

RURAL NEETS IN POLAND



2009/2019
OVERVIEW

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INDEX

1. CONTEXTUALIZATION	6
2. METHODOLOGICAL NOTE	8
3. DATA ANALYSIS	9
3. 1. Population and youth population	9
3. 2. Employment and unemployment	11
• Youth employment	11
• Youth unemployment	14
3. 3. Education	17
• Young people by educational attainment level	17
• Early School Leavers from Education and Training	19
3. 4. NEETs	20
• NEET rate	20
4. CONCLUSIONS	23
5. REFERENCES	25
6. IMPORTANT LINKS	26

SUMMARY

The report outlines the evolution of the labour market situation of young people in Poland between 2009 and 2019. Particular attention was paid to describe how the situation has changed across different age subgroups and degree of urbanization. The analysis includes descriptive statistics of the selected labour market indicators (employment and unemployment rate, NEET rate) along with educational and population data extracted from the Eurostat public datasets.

The report shows that youth population in Poland has been declining over the past decade, especially in cities and rural areas. Labour market situation of young Poles worsened in the aftermath of financial and economic crisis. Since 2013 it has improved considerably. In 2019, the unemployment rate was below the pre-recession level and the lowest since the political and economic transformation. The pattern of labour market situation evolution was similar across all age subgroups and degrees of urbanisation, although those from the younger subgroups were more vulnerable to economic fluctuations. In 2019, the difference between rural and urban areas in the unemployment level was minor. The employment rate and the NEET rate, however, was clearly higher in cities which suggests that many of those living in towns and rural areas remain outside the labour force. The level of school dropouts among youth is one of the lowest in the EU and has been relatively stable over the past decade. It is slightly higher in towns and rural areas than in cities, but the difference is not significant.

PODSUMOWANIE

W raporcie opisano sytuację młodych osób w Polsce na rynku pracy w latach 2009–2019. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na porównanie zmian zachodzących na obszarach miejskich i wiejskich oraz wśród różnych grup wieku. Raport sporządzono na podstawie analizy głównych wskaźników rynku pracy (wskaźnika zatrudnienia, stopy bezrobocia, wskaźnika NEET) oraz wybranych danych dotyczących edukacji i liczby ludności. Wszystkie dane pochodzą z ogólnodostępnych baz Eurostatu.

Raport pokazuje, że w ciągu ostatniej dekady populacja młodych osób w Polsce spadła, zwłaszcza w dużych miastach i na wsi. Sytuacja młodych osób na rynku pracy pogorszyła się w następstwie kryzysu gospodarczego, jednak od 2013 roku ulega poprawie. W 2019 roku stopa bezrobocia osiągnęła poziom sprzed recesji i była najniższa od czasu transformacji ustrojowej i gospodarczej. Trajektoria zmian była zbliżona dla wszystkich grup wieku i stopni urbanizacji, choć osoby młodsze w większym stopniu reagowały na zmiany gospodarcze. W 2019 roku stopa bezrobocia była niska zarówno na obszarach miejskich, jak i wiejskich. Poziom zatrudnienia i wskaźnik NEET były jednak wyraźnie wyższe w miastach, co sugeruje, że część młodych osób mieszkających w małych miejscowościach i na obszarach wiejskich pozostaje poza siłą roboczą. Odsetek młodych osób przedwcześnie kończących edukację znajduje się wśród najniższych w UE i utrzymuje się na stosunkowo stabilnym poziomie od dziesięciu lat. W 2019 r. był nieco wyższy na obszarach wiejskich niż miejskich, ale różnica nie była znaczna.



1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Poland is located in Central Europe. It is bordered by seven countries – Lithuania and Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast to the North, Belarus and Ukraine to the East, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to the South, and Germany to the West. The country is populated by over 38 million people. Around 60% of the population live in urban areas (Statistics Poland, 2020).

Poland is a unitary republic. Its territory is divided into 16 regions (voivodships); these are further divided into 380 counties (powiats), and these, in turn, into 2477 municipalities (gminas) (Statistics Poland, 2020). In general, the public management system is decentralised – a substantial part of public tasks and services have been devolved to regional and local self-governments. Local authorities are elected in general elections.

There is no singular central level authority responsible for youth policy. It is provided by different ministries (e.g., Ministry of National Education for education; Ministry of Science and Higher Education for higher education and research; Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy for employment and social issues; Ministry of Economic Development, Labour and Technology for Youth Guarantee scheme). Local governments have competencies primarily in the fields of education, social policy and culture. There is no single source of funding for activities related to youth policy. Projects and programmes are financed from national and European funds which are at the disposal of ministries, governmental agencies and local governments.

Compulsory education in Poland starts when children reach the age of six. A year later, they begin the 1st grade of the full-time compulsory primary schooling which lasts for 8 years. Afterwards, pupils start upper secondary education in a general secondary school (liceum), a technical school (technikum), a vocational school (szkoła zawodowa) or a profiled general secondary school (liceum profilowane). Overall, general secondary schools prepare students for entry into higher education and other forms of entry directly into the labour market. The latter teach occupations such as: mechanic; electronic specialist; hairdresser; baker; cook; and, accountant etc. Regarding tertiary education, Poland follows the Bologna framework which means that most programmes are divided into a three-year bachelor's degree and a two-year master's degree.



