

Disability and social participation in Europe



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION



THEME 3
Population
and social
conditions



A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet.

It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

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Yves Franchet
Director-General

Symbols and abbreviations

*	provisional/estimated data or low reliability due to small number of observations
:	not available
—	nil
.	not applicable or data not statistically significant
0	less than half the unit used

EU-15	European Union of 15 Member States
B	Belgium
DK	Denmark
D	Germany
EL	Greece
E	Spain
F	France
IRL	Ireland
I	Italy
L	Luxembourg
NL	Netherlands
A	Austria
P	Portugal
FIN	Finland
S	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

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Introduction

This is the first edition of a statistical pocketbook on 'Disability and social participation in Europe'. It aims to respond to the growing demand of Member States and the European Commission for internationally comparable statistics on the social situation of people with disabilities.

The need for reliable statistical and demographic data and information about people with disabilities is highlighted in the Commission communication 'Towards a barrier free Europe for people with disabilities' (COM(2000) 284 final). Moreover, the European Council resolution of 17 June 1999 on equal opportunities for people with disabilities, calls upon the Commission to work together with the Member States, to monitor and analyse the development of the employment of people with disabilities on the basis of comparable data. Similarly, comparable data and information on the social integration of people with disabilities will particularly be required for guiding actions under the forthcoming 'European Year of People with Disabilities', in 2003, for which the European Commission has recently made a proposal.

Aiming to respond to information needs on the situation of people with disabilities throughout Europe, this pocketbook contains comparisons on the social situation and participation of three population groups: people with severe disabilities, people with moderate disabilities, people without disabilities, as defined by a 'global disability question' in the European Community Household Panel.

This pocketbook was based on a manuscript from the 'Equipe Démographie et Santé' in Montpellier (F) and produced by Eurostat, Health and Safety unit. Support was provided by the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs, Integration of People with Disabilities unit.

More detailed information on the labour market situation of people with disabilities in Europe, including their specific needs for support in order to be able to work, will be available from a special 'module' which is planned to be attached to the European Labour Force Survey in 2002.

Explanatory notes

Countries

Throughout this pocketbook, data for the European Union refer to 'EU-14', meaning 'EU-15 excluding Sweden'. The latter country could not be included in the analysis because no ECHP data on Sweden were available.

Rounding of figures

In tables where percentages have been rounded to the nearest final digit, there may be a discrepancy between the sum of the components and the total of 100.

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Measuring disability in the European Community Household Panel (ECHP)

This booklet is the first attempt to answer an essential question by means of about 20 charts and sets of comments. That question is 'What is the degree of participation in the main areas of life, such as marriage, family, education, work and social contacts, of persons with disabilities'?

This study approaches the above question using data from the European Community Household Panel (ECHP). The ECHP is a longitudinal, multi-subject survey covering many aspects of daily life, particularly employment and income, but also demographic characteristics, the environment, education and health. The three essential features of the ECHP are: (i) simultaneous coverage of numerous dimensions, (ii) a standardised methodology producing comparable information for the Member States of the European Union, and (iii) a longitudinal or 'panel' design (Eurostat, 1999).

The ECHP sample covers some 60 000 households comprising 130 000 adults aged 16 or over. The first three waves took place in 1994 (wave 1), 1995 (wave 2) and 1996 (wave 3). The ECHP contains several questions on health, including a general question on restrictions on everyday activities caused by a health problem. In wave 3, the health module comprises a screening question and the question on difficulties in daily life.

The reference wording is:

Q 158: Do you have any chronic physical or mental health problem, illness or disability? If Yes ⇒ Q 159

Q 159: Are you hampered in your daily activities by this chronic physical or mental health problem, illness or disability?

Yes, severely/Yes, to some extent/No

It is on the basis of this question that differences and similarities between population groups with and without disabilities in the European Union are shown. The analysis concerns the population of working age (16–64 years) and uses the most recent data to have emerged from the ECHP in 1996. This wave covers 14 out of the 15 EU countries: Sweden is not included. Detailed information on data obtained from this question at the different waves can be found in the appendix.

