the share of persons with a tertiary education in the total population aged 15–64 from 1995 to 2011, which could be treated as being an indicator of a significant rise in the level of skills of the workforce. Regionally, the same trend has been experienced. In 2000, Małopolska led the way, with more than 10% of persons aged 15–64 having a tertiary education. In 2011, the two regions (Małopolska and Pomorskie) were above the average for tertiary education. In the whole country, the share of highly educated persons increased to more than 20% (Fig. 3.8). The trend is not so clear—the share is increasing very rapidly among the young cohorts (according to the 2011 Census data, 45% of people aged 25–29 have a tertiary education), but at the same time there is an emerging question about the quality of the education, expressed in terms of adjustment to current and future employers’ expectations. Tertiary education is not necessarily fitted to job position offers, and a very important task is to close the gap between “tertiary production” and the labour market.

The number of higher education units within the study regions has also increased, although at different rates:

- Małopolska: in 2000 there were 23 institutions, by 2010 the number had increased to 33
- Łódzkie: in 2000 there were 19 institutions, by 2010 the number had increased to 32 (and in 2011 there were 30)

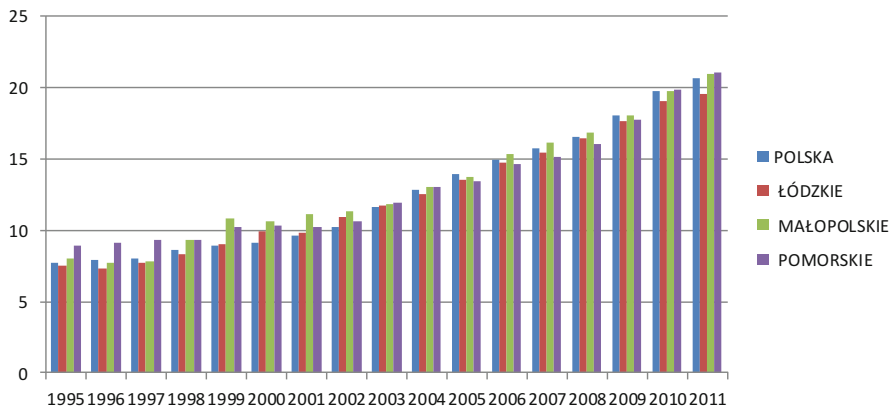


Fig. 3.8 Share of people aged 15–64 with a tertiary education in the Polish study regions (1995–2011). *Source:* Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

- Pomorskie: in 2000 there were 17 institutions, by 2010 the number had increased to 28.

The changing age structure of Poland reflects a decrease in the numbers of youth and as a result there are less students to undertake study. Małopolska managed to increase the number of students per 10,000 inhabitants up to 2010 and is still in a better situation compared to the other two regions and to Poland in general. The Jagiellonian University (JU) is at the top of the list of the best universities in the country. JU, but also other universities in the city, like AGH University of Science and Technology, also have international recognition. This makes Kraków a strong academic centre. The Pomorskie region is the strongest educational centre in Northern Poland. In 2010, there were over 107,000 students in the region. Most of them studied at the TriCity agglomeration, whose potential is created predominantly by the state universities. Despite the demographic change, the number of students by 2010 continued to grow. Over a 12% increase was observed in 2005–2010 years (Local Data Bank, CSO²).

The Łódź trajectory is different; from 2002 to 2008 the number of students increased, but since 2008 there has been a dramatic decrease in numbers, dropping below the national average in 2010 (Fig. 3.9). Łódzkie competes for new students not only with Warsaw, but with Wrocław and Poznań. The catchment area (i.e. the region from which students come) is declining, young people from the eastern part of the Łódzkie region prefer to study in Warsaw; those from the southern part in Wrocław; and those from the western part in Poznań. The other cities offer—according to the students' opinion³—better opportunities to start a professional career (due to lower unemployment rates and higher incomes) and to be able to reconcile studying and working. The decrease in student numbers poses important challenges ahead for skills development in the region, at a time when highly skilled human resources are needed to increase the competitiveness of the local firms. The decrease in student numbers shows the adjustment in relation to employment and attractiveness of the SMEs sector. There is a need to develop Łódź as a centre for student education, by creating favourable conditions both aesthetically and economically.

The number of public higher vocational schools has also been increasing (there were changes in classification of higher vocational schools/other higher schools). In Poland in 2007, there were 234 such schools, and in 2011 there were 254, while in the regions:

- Łódzkie: in 2007 there were 12, by 2011 the number had increased to 14
- Małopolska: in 2007 there were 15 and it had not changed in 2011
- Pomorskie: in 2007 there were 16, by 2011 the number had increased to 17.

²www.stat.gov.pl/gus/index_ENG_HTML.htm

³Łódź w oczach studentów łódzkich publicznych uczelni wyższych. IV edycja (2009-2010 (Łódź in eyes of the people studying in Łódź), http://spatium.uni.lodz.pl/?page_id=303)

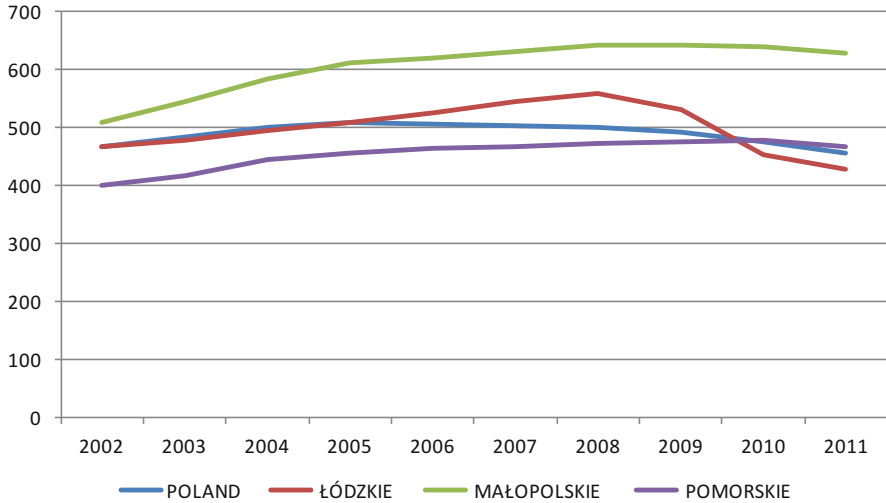


Fig. 3.9 Number of students per 10,000 inhabitants in Poland and the study regions (2002–2011). *Source:* Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

The level of development of education services in the regions directly affects the quality of human capital. This, in turn, determines the quality of the labour market and has an impact on the dynamics of a region’s economic development and a further impact on its living standards. The high share of people with a higher education in a region has an even more positive aspect because of the ageing processes. People with higher education tend to stay professionally active for longer. They are mentally well prepared for long-lasting activity in the labour market. The importance of education services within the regions cannot be underestimated. The continued development and improvement in these services is required to ensure quality market supply of labour, and the longevity of a professionally active population.

3.2.2.1 Skills for the “White” Economy

“White economy” refers to those products, services and activities related to healthcare and care including the dependent, disabled and the elderly. Regional comparisons of the “white” sector with reference to the situation in Poland are much more challenging, as there are no direct or composite indicators giving precise information about this sector’s importance in the economy. Some indicators describe the differences. The number of physicians per 100,000 inhabitants in Łódzkie is much better than in other regions and in Poland generally. In Pomorskie, statistics reveal the decline of physicians per 100,000 inhabitants in the last years (Fig. 3.10). The significant drop in their number is observed from 2004, after

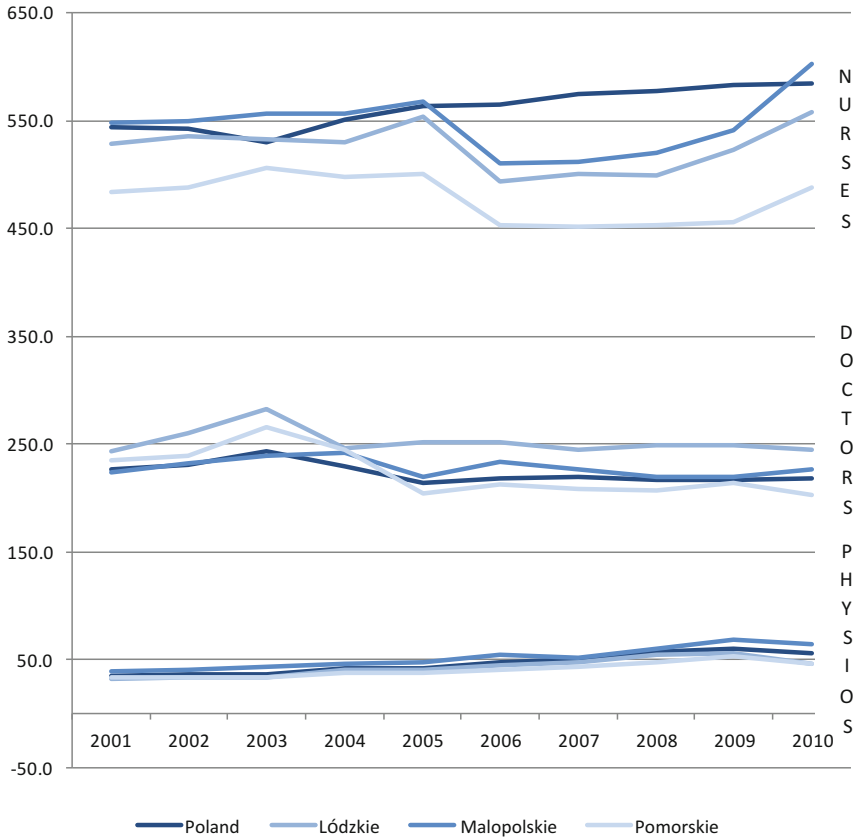


Fig. 3.10 Physicians/doctors, physiotherapists and nurses per 100,000 inhabitants in the Polish study regions. *Note:* Physios = physiotherapists. *Source:* EuroStat. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database. Accessed June 2012

joining the EU. It may be explained by the external emigration of white sector professionals; however, this would need further research.