Under Polish law, the legal age of majority is attained at 18 years. This is also the age when a person can become an employee, according to the Labour Code. Juvenile employees (defined as being 15 to 18 years old) can take up employment in a form of vocational preparation or regular, paid work, but only in case of light jobs which should be accepted by the labour inspector and an occupational medical doctor.

Currently, there is no one official document or strategy focusing on young people operating in Poland. Youth-related regulations are fragmented and scattered in between different legal acts. Before accession to the EU, Poland adopted the “State Strategy for Youth for 2003–2012” which determined the directions of Polish youth policy in such areas as: education; social welfare; employment; living conditions; and, healthcare.

As far as employment issues are concerned, Poland is implementing the Youth Guarantee which is the EU’s key programme addressed to young people intending to support them in the labour market. The Youth Guarantee scheme is open to young people aged 15 to 29 from the NEET group (not in education, employment or training). It is financed from national and EU funds (mainly the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative). Youth Guarantee supplements assist with policies aimed at counteracting youth unemployment. The YG scheme is regulated in the “Youth Guarantee implementation Plan”.



2. METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The Polish national report uses information gathered by the National Reports Editorial Team of the Rural NEET Youth Network in the Eurostat platform. The main data presented and analysed in this report are from the following Eurostat database:

- Population Statistics: [yth_demo_020]
- EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS): [fst_r_pgauwsc]; [fst_r_ergau]; [fst_r_urgau]; [edat_lfs_9913]; [edat_lfse_30]; [edat_lfse_29]

Selected indicators were extracted from the different databases according to two criteria:

- Time range: the previous decade (2009–2019) in order to have a sufficiently long period of time to capture the main changes and continuities in trajectories of education, training and employment for young people. The analysis mainly covered 3 dates – 2009–2013–2019 – in order to capture the impact of the economic and financial crisis that hit Europe and that, in most countries, reached its peak in 2012/2013.
- Age group: age group range varies accordingly to the data available in each indicator (15–24; 15–29; 15–34; and 15–39). Whenever possible, age range also covered young adult's data (age groups 30–34 and 35–39) in order to capture the extent of crisis impact on these groups.

In addition to a descriptive analysis, in order to compare data main changes and continuities in different time periods, absolute and relative change were calculated considering the three main time points that were selected – 2009, 2013 and 2019. Absolute change refers to the simple difference in the indicator over two periods in time and is expressed in percentage points (pp). Relative change expresses the change of a value of an indicator in an earlier period and is expressed in percentage terms.

The report also includes an introductory contextualisation section with the most relevant information concerning the Polish social, economic and political situation in the last decades and key youth policies based on a relevant literature review and the Youth Wiki European online encyclopaedia.