Although this type of question appears in virtually every health survey (Verbrugge, 1997), no general question on restrictions on everyday activities is currently recommended. The question used in the ECHP does not refer to a specific definition of disability, such as proposed by the World Health Organisation, neither does it refer to an administrative status such as 'work disability'. One problem with this type of

approach to assessing disability may be that the responses given by the surveyed individuals can be circular if they report that **general** problems in daily life are due to health problems.

Nevertheless, the question allows an aggregated measurement of the consequences of a chronic health problem for daily activities, and therefore gives an idea of the proportion of people who cannot easily cope with health problems. The question has added relevance in the current context of lengthening lifespans and increasing concern about the growing need for care and assistance. Therefore, while such a question is not exactly measuring disability levels in the population of working age, it does allow for an overview of the situation in the European Union regarding difficulties faced in daily life and the potential need for assistance as perceived by the population. The present study aims to compare the characteristics and social integration of population groups which do/do not experience difficulties in daily life as a result of health problems or disabilities, through key dimensions such as work participation, sources of income and level of education. To simplify the text, the terms 'severe' or 'moderate' disability are used for those who state that they are 'severely' or 'to some extent' hampered in their daily life by health problems.

As can be seen from the tables and graphs, this first analysis reveals systematic differences between the population groups with and without disability. The magnitude of these differences, and sometimes their direction, varies from one country to the other. These variations are in part the result of real differences in opportunities or social integration of these population groups. Some of these variations may also be the result of differences in the interpretation of the question on disability (cultural differences) and differences in the social organisation and availability of services in the various countries. Differences in the systems of education, pensions, retirement and health care sometimes make it difficult to compare the categories of people under consideration. Therefore, without drawing hasty conclusions as to the varying magnitude of differences between people with and without disability in EU countries, this study outlines the systematic differences between these population groups and points out some specific dimensions of which more in-depth analysis is required.

References

- Eurostat (1999), *The European Community Household Panel user's database*. Waves 1, 2 and 3 Manual. Eurostat.
- Verbrugge L. M. (1997), A global disability indicator. *J Aging Studies* 11(4):337-362.

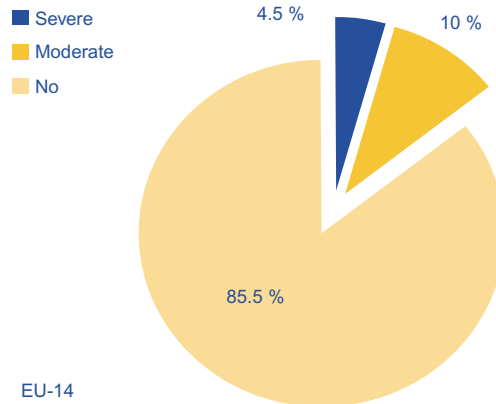
Part 1. SELF-REPORTED DISABILITY

Chart 1. Percentage of the population reporting disability

Almost 85.5 % of the EU-14 population aged 16 to 64 do not report a disability as defined here. 4.5 % report a severe disability and 10 % report a moderate disability. This average masks disparities between countries: only 77 % of the Finnish population report no disability, compared with 92 % in Italy.

In some cases, absolute differences between countries in terms of levels of disability are large. These differences may partly be the result of different interpretations of notions such as 'moderate' and 'severe' in the EU countries. The boundaries between 'no disability', 'moderate disability' or 'severe disability' can vary from one country to another. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the analyses in some of the following tables and graphs show that the profile of the population with moderate disabilities is close to the profile of the population without any disability in some countries, but close to the profile of those reporting severe disability in others.