The very positive trend of constant growth in the number of physiotherapists per 100,000 inhabitants is observed in all regions as well as in Poland (Fig. 3.10). The level of development of this type of service is especially significant in the Małopolskie region, where the number of physiotherapists is above the national average, which is related to the number of available schools and universities in which it is possible to obtain the corresponding education, and the relatively large number of rehabilitation and spa/health resorts in which they can work in the region.

For nursing professionals, the trend is not clearly as positive as the indicator shows increases as well decreases in the number of nursing professionals per 100,000 inhabitants (Fig. 3.10). In this aspect of white services development,

Małopolska is in the best situation, with numbers above the national average. Concerning the ageing population, the access to nursing staff is of crucial importance. It may be considered to be one of the key indicators for the quality of life for elderly people. The importance of continued resources and support to the white sector is of utmost importance considering the ageing of the population in the three study regions.

3.2.2.2 Long-Term Care

In the context of an ageing population, further analysis of the possibilities and barriers to long-term care is part of the “white” sector. There is limited data on long-term care, not only at a regional level, but also at a national level (e.g. no data are available on the number of informal older carers in Poland and the regions). However, demographic changes currently do not have an impact on improving the infrastructure of long-term care sectors. This is due to changes in the law regarding social assistance (2004), but also due to the obligatory standardisation of social assistance houses (*Domy Pomocy Społecznej*), called nursing or residential care facilities, which for some it is not possible to access. Data presented here are from Eurostat sources. However, in some regions, information about the beds available in the region is officially presented on a website, with costs and waiting lists. As an example, in Małopolska, as at 31 July 2012, there were 7315 available beds in nursing and residential care facilities (for all people, including older persons), while 137 beds were free and 679 persons were still on waiting lists. The indicator of available beds in nursing and residential care facilities per 100,000 inhabitants show that Małopolska and Łódzkie are above the average, even though Łódzkie decreased the number of available beds in 2010 compared to 2003, while in Pomorskie this indicator was lower than the national average, but had increased from 2003. Many experts and scientists indicate an urgent need to prepare the long-term care system for the population ageing phenomena, not only in finding new ways of securing financing for elderly care services (Augustyn 2010) through additional care insurance, but also to support family carers (Eurofamcare project),⁴ especially working ones (Stypińska and Perek-Białas 2014).

The inconsistency in data of the healthcare sector can be found in various reports. For example, in the official report of Małopolska’s health department of the Voivodship Office responsible for the health sector, there were 13 (in total) geriatricians employed at the end of December 2010 and no nurses with geriatrician qualifications (see Protection of health care in the province of Małopolska in 2010–2011). However, the information differs as shown in Table 3.3, where data is available regarding geriatricians and geriatric beds, and centres of independent

⁴More information on this EU-funded study carried out in Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (contract n. QLK6-2002-02647) is available at: www.uke.de/extern/eurofamcare/beschreibung.php (accessed 20 October 2012).

Table 3.3 Geriatricians, geriatric centres and geriatric beds at the end of 2010

	Małopolska	Łódzkie	Pomorskie	Śląskie
Geriatricians	36	15	15	58
Geriatric centres	7	1	5	25
Geriatric beds	73	10	5	229

Source: Dubiel, M. and A. Klich-Rączka (2011), Wyzwania dla opieki zdrowotnej—kadry, leki, badania w Zeszyty Naukowe Ochrony Zdrowia, “Zdrowie Publiczne i Zarządzanie”, tom. IX, nr 1/2011

expertise (Dubiel and Klich-Rączka 2011). According to Table 3.3, Małopolska is in a much better situation, both Łódzkie and Pomorskie; however, the leading region in Poland is Śląskie.

The new demographic trends, and particularly the issue of an ageing population, poses different sets of challenges for health services. From the available data, it seems that the Małopolskie region compared to two others is already in the best position to face these new challenges. In particular, the Pomorskie region has to carefully consider the health sector’s needs in its development strategy plans.

3.2.2.3 Social Exclusion

Poverty should be taken into account in the study of the overall socio-economic situation in the regions. This situation is definitely the worst for Łódzkie, followed by Małopolska, with a relatively better situation in Pomorskie, where the data is below the national average (Fig. 3.11). In fact, Małopolska has fewer people experiencing severe material deprivation than the other regions. The problem is closely related to: (i) remuneration levels (especially to frequency of minimal wages); (ii) unemployment levels (lack of income); (iii) size of the agricultural industry (typically the incomes of people working in agriculture are much lower than the average income). These three factors affect poverty levels directly and indirectly (via a formula for pension calculations).

The analysis of persons who are supported by social assistance per 10,000 inhabitants shows that there is a decrease in numbers in Poland and the study regions (Table 3.4), but this is mostly due to changes in the regulation of social assistance, which limits access to social assistance. In 2004 there was a similar decrease as there was also a change in the social assistance laws. However, in Poland, as well as in the regions, similar trends could be observed in each year analysed. The change in this indicator between 2002 and 2011 for Poland shows about a 21% decrease; in Łódzkie, the change in the value of this indicator is only 12% in the same period; and it is similar for Małopolska and Pomorskie, which were above the average at approximately 28% and 27% respectively. Małopolska previously experienced (in 2002) and in 2011 the lowest number of beneficiaries of social assistance per 10,000 inhabitants.

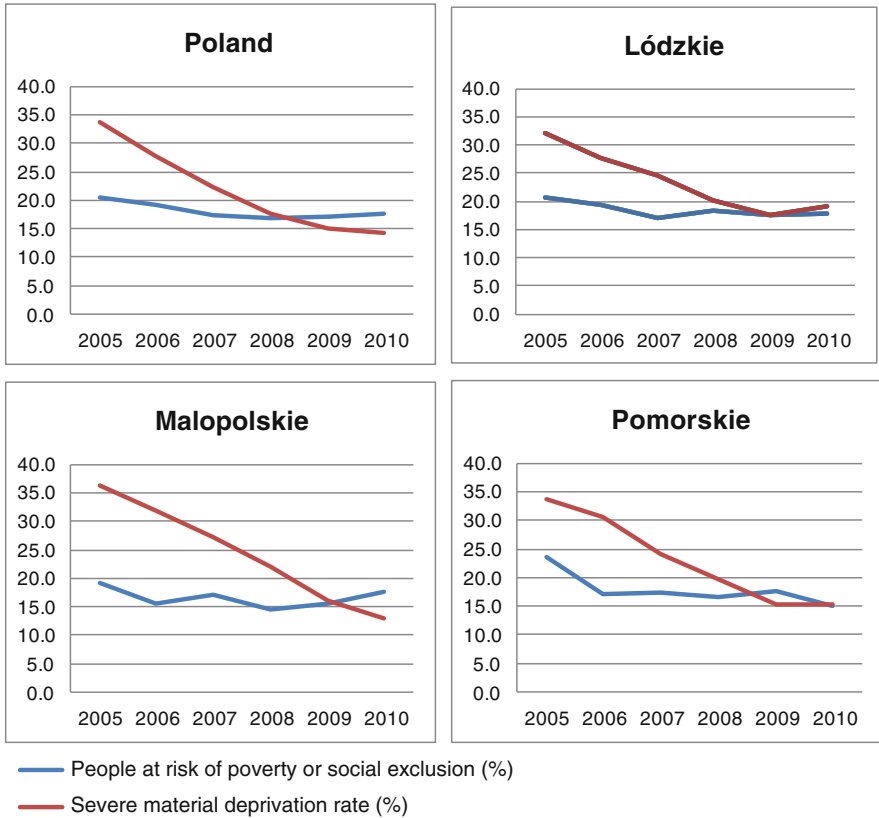


Fig. 3.11 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared with the severe material deprivation rate. *Source:* based on EuroStat. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database. Accessed June 2012

3.2.2.4 Civil Society

In the context of population ageing, civil society and its role have to be particularly taken into account, as civil society can fill the gap if public institutions are lacking. The data regarding the development of non-government organisations (NGOs) focused on tasks related to population ageing (children, older and inter-generational co-operatives) are not easily accessible and not necessarily accurate (as shown by the studies of Klon/Jawor or estimates prepared for the EY 2011 of Volunteerism). Based on data from the Central Statistical Office, there is an increased number of NGOs in Poland, and in all of the study regions (Table 3.5). It should be stressed that in these organisations, in addition to volunteers, there are options to be employed, as shown in Table 3.5.