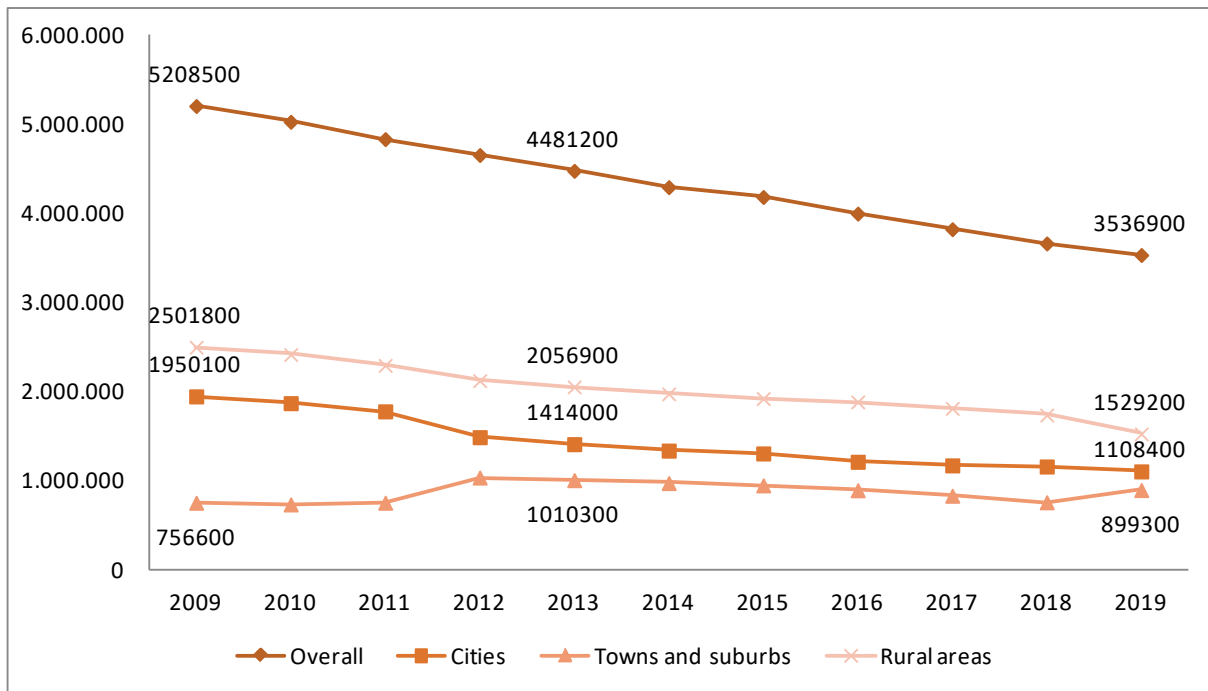


3. DATA ANALYSIS

3. 1. Population and youth population

Chart 1 illustrates the changes in the population of young Poles aged 15 to 24 between 2009 and 2019 by degree of urbanisation. It shows that the number of young people has been decreasing gradually over the past decade, from 5.2 million in 2009 to 3.5 million in 2019. The trend was similar for cities and rural areas. Conversely, small towns and suburbs experienced a slight increase in the number of young people. Table 1 shows that not only the number of young people has been decreasing, but the proportion of youth in the overall population as well. Between 2011 and 2019, the youth population ratio dropped by 6.3 pp, from 23.4% to 17.1%. The decline occurred across all age subgroups of young people.

Chart 1. Total youth population aged 15 to 24 in Poland in 2009–2019 by degree of urbanisation



Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (lfst_r_pgauwsc). Data extracted on 12.05.2020.



Table 1. Ratio of youth population and absolute and relative change in Poland (2009–2013, 2013–2019 and 2009–2019) by age groups

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2019 (relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (relative change 2009–2019)
Overall	23.40%	20.90%	17.10%	-2.50 pp (-10.68%)	-3.80% pp (-18.18%)	-6.30% pp (-26.92%)
15–19	6.90%	5.80%	4.80%	-1.10% pp (-15.94%)	-1.00% pp (-17.24%)	-2.10% pp (-30.43%)
20–24	8.10%	7.00%	5.50%	-1.10% pp (-13.58%)	-1.50% pp (-21.43%)	-2.60% pp (-32.10%)
25–29	8.50%	8.10%	6.80%	-0.40% pp (-4.71%)	-1.30% pp (-16.05%)	-1.70% pp (-20.00%)

Source: Eurostat: yth_demo_020 – data extracted in 27.06.20

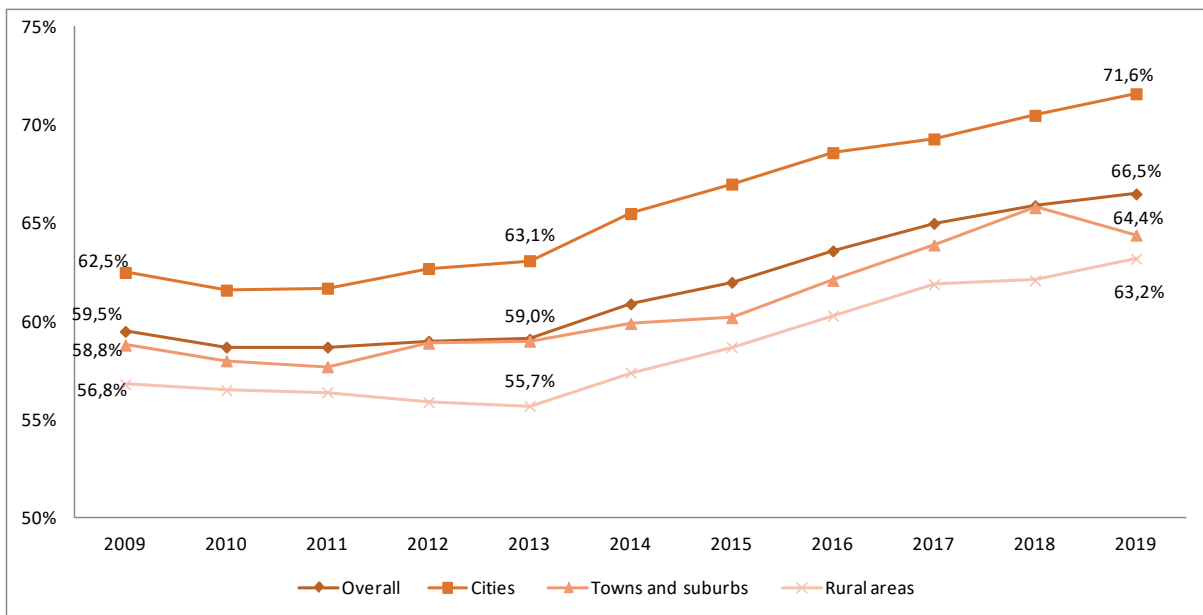


3. 2. Employment and Unemployment

3. 2. 1. Youth employment

Chart 2 shows the changes in the employment rate of people aged 15 to 39 between 2009 and 2019 by degree of urbanisation. Overall, the employment level increased by 7.0 pp during that period, from 59.5% to 66.5%. We can observe two distinct phases: a slight decrease in the employment rate between 2009 and 2013 from 59.5% to 59.1% caused by the financial and economic crisis followed by an improvement of the economic situation and increase in employment level up to 66.5% in 2019. The pattern of change was similar across all degrees of urbanisation.

Chart 2. Employment rate of people aged 15 to 39 between 2009 and 2019 by degree of urbanisation



Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (lfst_r_ergau). Data extracted on 29.04.2020.



Table 2 shows that the employment level is positively associated with age. In 2019, it ranged from 4.9% among people in the 15–19 age range to 83.0% among those aged 30 to 34. All age subgroups experienced a decrease in employment levels between 2009 and 2013, followed by an increase since 2013. The labour market situation improved particularly for people aged 20 to 24 (increasing by 14.5 pp, from 41.0% in 2013 to 55.5% in 2019).