Percentage of the population reporting severe, moderate and no disability, age group 16–64, EU-14, 1996



Percentage of the population reporting severe, moderate and no disability in 14 EU countries, age group 16–64, 1996

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
Severe	4.6 %	4.7 %	4.6 %	3.3 %	3.3 %	6.0 %	2.5 %	2.3 %	4.3 %	5.8 %	3.2 %	7.5 %	6.2 %	5.7 %	4.5 %
Moderate	8.3 %	12.7 %	12.7 %	4.9 %	6.6 %	9.3 %	8.4 %	5.5 %	12.1 %	12.7 %	9.3 %	10.9 %	16.7 %	13.2 %	10.0 %
No	87.1 %	82.6 %	82.7 %	91.8 %	90.1 %	84.7 %	89.1 %	92.2 %	83.5 %	81.5 %	87.5 %	81.6 %	77.1 %	81.2 %	85.5 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Percentage of the population reporting severe and moderate disability in 14 EU countries, age group 16–64, 1996

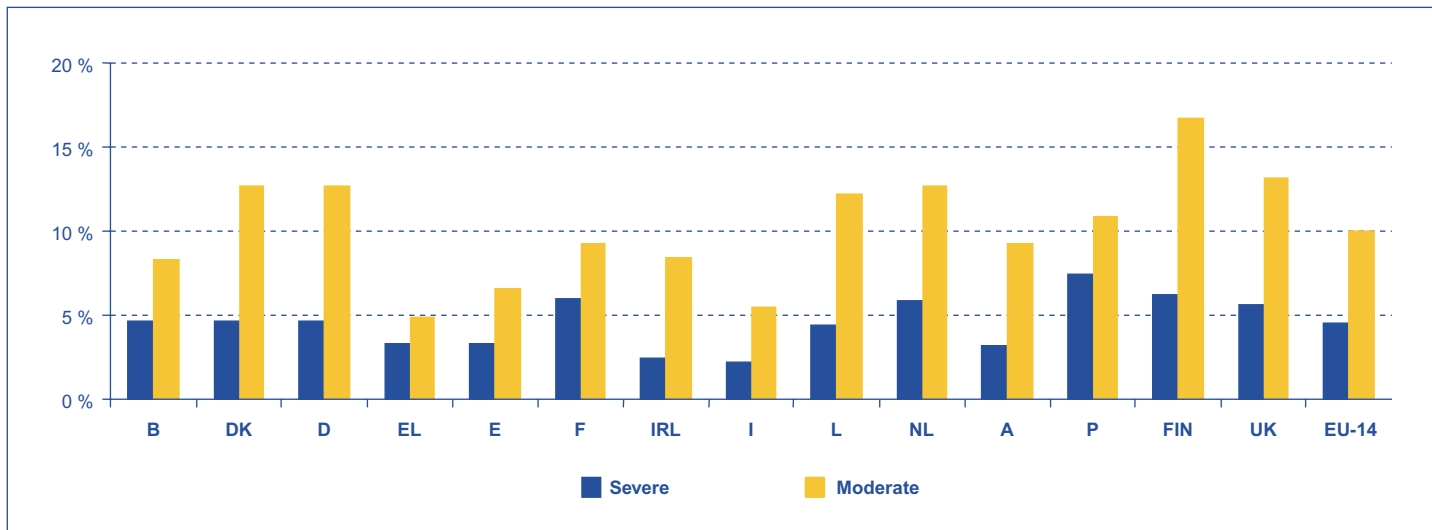


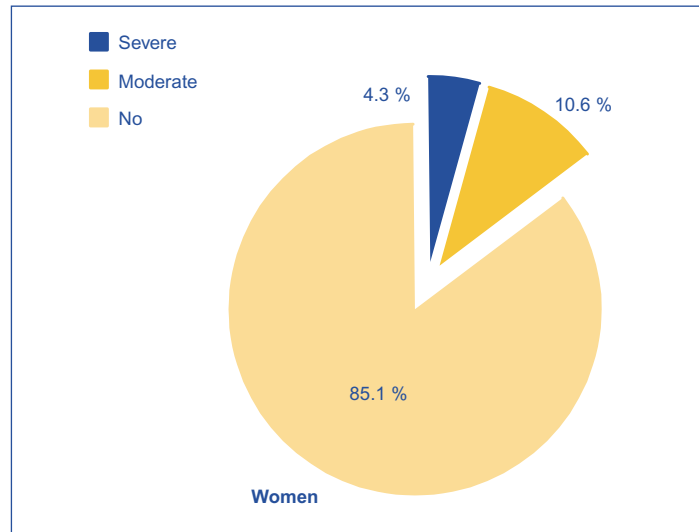
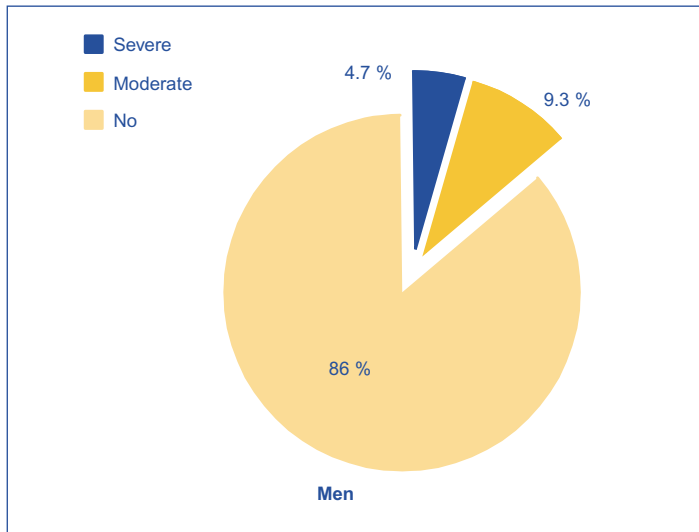
Chart 2. Gender differences in the reporting of disability

At European level, in the population aged 16 to 64 years, almost 15 % of women and 14 % of men report either a moderate or severe disability.

4.7 % of men and 4.3 % of women report a severe disability, while a higher proportion of women (10.6 %) than men (9.3 %) report a moderate disability. As shown for the different EU countries, differences between men and women are larger for the moderate level of disability than for the severe level.