Regarding the development of civil society and the activity of NGOs in the regions, there are limited accessible quantitative studies that explain the

Table 3.4 Persons of social assistance per 10,000 inhabitants

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Poland	666.8	691.3	631.2	674.7	738.4	620.8	551.3	545.9	541.5	523.7
Łódzkie	605.4	656.2	585.7	654.3	734.8	632.6	545.4	539.5	544.8	530.4
Małopolskie	580.4	604	483.3	511.4	562.2	480.8	436.9	436.7	437.4	418.7
Pomorskie	763.9	796.5	696.6	728.4	733.3	675.6	585.3	580.7	569.6	561

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

Table 3.5 Number of active non-governmental organisations and persons employed in them

(in thousands)	2008		2010	
	Number of NGOs	Number of employed persons	Number of NGOs	Number of employed persons
Poland	70.9	70.8	75	85.4
Łódzkie	4.6	3.0	4.8	3.3
Małopolskie	6.6	7.2	6.8	8.1
Pomorskie	3.6	3.8	4.2	5.3

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012

determinants and factors relating to the higher or lower activity of citizens in NGOs for these regions, which could be compared as being better or worse. Recent studies do highlight initiatives for seniors in the three regions (Perek-Białas 2013; Sagan 2013; Szukalski 2013). However, in Kraków there were no additional advisory groups at the city level that have a direct influence on what could be done for the older population (such as in Gdańsk where there is the Council for Seniors, with an active University of Third Age, and in Gdynia where there is the Centre for Senior Activity, which also tried to engage older persons in various activities). However, since 2014 progress has been made, such as the establishment of Cracow's Council of Seniors, an advisory group for city policy makers, and new institutions—financed by local funds—Centres of Seniors' Activity aimed at activating older inhabitants of city in various ways.

In Łódź, the Senior's Council was established in October 2011, and had its first session in July 2012. In recent years, due to public support from the European Social Fund (ESF), a substantial increase in the number of NGOs focused on pre-primary education was observed. Unfortunately, there are still only 72.2% of children aged 3–6 with access to pre-primary establishments (83.5% of children living in urban areas have access compared to 55.1% in rural areas), and an even smaller proportion were able to attend kindergartens (respectively: 53.8%, 73.2% and 24.6%). Particularly in rural areas, grandparents, predominantly grandmothers, substitute for those services that are lacking for families with young children. This is still the dominant form of inter-generational support, although some new

initiatives are emerging. However, discussion around the inter-generational solidarity at the regional level is focused primarily on initiatives aimed at education of the elderly (such as the Universities of the Third Age, or UTAs) and at leisure activities for older people.

In Małopolska, the NGOs are well-known and active not only at the regional level, but at the national level as well, as they fall within the structure of umbrella organisations of Forum 50+ and the AGE Platform Europe. Projects of Małopolska's NGOs are treated as being good practices and are well known in Poland and abroad (as the Academy of Fullness of Life). The role of the S@S in engaging seniors via educational and cultural offers is internationally known and appreciated (Brussels Conference, 4 June 2012). The social sphere is the region's resource, and constitutes its endogenous capital, whose capabilities should be considered in the development scenarios. The described nature of the region's social capital helps to develop the attitudes and activities aimed at social inclusion and integration. The strong bonding of social relations and human capital resources create the conduit for the high social milieu of the NGOs' activities. Regional policy should stimulate the development of NGOs focused on tasks related to population ageing. Their role in providing services devoted to the existential needs of older people may be crucial. The mobilisation of the NGO sector to combat social exclusion processes should be strengthened by the development and availability of information technology services. Considering the high level of households' computer equipment and broadband Internet connection access, the development of e-administration and of e-governance generally may significantly help to avoid social exclusion stemming from low mobility caused by the age of the region's inhabitants. In this sphere, the role of regional and local policy is pivotal. Therefore, promoting the importance of the role of NGOs in society, maintaining and, in some cases (as the population ages), increasing the support and importance of sharing knowledge between NGOs and other institutions dealing with seniors at the local level can boost community inclusion.

One of the most successful initiatives developed throughout the entire country are the UTAs. The number of these universities is expanding very rapidly: in 1989 there were only 9; by 2007 there were 125; in 2010 there were 248; and in March 2012 as many as 385 (in 2012, there were 32 in Małopolska, 28 in Łódzkie and 20 in Pomorskie). These numbers are evolving: in August 2012 there were 410 UTAs.

In addition to increasing the number of UTAs, the increase of the number of students as well as the education range of individual universities is observed. The dynamic of growth of Gdańsk University of the Third Age provides a good example of the intensity of the changes (Table 3.6).

Besides of the many known Universities of Third Age (UTAs) located in Cracow (like Jagiellonian University's) there are also other successful UTAs in Małopolska like in Nowy Sącz, which besides general education offers for seniors upon retirement, has introduced courses which can give participants new skills and an option to obtain certificates in new professions (as older persons' assistants) (see Box 3.1).

Table 3.6 Gdańsk University of the Third Age

Academic year	Lectures			Number of lectures	Classes—number of teaching hours	Number of students				
	Professors	Doctors	M.Sc			Gdańsk	Kartuzy	Prużycz Gd.	Pelplin	Total
2004/05	7	8	6	29	464	470	—	—	—	470
2005/06	11	10	10	27	945	735	—	—	—	735
2006/07	13	12	19	51	2378	770	—	—	—	770
2007/08	9	16	17	50	2525	800	50	200	—	1050
2008/09	17	10	26	52	2878	1250	70	220	180	1720
2009/10	15	13	33	75	3033	1300	70	220	180	1770

Source: Based on Gdańsk University. Available at: www.ug.edu.pl. Accessed June 2012

Box 3.1 An Example of Initiatives for Older Citizens in Nowy Sącz City: The Third Age University

Participants of Nowy Sącz's University of the Third Age are obtaining job certificates in new professions like medical assistants, IT technicians, beauticians, tour guides and human resource experts.

Participants of Nowy Sącz's UTA made up half of the whole group for the courses to prepare for taking the exam to become a medical assistant. The course was divided into two terms, twice per week for 4 h. At the beginning there were 42 participants aged between 20 and 60. Thirty-one of them graduated. Besides theoretical lessons, there was also a lot of practical training. Skills could be verified via special training/apprenticeships in rehabilitation hospitals, social welfare houses (including those for the elderly). As a result, three graduates of the UTA became volunteers in the newly opened Nowy Sącz's hospice and others could be informal caregivers for their ill, disabled family members. This is an innovative project, meaning that the participants of the UTA could obtain new skills and re-enter the labour market for free.

Source: information provided by the President of the Sądecki University of Third Age Wiesława Borczyk and www.dziennikpolski24.pl/pl/magazyny/kariera/1219196-nowe-kwalifikacje-na-emeryturze.html, 0:pag:2#nav0 accessed August 2012.

The Universities of the Third Age have had political support in parliament as there is a special parliamentary working group for the UTA and the Parliamentary Commission of Senior Policy. UTAs are important partners in creating and designing social policy for seniors (being actively involved in initiatives of a new Department of Senior's Policy in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy established in 2012).

It seems that there is a need for continued support for UTAs and other seniors' organisations to create a knowledge network for sharing initiatives between UTAs and to help find volunteers from among its members. One example is the Programme of the Social Activity of Older People (ASOS) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Since late 2012, with great success, more than 400 organisations, UTAs and other institutions focused on seniors were able to finance their activities thanks to this programme. Many activities financed from these funds are directed at increasing the activity of seniors at the local level (via volunteering, see, the Organisation of Creative Initiatives "e" from Warsaw⁵ which managed to organise special intensive workshops for leaders from UTAs from various parts of Poland, to share best practices between UTAs and their leaders and to develop skills for volunteering for their local community).

⁵<http://e.org.pl>

3.3 Demographic Change, Older Workers and Regional Policy Challenges

The regions under study have different economic situations, not only in terms of current inflows, but also in terms of accumulated resources. GDP per capita is a synthetic indicator commonly used for the comparative analysis of the level of economic development of regions. Between 2002 and 2009, the economic growth rate was almost the same in all of the study regions (in Pomorskie it increased by 57.6%, in Łódzkie by 58% and in Małopolskie by 59.6%), but the absolute differences were stable (Łódzkie 91–92% of the national average, Małopolskie 85–86%, Pomorskie 95–98%). The differences result from structures by age, economic activity and economic sector (Fig. 3.12). The lower value of GDP per capita for Małopolska compared to the other regions could probably be explained by the fact that it is an agricultural region.