The employment rate is higher in cities (71.6%) than in towns (64.4%) and rural areas (63.2%). Between 2009 and 2019 it increased across all degrees of urbanisation – from 62.5% to 71.6% in cities, from 58.8% to 64.4% in towns and suburbs, and from 56.8% to 63.2% in rural areas.



Table 2. Youth employment rate and absolute and relative change in Poland (2009–2013, 2013–2019 and 2009–2019) by age groups and degree of urbanisation

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2019 (relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (relative change 2009–2019)
Total						
15–19	5.60%	4.20%	4.90%	-1.40 pp (-25.00%)	0.70 pp (16.67%)	-0.70 pp (-12.50%)
20–24	46.10%	41.00%	55.50%	-5.10 pp (-11.06%)	14.50 pp (35.37%)	9.40 pp (20.39%)
25–29	75.00%	73.00%	79.50%	-2.00 pp (-2.67%)	6.50 pp (8.90%)	4.50 pp (6.00%)
30–34	80.90%	78.50%	83.00%	-2.40 pp (-2.97%)	4.50 pp (5.73%)	2.10 pp (2.60%)
Cities						
15–19	4.10%	2.70%	4.00%	-1.40 pp (-34.15%)	1.30 pp (48.15%)	-0.10 pp (-2.44%)
20–24	41.80%	36.20%	52.30%	-5.60 pp (-13.40%)	16.10 pp (44.48%)	10.50 pp (25.12%)
25–29	78.20%	77.30%	84.40%	-0.90 pp (-1.15%)	7.10 pp (9.18%)	6.20 pp (7.93%)
30–34	83.50%	82.70%	87.80%	-0.80 pp (-0.96%)	5.10 pp (6.17%)	4.30 pp (5.15%)
Towns and suburbs						
15–19	3.20%	3.80%	5.60%	0.60 pp (18.75%)	1.80 pp (47.37%)	2.40 pp (75.00%)
20–24	46.60%	41.60%	55.00%	-5.00 pp (-10.73%)	13.40 pp (32.21%)	8.40 pp (18.03%)
25–29	74.80%	72.70%	77.10%	-2.10 pp (-2.81%)	4.40 pp (6.05%)	2.30 pp (3.07%)
30–34	81.90%	78.10%	80.20%	-3.80 pp (-4.64%)	2.10 pp (2.69%)	-1.70 pp (-2.08%)
Rural areas						
15–19	7.20%	5.30%	5.10%	-1.90 pp (-26.39%)	-0.20 pp (-3.77%)	-2.10 pp (-29.17%)
20–24	50.00%	44.50%	58.20%	-5.50 pp (-11.00%)	13.70 pp (30.79%)	8.20 pp (16.40%)
25–29	71.80%	69.10%	76.60%	-2.70 pp (-3.76%)	7.50 pp (10.85%)	4.80 pp (6.69%)
30–34	77.70%	74.80%	79.60%	-2.90 pp (-3.73%)	4.80 pp (6.42%)	1.90 pp (2.45%)

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (lfst_r_ergau). Data extracted on 29.04.2020.



3. 2. 2. Youth unemployment

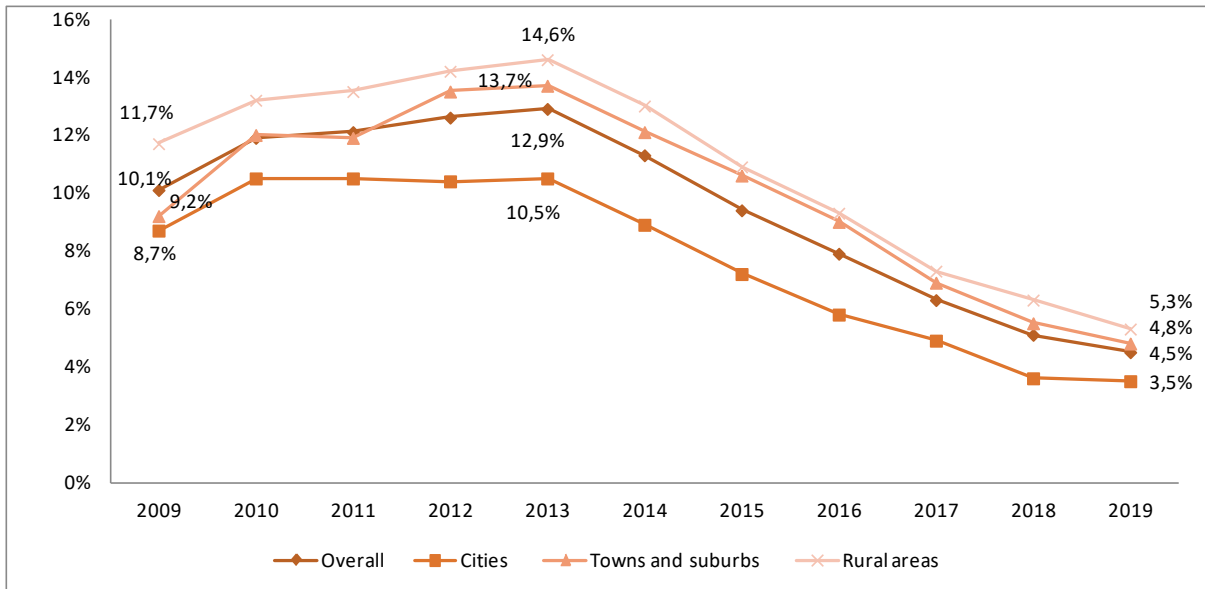
Chart 3 shows the unemployment rate of people aged 15 to 39 in Poland, between 2009 and 2019, by the degree of urbanisation. It shows that in the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis the unemployment rate increased from 9.2% in 2009 to 12.9% in 2013. Since then, the labour market situation of young people has been improving and the unemployment rate dropped to 4.5% in 2019.

Table 3 shows that unemployment is negatively associated with age. In 2019, it ranged from 19.2% among people in the 15–19 age range to 3.0% among those aged 30 to 34. All age subgroups witnessed an increase in the unemployment levels between 2009 and 2013, followed by a decrease between 2013 and 2019. People in the younger subgroups (15–19 and 20–24) were particularly vulnerable to the labour market fluctuations. They were hit hard by the recession (an increase in the unemployment rate by 9.6 pp and 6.5 pp respectively). They also experienced the greatest improvement during the recovery phase (a decrease in the unemployment rate by around 17 pp between 2013 and 2019).

In 2019, the difference in the unemployment rate between cities, towns and rural areas was minor. The lowest unemployment rate was in cities (3.5%), yet towns and rural areas were close to that number (4.8% and 5.3% respectively). Rural areas and towns have caught up with cities in recent years and managed to reduce the difference in the unemployment rate from 3.5 pp to 1.8 pp and 3.2 pp to 1.3 pp respectively between 2013 and 2019.



Chart 3. Unemployment rate of people aged 15 to 39 in Poland between 2009 and 2019 by degree of urbanisation



Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (fst_r_urgau). Data extracted on 29.04.2020.



Table 3. Youth unemployment rate and absolute and relative change in Poland (2009–2013, 2013–2019 and 2009–2019) by age groups and degree of urbanisation

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2019 (relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (relative change 2009–2019)
Total						
15–19	27.40%	37.00%	19.20%	9.60 pp (35.04%)	-17.80 pp (-48.11%)	-8.20 pp (-29.93%)
20–24	19.80%	26.30%	9.00%	6.50 pp (32.83%)	-17.30 pp (-65.78%)	-10.80 pp (-54.55%)
25–29	9.80%	13.60%	4.40%	3.80 pp (38.78%)	-9.20 pp (-67.65%)	-5.40 pp (-55.10%)
30–34	6.50%	8.70%	3.00%	2.20 pp (33.85%)	-5.70 pp (-65.52%)	-3.50 pp (-53.85%)
Cities						
15–19	31.70%	39.00%	26.00%	7.30% (23.03%)	-13.00 pp (-33.33%)	-5.70 pp (-17.98%)
20–24	17.90%	22.20%	7.00%	4.30% (24.02%)	-15.20 pp (-68.47%)	-10.90 pp (-60.89%)
25–29	8.30%	11.10%	3.50%	2.80% (33.73%)	-7.60 pp (-68.47%)	-4.80 pp (-57.83%)
30–34	6.00%	8.00%	2.30%	2.00% (33.33%)	-5.70 pp (-71.25%)	-3.70 pp (-61.67%)
Towns and suburbs						
15–19	30.50%	43.50%	.	13.00% (42.62%)	.	.
20–24	19.50%	27.50%	10.50%	8.00% (41.03%)	-17.00 pp (-61.82%)	-9.00 pp (-46.15%)
25–29	10.00%	15.20%	5.40%	5.20% (52.00%)	-9.80 pp (-64.47%)	-4.60 pp (-46.00%)
30–34	5.00%	8.90%	3.20%	3.90% (78.00%)	-5.70 pp (-64.04%)	-1.80 pp (-36.00%)
Rural areas						
15–19	25.10%	33.50%	20.60%	8.40% (33.47%)	-12.90 pp (-38.51%)	-4.50 pp (-17.93%)
20–24	21.30%	28.20%	9.70%	6.90% (32.39%)	-18.50 pp (-65.60%)	-11.60 pp (-54.46%)
25–29	11.30%	15.10%	4.80%	3.80% (33.63%)	-10.30 pp (-68.21%)	-6.50 pp (-57.52%)
30–34	7.50%	9.50%	3.70%	2.00% (26.67%)	-5.80 pp (-61.05%)	-3.80 pp (-50.67%)

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (lfst_r_urgau). Data extracted on 29.04.2020



3. 3. Education

3. 3. 1. Young people by educational attainment level

Table 4 describes young people aged 15 to 24 by educational attainment (ISCED levels) and degree of urbanisation between 2009 and 2019 in Poland. It shows that in 2019, 47% of the 15–24 year-olds held lower secondary degree level qualifications or below (ISCED 0–2), 46.2% held upper or post-secondary degree level qualifications (ISCED 3–4), and 6.8% held tertiary degree level qualifications (ISCED 5–8).