However, in 2010, all regions were below average for Poland (GDP per capita), which is heavily weighted by Mazowsze (especially in comparison to Warsaw, where the GDP per capita is equal to 301.1% of the national average, with a population share of 4.4% of the country). In 2010, the GDP in Pomorskie and Łódzkie was relatively close to the average (Pomorskie: 96.0%, Łódzkie: 92.1%) with Małopolskie (84.9%) being in a much worse situation. At the same time, there were sub-regional differences. The region’s capital area is in a much better situation compared to the rest of the region (for example, in Łódzkie, GDP in Łódź is 123.6% of the national average, which is almost twofold of the GDP in the Sieradz

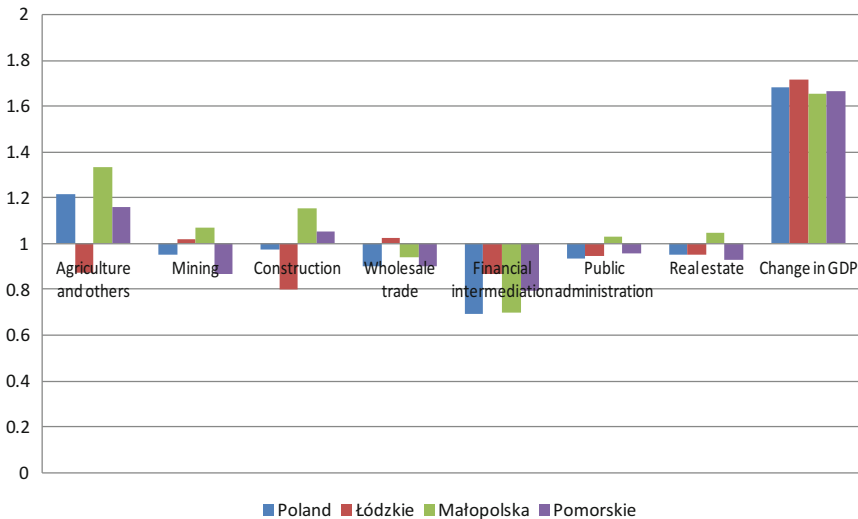


Fig. 3.12 Changes in national and regional sector employment and GDP (2000–2007). *Note:* GDP per capita, national currency, current prices. *Source:* based on OECD.StatsExtract. Available at: <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>. Accessed June 2012

Table 3.7 Employment rates of the population aged 20–64 in Poland, the study regions and the EU27 (1991–2011)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Poland	62.6	61.0	59.2	57.1	56.9	57.1	58.0	60.1	62.7	65.0	64.9	64.6	64.8
Łódzkie	64.7	62.1	59.4	57.9	57.7	58.1	58.8	61.2	64.3	66.6	65.6	66.2	67.0
Małopolskie	64.9	65.1	64.2	60.7	59.5	60.4	60.6	61.7	64.1	67.3	66.6	65.3	65.7
Pomorskie	61.1	59.5	59.3	56.3	55.6	54.8	55.9	58.9	62.1	65.0	63.9	64.4	64.1
UE-27	...	66.5	66.9	66.8	67.2	67.3	68.0	69.0	69.9	70.3	69.0	68.6	68.6

Notes: Light grey highlight indicates better than average for Poland and darker grey highlight is below the Polish average. White is equal to the national average

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012; Eurostat. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database. Accessed June 2012

sub-region, which is 64.7%; in Małopolskie, Kraków is 150.9% and the Nowy Sącz sub-region is 57.9%; while in Pomorskie's Tricity sub-region it is 140.6% and in the Gdansk sub-region it is 69.8%) (Local Data Bank, CSO). The sub-regional differentiation is more important than the inter-regional differences.

Demography is a key factor affecting the development of an economy. In the last decade, changes in economic activity in the study regions were closely related to the national situation on the labour market. The directions and pace of changes were generally similar to the national trends. At the same time, differences between regions were observed in employment figures, reflecting demographic components (age structure of the population) and economic dynamics (Table 3.7).

The Łódzkie region is experiencing a higher employment rate than the national average in the 20–64 year-old age group (the difference is especially visible in the female population, see Szukalski 2013), in spite of having the highest proportion of workers in the so-called immobile working age and lower than average activity and employability among those aged 50 and over. Relatively high economic activity and subsequent employment levels for young females is probably one of the reasons for the low fertility in Łódzkie. The Małopolskie region profited from a relatively high proportion of people who were self-employed (especially in agriculture), particularly for people 50 and over. The structural changes restricting the importance of agriculture as an economic sector are responsible for the long-term decline in employment rates among people aged 50 and over in the region (Fig. 3.13).

The labour market in post-socialist Poland was affected by a high level of unemployment. All study regions experienced this phenomenon, but the extent was dependent on many factors—generally the best situation was observed in Małopolskie where due to a significant proportion of agriculture and self-employment (artisanship, small commerce), the influence of broader economic crises between 1998 and 2002 were modest. The initial worst labour market position of Łódzkie, which resulted from the collapse of the textile and chemical industries developed in the socialist era, shifted due to SME closures (especially

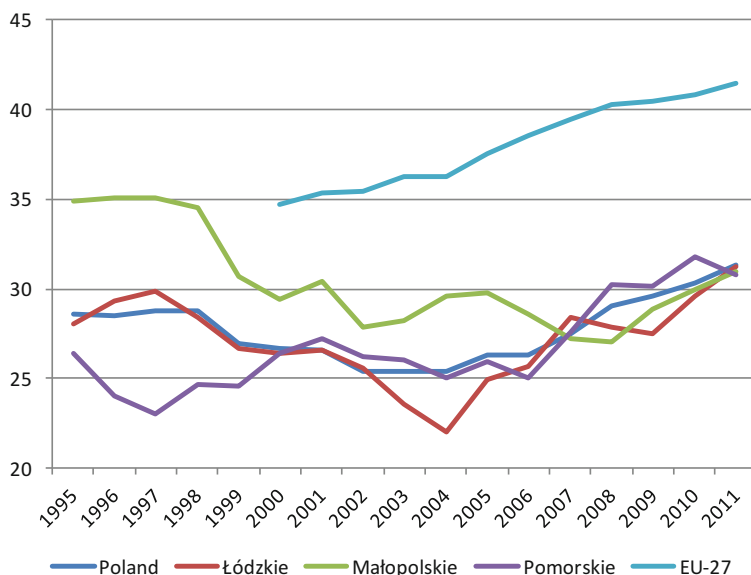


Fig. 3.13 Employment rate of people aged 50 and over in Poland, the study regions and the EU27 (1995–2011). *Source:* Central Statistical Office of Poland. Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012; Eurostat. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database. Accessed June 2012

small enterprises). The inter-regional differences narrowed due to a general economic increase after EU accession (Fig. 3.14).

It is worth underlining that the unemployment rate in the Łódzkie region is close to the national average, despite the relatively high rate of this indicator in Łódź. The city is an exception to other Polish “big cities”, where unemployment is typically lower by one-third to one-half compared to the rest of the surrounding region. For example, in April 2012, the unemployment rate in Łódź (11.6%) was more than twice that observed in Warsaw (4.0%), Kraków (5.5%), Wrocław (5.4%) or Gdańsk (6.2%), and was much closer to the regional average (13.5%) than in other regions (Małopolskie: 11.0%; Pomorskie: 12.8%; Mazowieckie: 10.4%; Dolnośląskie: 13.1%).⁶ Also, in Łódzkie, the share of the population 55 and older among the long-term unemployed is higher than the national average (2010: Poland 15.1%, Łódzkie 19.2%, Małopolskie 11.4%, Pomorskie 15%).⁷ In the case of Łódź, the higher unemployment level is related to the lower level of education of the population and to the long-term consequences of initial unemployment (people who lost

⁶Bezrobotni oraz stopa bezrobocia wg województw, podregionów i powiatów—kwiecień 2012 r., Statistics Poland, Warsaw 2012.

⁷Based on data from Statistics Poland, Bank Danych Lokalnych, www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?p_name=indeks

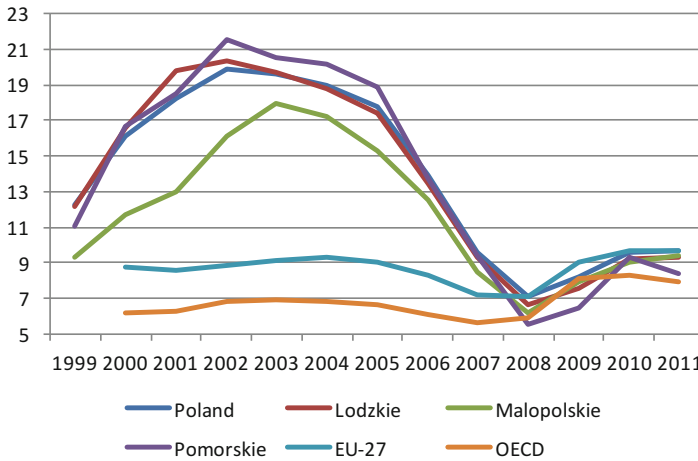


Fig. 3.14 Unemployment rate in Poland, the study region, EU27 and the OECD (1999–2011). *Source:* Central Statistical Office of Poland, Available at: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/>. Accessed June 2012; Eurostat. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database. Accessed June 2012

their positions in early 1990 and were unemployed for a few years are treated as less valuable work candidates). This implies the need to develop an education system fitted to employers' expectations and fit for the future demand for labour.

Graphs (Figs. 3.13 and 3.14) illustrating the changes in the level of employment and unemployment rates show a clear convergence of values for the regions over the years. The values for the regions are also much closer to the national average. This may be the result of cohesive policy subsequently carried out in the country with support from the EU structural funds. Although the differences among regions are still present, the scale is much smaller, which is well reflected in Figs. 3.13 and 3.14.