There were no considerable changes in the educational structure at the National level over the previous decade, however, some variation occurred in the case of tertiary education. Its popularity increased from 5.6% to 7.8% between 2009 and 2013 and then started decreasing and reached a level of 6.8% in 2019. It seems that as a response to the economic crisis, young people were more willing to continue education to improve their qualifications and/or postpone entry into the labour market.

In 2019, young people living in cities were around two times more likely to hold a tertiary degree (10.2%) than those living in towns (4.5%) and rural areas (5.6%). City inhabitants also noted the most remarkable improvement in this regard – the share of university degree holders increased by 36% between 2009 and 2019 (from 7.5% to 10.2%).



Table 4. Educational attainment (ISCED levels) of young people aged 15–24 in Poland and absolute and relative change (2009–2013, 2013–2019, 2009–2019) by degree of urbanisation

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2019 (relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (relative change 2009–2019)
Country						
ISCED 0–2	45.80%	45.30%	47.00%	-0.50 pp (-1.09%)	-1.70 pp (3.75%)	1.20 pp (2.62%)
ISCED 3–4	48.60%	46.90%	46.20%	-1.70 pp (-3.50%)	-0.70 pp (-1.49%)	-2.40 pp (-4.94%)
ISCED 5–8	5.60%	7.80%	6.80%	2.20 pp (39.29%)	-1.00 pp (-12.82%)	1.20 pp (21.43%)
Cities						
ISCED 0–2	40.50%	39.70%	42.20%	-0.80 pp (-1.98%)	2.50 pp (6.30%)	1.70 pp (4.20%)
ISCED 3–4	52.00%	49.50%	47.60%	-2.50 pp (-4.81%)	-1.90 pp (-3.84%)	-4.40 pp (-8.46%)
ISCED 5–8	7.50%	10.80%	10.20%	3.30 pp (44.00%)	-0.60 pp (-5.56%)	2.70 pp (36.00%)
Towns and suburbs						
ISCED 0–2	47.50%	47.20%	53.50%	-0.30 pp (-0.63%)	6.30 pp (13.35%)	6.00 pp (12.63%)
ISCED 3–4	48.10%	45.20%	42.00%	-2.90 pp (-6.03%)	-3.20 pp (-7.08%)	-6.10 pp (-12.68%)
ISCED 5–8	4.40%	7.70%	4.50%	3.30 pp (75.00%)	-3.20 pp (-41.56%)	0.10 pp (2.27%)
Rural areas						
ISCED 0–2	49.30%	48.30%	46.70%	-1.00 pp (-2.03%)	-1.60 pp (-3.31%)	-2.60 pp (-5.27%)
ISCED 3–4	46.10%	45.90%	47.70%	-0.20 pp (-0.43%)	1.80 pp (3.92%)	1.60 pp (3.47%)
ISCED 5–8	4.60%	5.80%	5.60%	1.20 pp (26.09%)	-0.20 pp (-3.45%)	1.00 pp (21.74%)

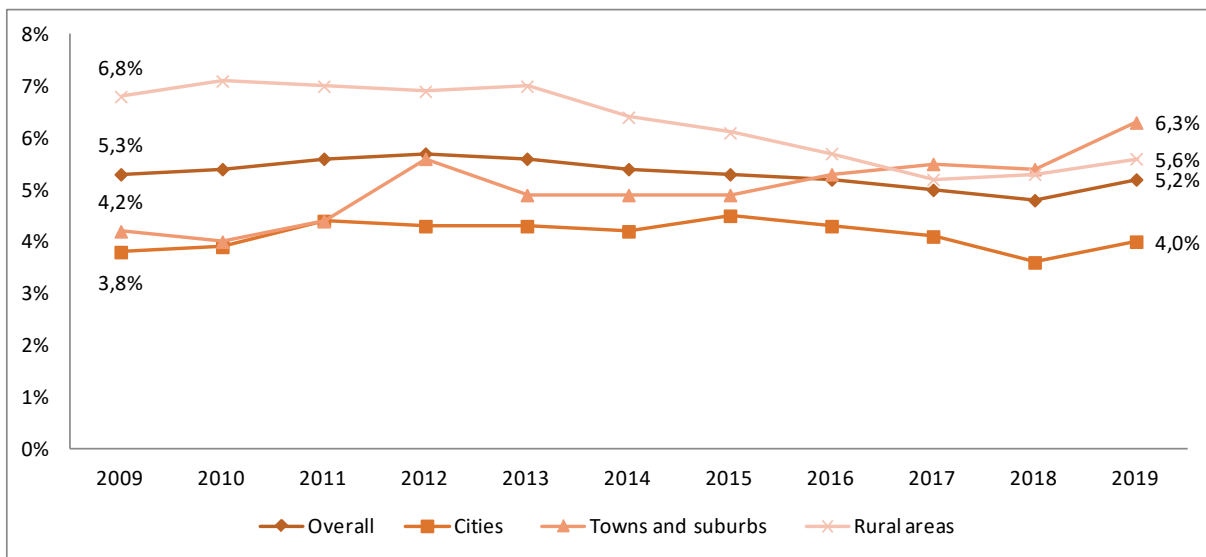
Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (edat_lfs_9913). Data extracted on 29.04.2020.



3.3.2. Early School Leavers from Education and Training

Education increases one's opportunities in the labour market. Therefore, countries seek to increase educational participation and reduce early school leaving. Chart 4 displays the proportion of Early Leavers from Education and Training (ESLET) between 2009 and 2019 by degree of urbanisation. In 2019, 5.3% of young Poles could be considered as early school leavers. The level of dropouts was slightly higher in towns and rural areas (6.3% and 5.6% respectively) than in cities (4.0%). The ESLET rate has been relatively stable over the past ten years – it decreased overall by 0.1 pp, falling in rural areas by 1.2 pp, while increasing in towns and suburbs by 2.1 pp and in cities by 0.2 pp.

Chart 4. Early School Leavers from Education and Training in Poland between 2009 and 2019 by degree of urbanisation



Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (edat_ifse_30). Data extracted on 20.04.2020.



3. 4. NEETs

3. 4. 1. NEET rate

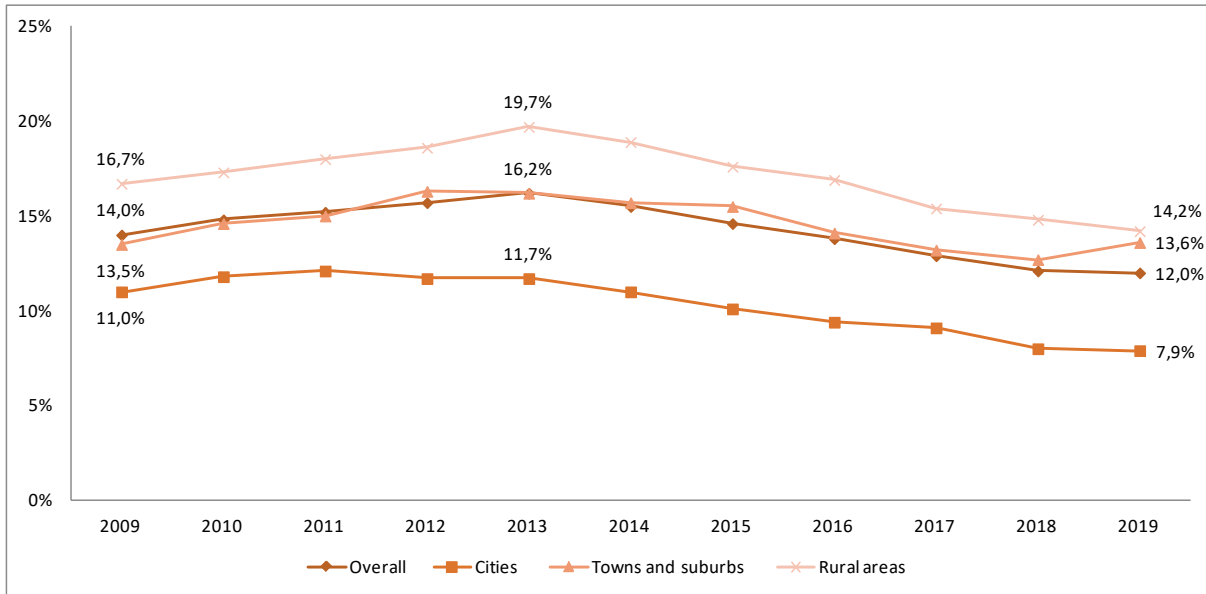
Chart 5 shows the proportion of NEETs among young people aged 15 to 29 by the degree of urbanisation over the last ten years. Between 2009 and 2013, the NEET rate increased from 14% to 16% and since then has been steadily decreasing, reaching 12.0% in 2019. This pattern was similar across all levels of urbanisation.

Table 6 shows that the NEET rate is negatively associated with age. In 2019, it varied from 2.3% in the youngest age group (15–19) to 17.7% among those aged 25 to 29. All age subgroups experienced an increase in the NEET rate between 2009 and 2013 and a decrease between 2013 to 2019.

In 2019, rural areas and towns displayed higher NEET rates than cities across all age subgroups. The difference was especially visible in the 25–29 age group, in which the NEET rate gap between cities and rural areas reached almost 11 pp (11.1% in cities vs. 21.8% in rural areas). The gap has been quite stable for ten years, which means that rural areas and small towns did not converge with cities.



Chart 5. NEET rate among young people aged 15 to 29 in Poland between 2009 and 2019 by degree of urbanisation



Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (edat_lfse_29). Data extracted on 29.04.2020.



Table 6. NEET rate in Poland and absolute and relative change (2009–2013, 2013–2019, 2009–2019) by age subgroups and by degree of urbanisation