Due to general regulations related to the eligible retirement age in Poland of 60 years-old for women and 65 years-old for men, the majority of Poles aged 65 and older do not work and are pensioners. However, as the Polish average employment rate for people over 65 is close to the European one, the obvious exception is Małopolskie, which is above average (Table 3.8). On the other hand, in Łódzkie and Pomorskie, the employment rate for people 65 and over is lower than the average for Poland. Differences across regions could be explained by different attitudes to work and job places being available for silver workers or by the development of the agricultural sector. However, more detailed data is lacking, which could clarify this situation.

The interpretation of differences in employment rates for people aged 65 and over requires in-depth research, taking into account the qualitative aspects of both human capital and the structure of the economy in particular regions. Such features as high education rates and self-employment prolong the period of professional activity. The positive regional statistics of employment rates for those 65 and older

Table 3.8 Employment rates of the population aged 65 and over in Poland, the study regions, EU27 and the OECD (2002–2011)

(%)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Poland	6.4	5.9	5.8	5.6	8.5	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8
Łódzkie	5.5	4.3	4.0	4.8	6.2	3.5	3.6	3.0	3.4	3.9
Małopolskie	10.5	9.8	9.9	10.0	14.3	6.0	5.0	5.3	6.9	7.0
Pomorskie	3.5	3.5	2.7	2.5	4.4	2.5	2.9	3.4	2.8	3.2
OECD	10.7	10.8	10.8	11.1	11.3	11.6	11.9	11.9	12.4	12.3
EU27	4.6	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8

Source: Eurostat. Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database. Accessed June 2012

for Małopolska seem to confirm this relationship. However, there is a need for resources and support for education and entrepreneurship, which can further prolong the period of professional activity, which needs to be taken into consideration, especially in Łódzkie and Pomorskie. The higher the level of education of professionals, the stronger the tendency to stay longer in the labour market and to be more flexible with retraining. Also, the activity in the entrepreneurial sector is positively correlated with an extended employment period. This is most evident in the examples of self-employment and family business where reaching retirement age rarely means actual retirement.

The development of education services oriented towards population ageing should take place in two areas:

1. *Developing and improving the education system in strengthening generic skills.* These skills are best developed in secondary schools and at higher education institutions. This type of education shapes the attitudes towards lifelong learning which are necessary for flexible and longer engagement in the labour market. Schools which provide a broad education are the best places to promote and form an active and healthy style of life. The Universities of the Third Age are the later phase of this type of education. Due to the general education profile, secondary schools and universities have very limited access to funds from business and production sectors, including private funds. Thus, any support from various sources (including European Funds) to strengthen and develop this type of education within regions seems to be a desirable investment for the future. Programme support for lifelong learning and promoting an active lifestyle, including active ageing, in the education system helps to save costs for future older worker training and healthcare.
2. *Training and skills development should be directly oriented to the needs of the labour market.* They are also of a two-fold nature: (i) skills and competence training for employees (especially aimed at ICT competencies to eliminate possible “e”-exclusion, as well as in other specific skills needed by the enterprises); and (ii) age management training for employers. The innovative project “I work, I develop competency: An innovative model of support for workers

50+” financed from the ESF and carried out in the Pomorskie region, provides an example of this kind of initiative (Box 3.2).

Box 3.2 I Work, I Develop Competency: An Innovative Model of Support for Workers over 50 (Poland)

Pracownia Badań Społecznych DGA implemented in 2010–2012 in the Pomorskie Region is one of the first innovative project testing. The project was aimed at the certain target groups:

User group: i.e. representatives of local and regional institutions in charge of leading employment promotion policy, holding the instruments for the implementation of system solutions to economic activity in the labour market, and public counsellors (employment offices) and private labour market institutions.

Groups of customers: those working in the age group 50 and over, residing in the Pomorskie region, interested in remaining in employment and continuing professional development. Moreover, in this group are human resource professionals and human resource departments dealing with human resource management, including age management personnel in companies.

The main objective of the project was to increase the activity and the attractiveness of employment of workers 50 and older in the labour market by developing and testing an innovative model of providing consulting services and development (including career counselling and assessing levels of competence, participation in training and courses, the use of specialised prevention of health-related consulting and legal services relating to the functioning of the labour market).

The dimension of innovation in the labour market affected three areas:

a new approach to the problem of availability and dissemination of career counselling services for people who work (creation of the Career Centre 50+) implementation of new methods of vocational guidance, balance of competence (including the development of tools to diagnose the potential competences of workers 50+) implementation of the new forms of support: financial instrument activation services in the form of Talon Career.

Balance of competency included activities such as:

- training/training of ABC Enterprise
- personal development training
- legal consultations on issues of employment and labour law
- consultations on the functioning of the labour market
- pro-health consultation (geriatricians, physiotherapists, dieticians, psychologists).

(continued)

Box 3.2 (continued)

Source: Pracownia Badań Społecznych DGA 2012, Project Implementation Strategy; I work—I develop competence. An innovative model of support for workers 50+. Pracownia Badań Społecznych DGA, Gdańsk

Population ageing increases the demand for services within the silver economy in each of the investigated regions. The region will react to the need for investments in silver economy services as soon as the positive economic results appear. The silver economy should be understood in a broad sense as covering all activities addressing:

- existential needs of older people
- needs of older employees
- needs of older customers
- needs of employers focusing on silver consumers' needs.

The general character of population ageing processes means that most of the interventions can be similar or the same across the regions. However, in each region, development strategies should identify the endogenous resources for particular types of silver economy activity development. It especially refers to activities targeted at older customers in such areas as tourism, recreation, spa and bath services. The possibilities for their development are connected with natural environmental resources and green economy development within the particular region. The development of the silver economy should be treated as an opportunity for regional economic recovery.

The development of sectors of the silver economy devoted to the existential needs of older people and needs of older workers should be supported with public funds, including the European Funds. However, the activities in these areas are especially appropriate for broader involvement by volunteers, NGOs and all other types of civil society organisations. Some financial support from the European and other funds may trigger real social movement in this sphere. The development of the silver economy, aimed at older customers and older entrepreneurs, opens up a variety of opportunities for SMEs' sector activities. SMEs are able to provide services and products tailored to the specific demands of particular age groups of clients and to be flexible enough to follow the ever-changing needs. The European funds may be used to provide the know-how and/or start-up funds supporting entrepreneurs and the self-employed ready to settle their businesses within the silver economy.

3.4 Local Visions for Demographic Transitions

Workshops co-organised by the OECD, the Polish Ministry of Regional Development, the regional Marshall's Offices of Pomorskie, Małopolska and Łódzkie, and involving local stakeholders, discussed demographic changes in their regions under the following themes: older workers; silver, white and green economies; urban and local sustainable development; and family policy. The key messages are discussed below.

3.4.1 *Older Workers*

Stakeholders from the three regions share the same concerns regarding older workers, in particular:

- negative perceptions of older workers compared to younger ones (negative attitudes/stereotypes)—ageism
- current poor economic and labour market situation, which works against older workers
- lack of systematic solutions that could promote longer labour market activity of older workers (increasing the in retirement age is not enough).

Government solutions are not enough, and at present may even be acting against older workers (such as the 4 years of income protection before retirement age). There is a considerable lack of a proper and adequate culture in relation to age management at company levels. The attitude and behaviour of older workers differ depending on their education level, type of work and profession, and thus an increase in motivation or a change in attitude is needed. Table 3.9 outlines the workshop conclusions regarding older workers in the labour market.

Overall major implications from the focus groups about situation of older worker include:

- *The need for programmes/initiatives that promote older persons in the workforce* (removing the negative stereotyping, enhancing employers' awareness of costs related to age discrimination and of future potential changes in labour markets), and skills development and training need to be adjusted to meet older people's needs, by undertaking frequent, regular evaluations of their skills and ways to potentially use these in their current or new jobs. In cases where some skills may be lacking, there should be an easy and co-financed way of updating these skills via training. It is not possible to have a unique solution to cover the training needs for each person, so it is the role of job advisors to help not only employers, but also to act as independent advisors for employees.
- *Policies and strategies need to be proactive—not only in the short term—but also in the long term, and to recognise the need for flexibility.* Labour market regulations should be as stable as possible, or, if they must be changed, there

Table 3.9 Key messages from the regional workshops: Older workers in the labour market