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2019 (relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (relative change 2009–2019)
Country						
Overall	15.10%	17.40%	13.40%	2.30 pp (15.23%)	-4.00 pp (-22.99%)	-1.70 pp (-11.26%)
Overall	15.10%	17.40%	13.40%	2.30 pp (15.23%)	-4.00 pp (-22.99%)	-1.70 pp (-11.26%)
15–19	3.50%	3.70%	2.30%	0.20 pp (5.71%)	-1.40 pp (-37.84%)	-1.20 pp (-34.29%)
20–24	16.10%	19.40%	13.30%	3.30 pp (20.50%)	-6.10 pp (-31.44%)	-2.80 pp (-17.39%)
25–29	20.50%	22.70%	17.70%	2.20 pp (10.73%)	-5.00 pp (-22.03%)	-2.80 pp (-13.66%)
30–34	18.30%	20.50%	16.50%	2.20 pp (12.02%)	-4.00 pp (-19.51%)	-1.80 pp (-9.84%)
Cities						
Overall	12.30%	13.10%	9.10%	0.80 pp (6.50%)	-4.00 pp (-30.53%)	-3.20 pp (-26.02%)
15–19	3.40%	3.10%	1.70%	-0.30 pp (-8.82%)	-1.40 pp (-45.16%)	-1.70 pp (-50.00%)
20–24	11.30%	11.70%	8.30%	0.40 pp (3.54%)	-3.40 pp (-29.06%)	-3.00 pp (-26.55%)
25–29	15.60%	16.50%	11.10%	0.90 pp (5.77%)	-5.40 pp (-32.73%)	-4.50 pp (-28.85%)
30–34	15.50%	16.10%	11.50%	0.60 pp (3.87%)	-4.60 pp (-28.57%)	-4.00 pp (-25.81%)
Towns and suburbs						
Overall	14.50%	17.70%	15.30%	3.20 pp (22.07%)	-2.40 pp (-13.56%)	0.80 pp (5.52%)
15–19	2.30%	3.60%	2.30%	1.30 pp (56.52%)	-1.30 pp (-36.11%)	0.00 pp (0.00%)
20–24	15.80%	19.00%	16.50%	3.20 pp (20.25%)	-2.50 pp (-13.16%)	0.70 pp (4.43%)
25–29	21.20%	23.70%	20.90%	2.50 pp (11.79%)	-2.80 pp (-11.81%)	-0.30 pp (-1.42%)
30–34	17.40%	21.00%	19.30%	3.60 pp (20.69%)	-1.70 pp (-8.10%)	1.90 pp (10.92%)
Rural areas						
Overall	17.90%	20.90%	15.80%	3.00 pp (16.76%)	-5.10 pp (-24.40%)	-2.10 pp (-11.73%)
15–19	4.00%	4.10%	2.60%	0.10 pp (2.50%)	-1.50 pp (-36.59%)	-1.40 pp (-35.00%)
20–24	20.60%	25.40%	15.50%	4.80 pp (23.30%)	-9.90 pp (-38.98%)	-5.10 pp (-24.76%)
25–29	25.30%	27.90%	21.80%	2.60 pp (10.28%)	-6.10 pp (-21.86%)	-3.50 pp (-13.83%)
30–34	21.60%	24.40%	20.00%	2.80 pp (12.96%)	-4.40 pp (-18.03%)	-1.60 pp (-7.41%)

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat (edat_lfse_29). Data extracted on 29.04.2020.



4. CONCLUSIONS

Population. Like many European countries, Poland has a noticeably ageing demographic. The number of young people and the youth population ratio has been gradually decreasing over the past decade across all age subgroups. This is mainly due to a low birth rate and a large-scale labour emigration of younger Poles to other EU countries after joining the EU in 2004. The trend was similar for cities and rural areas. Only small towns and suburbs experienced a slight increase in the number of young people, most probably due to the migration of urban population to the suburbs within the suburbanisation processes.

Youth employment and unemployment. The youth unemployment increased during the recession period, reaching a peak in 2013. Since then it has been decreasing significantly. Currently, it is below the pre-recession level and the lowest since the political and economic transformation undergone in the immediate aftermath of communism. People from the younger subgroups were more vulnerable to labour market fluctuations. In 2019, the difference in the unemployment rate was minor across various levels of urbanisation. The employment rate, however, was clearly higher in cities which suggests that many of those living in towns and rural areas remain outside the labour force.

Early School Leavers from Education and Training. The ESLET rate in Poland is 5.3%, one of the lowest in the EU (European Union, 2019). It has been relatively stable over the past decade. The level of dropouts is slightly higher in towns and rural areas than in cities, but the difference is not considerable.

Educational attainment. In Poland, 47% of young people held a lower secondary degree or below, 46% held an upper or post-secondary degree, and 7% held a tertiary degree. There were no significant changes in the educational structure at the country level between 2009 and 2019. Young people living in cities are around two times more likely to hold a university degree than those living in towns and rural areas. Cities also witnessed the greatest improvement in education. If this trend continues the educational gap between cities and rural areas may increase in the future.



NEETs. Overall, the NEET rate decreased between 2009 and 2019 in all age groups and across all levels of urbanisation. There were two phases – an increase during the recession period with a peak in 2013, followed by a decrease during the recovery period. What is interesting is that the decline in the NEET rate was not as considerable as the decline in the unemployment rate. This is because the NEET group in Poland is composed mainly of economically inactive young people. Their labour market status is rather independent of the condition of the economy. The share of economically inactive NEETs in Poland has been stable over the past decade (Smoter, 2020). Although the NEET rate has fallen in recent years across all levels of urbanisation, young people living in small towns and rural areas are considerably more vulnerable to becoming NEET than those living in cities.



5. REFERENCES

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6. IMPORTANT LINKS

Youth wiki: national youth policies in Poland <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/overview-poland>

Youth Guarantee implementation plan in Poland <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16338&langId=e>

Youth Guarantee country fiche for Poland <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1161&langId=en&intPagelId=3348>

The labour code <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19740240141>

Law on school education <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19910950425/U/D19910425Lj.pdf>