MAŁOPOLSKA	ŁÓDZKIE	POMORSKIE
<p>A lot of negative stereotypes make active ageing difficult to achieve, including: older people are not ready for change and they are more often sick than younger workers. On the other hand, some people said that ageing workers are reliable, stable and respectful members of staff. It became clear that actively helping older people find jobs can have a high success rate. In addition, ageing workers in employment can play a crucial role in supporting different generations. This is not a one-way system, younger workers can also support older workers.</p> <p>It is important to recognise the potential of older people and not focus solely on the shortcomings. In addition, training and skill development needs to be adjusted to what older people need and want. This also holds for specific programmes. An example was given of an entrepreneurship subsidy programme that was not successful among older unemployed, but it was noted that they were not supported either.</p> <p>Some participants wondered if the current stance on older people in society is sustainable in the longer term. There will be better times after the financial crisis and with an increasingly ageing population, skills shortages on the labour market might frustrate the region's further development.</p>	<p>It is a complex situation made up of shrinking numbers, ageing and unemployment due to redundancies. There is a tendency to think short term.</p> <p>Policy making needs to take into consideration the medium and longer terms, not only at the national level but also at a regional level. The problem might not be evident now, however, in the future there could be substantial problems. It is very important to be proactive. Policy making needs to look ahead. Particularly in a region that currently has economic problems, there is a need to make sure the conditions for progress and growth are in place. If there are shortages of workers in the future, it could make growth very difficult.</p> <p>A very important topic in the discussion was the need for flexibility. Working longer does not mean working in the same job. Career opportunities are very important as well as inter-generational solidarity.</p>	<p>Ageing is not a standalone issue. Ageing, economic and other trends jointly demand new ways of thinking about work, the labour market and continuous development of human capital and policies. Working longer does not always mean working in the same job. Radical job changes can be difficult, but there is a need to think in creative ways to discover promising career opportunities. There is also a need to ensure that actions are not undermined by negative stereotypes – people encountering many difficulties lose self-confidence after a while. The issue of ageing and difficulties in infrastructure are very much connected. It is very hard to expect ageing people to engage in a new job that requires a significant amount of travel to and from work.</p> <p>Labour market intelligence is a crucial tool to deal with the challenges of ageing. Although forecasting precise changes in the future is problematic, there are tools that give some direction which are very useful. However, intelligence is not only something at the macro level, it also encompasses skill-matching tools at the individual level. Such initiatives are already present in the region, and this is encouraging.</p>

Source: Martinez-Fernandez, C., et al. (2013), "Demographic transition and an ageing society: Implications for local labour markets in Poland", *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers*, No. 2013/08, OECD Publishing, Paris. Doi:[10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en)

should be clear information provided to all interested parties before changes are introduced. The primary aim is to activate the potential of the ageing workforce, not by simply changing the current situation, but mostly by setting up systems to maintain it in the long term. At the regional level, strategies should take into account the specifics of the local labour market for older workers, and people should be equipped with basic economic skills, which are useful in any business.

- *Labour market intelligence is a crucial tool not only at the national level, but also at the regional and local levels. Forecasting changes and skills matching are initiatives that need to be developed.*

3.4.2 Silver, White and Green Economies

New areas of growth in which older people can fully participate include activities centred around leisure, healthcare and green growth. In this context, the new approach in any planned strategy for ageing needs to consider the new multipliers of growth: the silver, white and green economies, whose combination may provide systemic solutions for a particular area.

The differences between the three regions are found by looking at which actions they emphasise. Within the Łódzkie region, there is both an urgency to act now, but also an underlying view that change is too difficult, which links to the lack of a long-term perspective and unwillingness to wait for results that may not be immediate. Additionally, and this is probably true not only for Łódzkie, part of this short-term search for solutions seems to include a perception that solutions have to come from government institutions—there is a dearth of strong involvement and activity from other stakeholders. There is a need to develop programmes/initiatives that encourage public involvement, not only by citizens, but also by private firms. At the same time, participants of the workshops found it challenging to define what concrete measures should be implemented in order to achieve the above-mentioned goals. A practical problem is how to convert the desired aims into affordable and easy-to-implement instruments.

The ageing of society is providing a new customer profile, from working older-age people to senior older people, and the aged consumer, all of whose needs are different, meaning the solutions need to take these differences into account. Leisure and health go together in the last part of the life-cycle, which offers an enormous potential for developing new businesses and occupations, and for the ageing-friendly workplace and urban space. Thus, the ageing profile of the regions is actually offering new opportunities for the economy, which need to be encouraged and promoted. The differences should be analysed in terms of scale, pace and spatial differentiation of the population's ageing. All regions are touched by the cohort effect, i.e. by the fact that the post-war baby boomers are reaching the age of 60–65. At the same time, the regions have different opportunities due to variations in seniors' positions due to income, educational attainment and place of residence.

From a practical point of view, the silver economy will be developed primarily in larger cities, led by older people with the financial resources and higher expectations and demands. Thus, the situation will depend on the economic and educational characteristics of the sub-populations in the regions. In comparing the socio-economic characteristics of the older population across the regions, the situation is most favourable in Kraków (due to a better educated and healthier population); Tricity in Gdansk is in second place; and Łódź is lagging behind due to the city's economic history (current senior citizens worked in the textile industry, where there were no special education requirements and where proffered wages and salaries were relatively low, meaning that today their pension benefits are low).

At the same time, incentives to increase the participation of older workers and their motivation to work will provide an ageing society with better overall economic performance and allow for inter-generational knowledge-intensive activities. The transfer of tacit knowledge in the workplace to the new generations of professionals, as an innovative training and skill development method, benefits both older and the younger employees, and also benefits firms and industry at large. There is a need for programmes (such as promoting age management measures, joint intra-generational co-operation, mentoring, coaching and programmes aimed at encouraging a healthy lifestyle) that promote the older workforce within businesses as a valuable resource for training and skill development through the transfer of tacit knowledge at the workplace.

There is an enormous potential for encouraging older and elderly people-inclusive developments. A key factor is to increase the purchasing power of the elderly by raising pension schemes, thus creating a market that in turn can respond to the demands from senior customers. Secondly, dependant on re-engaging older people, is a need to increase the tolerance and acceptance of other areas of society, which will only occur by changing the image of seniors to one that demonstrates that they are fit, well skilled and active in the labour market and society. This could be done in various ways, but starting with educating the younger generation regarding ageing is a must (e.g. special educational programmes at schools, special incentives for teachers and pupils to prepare lessons, initiatives which promote healthy lifestyles programmes and physical activity). Additionally, not only media campaigns are needed, but rather it is important to tell the younger generation about positive examples of people who via their life, their achievements, their healthy and active style of life could experience an adequate quality of life at old age. An answer to the challenges is educational change, which ensures that the next generations of elderly are better educated and more aware of their opportunities and power. However, despite the huge demand already developing, the supply of products and services, and new occupations are currently very limited, which is putting constraints on developing the silver market or the silver industrial ecology. Public policy should promote elderly self-organisation as both good examples of practical institutions that can raise seniors' quality of life, and as an example of non-commercial entities.

Entrepreneurship of the elderly should be promoted too, particularly if the newly established enterprises are quasi-commercial, i.e. production of items is priced

lower than their market equivalent. Also, promotion of volunteering in various spheres, including the long-term care sector, can have positive results for all (European Commission 2013).

There is a need to support the development of the *silver economy* and new financial instruments are needed to encourage the entrepreneurship of older workers as well as younger ones. New professions can also be developed, such as “assistants for cultural advice” or “assistant elderly” to provide flexible solutions for elderly people. The silver economy could act as an umbrella strategy for engaging older people.

However, more challenging is supporting the development of the *white economy*, which sees new professions also needed for the management of disabilities, diabetes, hypertension, smoking and mental health issues. The new health professions are fundamentally different from mainstream healthcare, which is focused on “curing” the patient. In an ageing society, the focus needs to be shifted to “management of symptoms” and management of the variability of symptoms. For example, more professionals are needed to develop monitoring systems and procedures for at-home care, and professions connected with rehabilitation or the use of telemedicine could be significantly expanded. Motivating health professionals to invest in their careers and to innovate is a significant challenge in the nursing area alone. There is also a generation gap in certain professions and a lack of flexibility in the sector, which is already leading to difficulties as the regions are ageing.

The policy implication for this could include financing projects using medical facilities which test the advantages of telemedicine and telecare in regional centres away from the city centres, and particularly at the local levels (*gminas* of regions). In Małopolska, the project ADAT2DC⁸ is a good example of such a project, which aims to test and introduce telemedicine and telecare options into the everyday life of older inhabitants of the selected *poviats*.

Additionally, within in the white sector, there is a need to support those who live alone and those who cannot care for older family members because they need to work. Day-visit centres for older people could be more widely developed and used to assist in this sphere, as is currently exemplified by the Daily Centre for Culture and Rehabilitation in Nowa Huta, Kraków.

In terms of supporting the development of the *green economy*, recycling and waste treatment in hospitals could be optimised. Also, linking tourism with leisure activities will offer quality and healthy services to the silver customer. One concrete recommendation from Małopolska that was mentioned during the group discussion is that there could be support for projects/programmes that would support medical institutions such as hospitals in applying for environmentally friendly infrastructure developments, which would in turn provide better management of recycling and waste treatment.

⁸www.adapt2dc.eu

3.4.3 *Urban and Local Sustainable Development*

In all workshops, local stakeholders indicated the importance of changing the perception of the older population (both among themselves and of the others about them) in order to engage them in the labour market for a longer period of time. A number of practical and good examples of projects and programmes implemented by local government agencies, businesses and NGOs were mentioned, which can be found in the regional working papers (Perek-Białas 2013; Sagan 2013; Szukalski 2013). However, not all projects/initiatives seem to be sufficiently meeting the needs, so more systematic approaches will be needed to meet future demands. Some irregular and unconnected projects could be joined in order to “synergise”.

Engaging the older population is important for economic reasons as well as for social ones (e.g. to engage in social activities in order to generate a sense of belonging to society, which is an important element of well-being for the older population). In this respect, all three workshops stressed the importance of third-age universities and other organizations (libraries, NGOs) and IT training for older people in order for them to stay informed and connected.

Given some of the differences in the urban and rural environment (e.g. the older population in the rural environment may be better supported by existing family systems and therefore may be more resilient than those in the urban environment, but they may not be as well supported by medical/healthcare, education and cultural services as those in the urban environment), recommendations for social policy should encourage the development of different policies and programmes for urban and rural environments in order to better cater to the different needs—thereby taking into account the “territorial” dimension (Martinez-Fernandez et al. 2011). To obtain this aim, updates to strategic planning, at different levels of government, and taking into account demographic changes, are needed. All regions have already noted demographic issues in their strategies, but ageing is still treated with quite differing emphases in these official strategic documents. Comparisons could thus be made between regions, but at the same time, constant evaluation is needed if changes are required.

There is a need to acknowledge that local governments will need to be mindful of the differences in demographic composition within their jurisdiction, even if the overall trend may be characterised as “young” or “shrinking” (e.g. the percentage of 60+ population in districts of Kraków ranges from 14 to 27%) and take appropriate actions based on analysis of different scenarios. This should be accompanied by a cost-benefit analysis, which will confirm the rational and best way to implement solutions. To convince the public of the importance of such changes, there is a need for social consultation and transparency in all dealings. Information on demographic change at the local or sub-local level should be readily accessible to inhabitants and their representatives.

Older people are often seen as burdensome or a threat (e.g. a source of increased medical or care costs), rather than as valuable resources for society (e.g. a stable,

predictable, knowledge-rich and loyal workforce). There is a need to raise awareness to overcome the stereotyping of the older population in society. This could be done in various ways, and not just via media campaigns, but also through education from kindergarten onwards (including school, work and retirement), explaining ageing and its possibilities. The Universities of the Third Age and other such senior citizen-oriented organisations could act as partners, helping to develop a joint curriculum.

From a sustainable development perspective, it is important to ensure that different stakeholders are engaged in decision-making processes and that those who benefit or are affected by certain decisions have ownership of the issue. It appears that in Poland, the historic role played by the central government (e.g. free, state-provided medical services) is affecting the current way of thinking and society's view of how some of these issues should be addressed and dealt with, which in turn makes it difficult to gain support for some solutions.

Given the likely financial challenges associated with an ageing society, the issue of governance may need to be revisited. Citizens may need to acknowledge their role in society in dealing with some of the challenges ahead (e.g. in the form of volunteering or social entrepreneurship or co-operative membership), rather than leaving it all in the hands of the government. Participatory actions and consultations are needed with as many interested groups as possible. A good example of this type of interaction was a consultation programme undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The programme, which was called the Programme of Activity of Older People (ASOS), was run in the summer 2012 mostly via the Internet, with more than 140 suggestions and opinions expressed by different institutions, organisations and individuals. The ministry was then able to take into account some of these suggestions and recommendations in order to improve the plan and better implement the programme, which had been approved in parliament and was then introduced in autumn 2012.

As has been demonstrated, most initiatives in this area have been supported by the ESF (e.g. the Operational Programme on Human Capital Development). However, the programme and using in future other European funds will not last forever and from an economic sustainability point of view, it is important to diversify the resource base now or to have scenarios for projects which can be continued when funding ceases. Recommendations could be formulated to encourage local governments to diversify the funding base, ensuring it meets legal requirements.

In general, during the workshops, the environmental considerations were quite limited. However, there seemed to be some potential for a green/low-carbon economy in all three regions. Well-designed transport systems, allocation of service points, commercial and residential mixes, management of environmental qualities (including energy, air, waste and water management) are particularly important in preparing for an ageing society. In the case of Małopolska, the issue of the environment was not mentioned spontaneously during group discussion. However, Małopolska was perceived as being a region that is attractive to tourists, meaning it could develop silver tourism (including for religious purposes) and health or spa tourism options. In Łódzkie, the emphasis is laid on geothermic energy as an

important factor, which has had a double positive effect on the competitiveness of the region: improving its attractiveness to tourists and providing renewable energy.

All policy recommendations in this report are formulated bearing in mind that different levels of government are responsible for different policy areas concerning demographic change. This is crucial as the gmina level is/should be the most decisive actor, having the ability to finance or not certain actions or measures. Gminas-level governance should be able to ascertain which funds are insufficient for a certain year. There should be a “buffer” demographic fund, which could temporarily be used to ensure that the primary needs in a particular year can be met; as a kind of solidarity agreement within the region. As was stated in the analysis of local initiatives, some services, if they are really needed, should have the option of being cross-financed, and it is therefore important to look at both horizontal and vertical linkages across different policy fields and use these options to ensure development proceeds.

3.5 Family Policy

Demographic change creates an increased risk of social exclusion and affects many different social categories (including older people, homeless people and families).⁹

Stakeholders in all regions agreed that a major weakness of the family policy is underdevelopment of public child-care services. Limited access to low-cost services, with flexible hours of being opened is one of the reasons why many young women decide to only have one child or remain childless altogether. Polish demographers (Governmental Council for Population 2012) have provided many recommendations, some of which could have policy implications:

- longer maternity leave (and also longer paternity leave for fathers)
- income tax deductions to cover the cost of baby-carers
- tax deductions for employers who organise crèches and kindergartens at their workplaces
- more “flexibility” of crèches and kindergartens (e.g. longer operating hours).

The second important factor affecting decisions concerning raising a family is access to housing. High housing prices (either renting or buying) are among the determinants of fertility ageing and fertility reduction. There is a need to enable access to housing—the government programme “Family at own” (*Rodzina na swoim*), which provides government support to pay the interest on a mortgage for young families, is not sufficient. Local authorities own some buildings that are available to rent more cheaply, but social housing overall is undeveloped. One suggestion is that housing could be assigned to rent temporarily by young people who are starting out in a profession or starting a family.

⁹Based on comments of OECD/LEED expert Ms Antonella Noya/CFE/LEED.

The third factor is insecurity in one's career, which is related to the growing number of temporary and contract positions, and lower paid jobs.

Institutional spaces are needed to deal with inter-generational solidarity, for example:

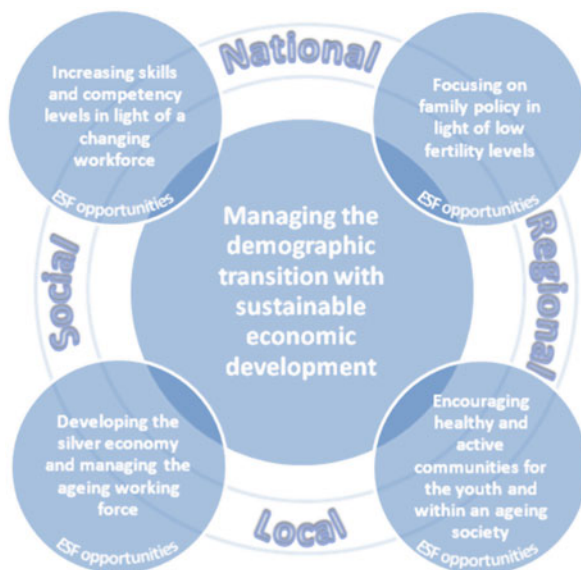
- *In the workplace*, to allow the transfer of skills and knowledge. This ensures people learn from each other, and is particularly valuable when one generation lacks certain skills such as ICT or new technologies, in which case the older person can have their skills updated with the support of the younger generation. In turn, the younger generation can see and discuss how to deal with different “real working life” situations, which the older generation, having more work experience, has encountered. This would require more flexibility in the workplace. Workplaces should be places where gender solidarity is pursued through different measures in order to ensure a fair balance between family and professional life, such as equal sharing of the care duties between both parents, etc.
- *In the family*, to allow grandparents and even “adoptive grandparents” to take care of the grandchildren. Special allowances could be paid to grandparents, to substitute for potentially lost remuneration, in order to help them when deciding if they wish to undertake “active” grandparenting.
- *In society*, to help to develop a more solid and cohesive society; this could be the ideal platform to foster inter-generational dialogue. Social economy initiatives seem especially tailored for this. Such example as was found in Łódź, where an initiative aimed at encouraging the elderly to utilise day senior centres, at which their involvement with kindergartens has been promoted by encouraging them to assist and supervise the kindergarten attendants.

To deal with the consequences of demographic change, it is necessary to “think outside of the box”, and this includes new institutional thinking, as construction of policies in consultation with the users (older persons and families) is needed in order to provide effective services.

3.6 Guidelines for Local Management of Demographic Changes in Poland

Demographic change is a key challenge for local development. Strategic solutions must take into account the interplay of elements within a particular local area of development. At the same time, there are opportunities to be fostered, such as the development of the silver economy of older entrepreneurs, the white economy of medical services for the elderly population and the natural green economy. The Polish case study revealed the complexity of the demographic challenges occurring within the regions, with each region experiencing different issues associated with its socio-economic situation. The Małopolskie and Pomorskie regions are experiencing population growth, population ageing and low fertility, while Łódzkie

Fig. 3.15 Strategic areas for Poland's demographic transition. *Source:* Martinez-Fernandez, C., et al. (2013), "Demographic transition and an ageing society: Implications for local labour markets in Poland", *OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers*, No. 2013/08, OECD Publishing, Paris. Doi:[10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/5k47xj1js027-en)



is experiencing population decline and ageing, low fertility, together with youth and young adult health concerns. These differences in demographic situations require a territorial analysis so that regional and local perspectives on policy preparation, development and implementation are co-ordinated with national policy efforts and key European funding.

The OECD “Local scenarios of demographic change” project on Poland and the corresponding final seminar in Warsaw, hosted by the Ministry of Regional Development, 16 October 2012, revealed six key interconnected areas of demographic change for which policy responses were required both at national, regional/local and social levels (Fig. 3.15).

1. *Managing the demographic transition with sustainable economic development*

Demographic changes, such as population decline (in the case of Łódzkie), population ageing, low fertility rates and migration, are key changes in the demography of Poland and the study regions. Due to socio-economic differences, regional systemic and sustainable strategies should first be explored, developed, implemented and reviewed, focusing on the key aspects that make the region unique. Essential measures for a strategy that provides the starting point and guidance for future projects and initiatives for each region include:

- attracting and settling new immigrants
- improving and promoting transport accessibility
- creating a family-friendly community
- supporting entrepreneurship, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and research and innovation
- stronger local job creation approaches.

2. *Focusing on family policy in light of low fertility levels*

All regions are experiencing low fertility rates, at below population replacement levels, which has a significant impact on population growth and economic stability. Each region should have a long-term family policy that outlines the provisions to support parenting decisions. Family policy requires national legislative initiatives to support regional and local efforts. Developing institutional support structures such as financial assistance, social infrastructure and flexible forms of employment and workplaces is essential for promoting family values, monitoring family situations and recognising family problems. Closing the gender gap for equality will also support family development. The ESF has a role in supporting programmes and initiatives not only to manage, but to promote, family support and family creation.

3. *Encouraging healthy and active communities and promoting inter-generational solidarity*

All of the study regions are faced with population ageing, with Łódzkie having the added burden of generally poor health within the working-age population. Health promotion and disease prevention are vital for increasing life expectancy, along with creating age-friendly environments and increasing the retirement age and the labour market participation rate. Essential in this process is the financial support of the “white” (health services) sector, developing health clusters, networks and pooling of resources for each region. Pomorskie has additional potential prospects, being part of the Baltic Sea Regional Strategy, wherein there will be opportunities to be part of projects centred around innovation in health and life sciences. There are significant opportunities for the ESF to support projects that encourage healthy lifestyles and active ageing in the study regions. Strategies in the labour market need to address the needs of both younger and older workers, by linking activities for jobs and skills development that can provide an inter-generational mix and knowledge transfer in both formal and informal environments.

4. *Developing new areas of economic growth: The silver economy and managing an ageing workforce*

Population ageing is a demographic phenomenon that is occurring across Poland, which is providing both opportunities for the “silver economy” (the ecosystem of services for the older customer) and challenges regarding workforce ageing. The increasing products and services needed for seniors will require a long-term care system, support of NGOs, creation of new leisure and business services and products, as well as providing opportunities for entrepreneurship and SME development in this sector. There will be opportunities for the ESF to provide programmes and initiatives for knowledge, and start-up support for entrepreneurs who are looking to take advantage of the silver economy and NGOs who are providing care services and family support. It is also important to encourage work at an older age, by removing the negative stereotyping of ageing workers, developing programmes to extend working activity (skills and

training), promoting and providing incentives for lifelong learning, supporting entrepreneurship for older persons, mentoring programmes for enterprises, funding initiatives for firms in age management programmes, flexible work forms and support for social organisations in implementing projects that support ageing workers. The European funds could potentially provide significant support for programmes and initiatives implemented by social organisations and regional governments in partnership with enterprises.

5. *Increasing skills and competency levels in light of a changing workforce*

Regional workforces are slowly changing from low-skill needs to medium-high skill requirements. The Łódzkie region, and in particular Łódź city, is located strategically close to Warsaw and with transport links to Europe could be developed as a centre for student education. However, improvement is needed to strengthen the education system—building basic generic skills in the young and promoting further education among young adults. Provision of better working places also needs to be achieved, which links to improving the health conditions for older workers, with the aim of higher retention rates to ensure a longer working life. The role of the civil society organisation that fosters citizen participation in the provision of opportunities to engage young persons, increasing/improving skills and employability is an opportunity for European funds support in youth education programmes. Another avenue for European funds is lifelong learning programmes in various forms, including University of the Third Age (UTA) support.

6. *Delivering smart and co-ordinated policy and planning infrastructure for inclusive communities*

Addressing demographic change requires a policy mix that promotes horizontal and vertical linkages across different policy fields and levels. Dialogue among different ministries (regional development, labour, education, economy, and environment) and across the various levels of policy delivery (state, regional and local) needs to be well developed for the design of short-term and longer term policy instruments. Programmes and initiatives need to be flexible enough to allow local authorities to adjust financial management to fit the local circumstances. Therefore, adapting the urban infrastructure for smaller and ageing communities requires planning to support the adaptation of the built environment and social services so that shrinking budgets can be directed towards areas that are more in need. Competencies and skills of local actors also need to be frequently updated, to be able to use the built environment and physical infrastructure in smart and strategic ways.

7. *Optimising the use of funding: The European Funds as an instrument of change*

The ESF is a vital tool to pursue a territorial approach; however, it requires flexibility to create ownership at the local level and to foster a co-ordinated policy approach, especially within job creation policies and programmes, education and skills development. The report highlights aspects for which the ESF could be utilised to address demographic transitions in family support, research and resources for childcare needs, work-life balance and supporting SMEs in age management.

8. *Fostering cross-regional sharing of experiences and a community of practice on demographic change*

As countries adjust to demographic change, shared information on international experiences can provide information on the causes, effects, strategies and policies and, to some extent, their impacts. However, less effort is directed at providing opportunities for regional knowledge sharing within the country. Poland could rectify this by introducing a “demographic change community of practice”, which could be a web-based mechanism, but with workshops run across the country in order to share and discuss practices and ideas for the present and the future—a community-based knowledge-intensive activity that can inform policy development in this field over the years to come.

3.7 Key Changes in Policy Related to Demographic Changes After 2012

Since the research, on which the chapter is based, number of changes has taken place in Poland, such as:

- Demographic trends have not changed significantly. The fertility rate is still very low and some signs of improvement, observed in 2010, already have disappeared.
- Low fertility rate, and policies supporting families became much higher on the political agenda during recent years, within national government as well as regional and local authorities. Family policy is more focused on facilitating career with bringing up children. In the recent years local authorities invested in providing better access to child care services and pre-school education, which was also supported by the national government. Local authorities have undertaken number of initiatives facilitating access to local services.
- At the same time maternity and child-care leaves became extended, more accessible to a larger group of beneficiaries, and more financially advantageous. More generous tax reliefs for families with children were introduced. A direct financial support for families, however, was neglected at the time, except for introduction of a national *Large Family Card*, granting discounts when buying social and commercial services for families with at least 3 children. In 2016 the activities have been complemented with an introduction of the *Rodzina 500+* (*Family 500+*) program, offering financial support to families rising two or more children as well as low income families with one child.
- A noticeable trend in recent years has been growing migration to Poland, mostly from Ukraine (which is related to unstable situation in this country). Authorities issued growing number of permissions for individual workers (48 thousand in 2015 versus 25 thousand in 2014). In 2014, Polish government introduced measures to facilitate the process of obtaining permits for staying and working in Poland for citizens of Eastern European countries (particularly Ukraine) as

seasonal workers. As a result employers filled an increasing number of applications (762.7 thousand in 2015 versus 373 thousand in 2014). Despite some criticism, the migration seems to not have a negative impact on the labour market.

- There has been a growing migration of students from abroad, which became an important element of the strategy of Polish higher education institutions, facing a decrease of number of students due to demographic trends. Polish government introduced incentives for staying in Poland for university graduates willing to work in Poland.
- In recent years the employment rate has been growing and unemployment rate has been decreasing. Despite this the level of poverty in general is rather stable, with some slight increase in case of the extreme poverty rate.
- The employment rate for those aged 50 years and more is much lower than average in EU, and although some progress is observed, this is still below strategic goals. The policy supporting active aging is rather vague and not yet implemented effectively. The governmental programme *Solidarity of generations* could be a roadmap for actions but it seems to be rather an expression of a good set of recommendations rather than a concrete plan with funding for real actions.
- The governmental policy focused on activity of elderly people. A majority of actions, undertaken in recent years, focused on educational (Universities of the Third Age) and social activity as part of the governmental program *Aktywność Społeczna Osób Starszych* (ASOS, *Social Activity of Older People*), mostly due to a strong lobby of social partners. It was only in 2014 that rehabilitation and promoting active living were implemented as part of the *Senior-WIGOR* program. In 2015 the older persons were finally defined (as 60+), which made it possible to clearly specify the senior policy beneficiaries.
- Elderly access to care and health services is still a significant challenge.
- Although needed, these actions seem to have rather limited impact on prolonging working time. The situation can be even worse in forthcoming years, as the new government announced a plan to reverse the increase the retirement age, introduced by the previous government despite strong social resistance.

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