The slight excess of disability observed for females at Community level can also be found at national level in most cases. However, taking all levels of disability together, the relationship is reversed in Germany, Luxembourg and Austria, and is negligible in some other countries.

Percentage of the population reporting severe, moderate and no disability, by sex, age group 16–64, EU-14, 1996



Percentage of the population reporting severe, moderate and no disability in 14 EU countries, by sex, age group 16–64, 1996

Men															
	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
Severe	5.0 %	4.6 %	5.2 %	3.5 %	3.6 %	6.0 %	2.7 %	2.1 %	4.6 %	4.7 %	3.1 %	6.7 %	6.7 %	6.4 %	4.7 %
Moderate	7.9 %	10.1 %	12.4 %	4.2 %	6.2 %	8.8 %	8.1 %	5.4 %	12.9 %	11.4 %	10.1 %	9.9 %	15.0 %	11.6 %	9.3 %
No	87.1 %	85.3 %	82.4 %	92.4 %	90.3 %	85.2 %	89.3 %	92.5 %	82.5 %	83.9 %	86.8 %	83.4 %	78.3 %	82.0 %	86.0 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
Women															
	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
Severe	4.2 %	4.8 %	4.0 %	3.2 %	3.0 %	6.0 %	2.2 %	2.4 %	4.1 %	6.8 %	3.4 %	8.2 %	5.8 %	5.1 %	4.3 %
Moderate	8.7 %	15.4 %	12.9 %	5.5 %	7.0 %	9.8 %	8.8 %	5.7 %	11.4 %	14.0 %	8.5 %	11.9 %	18.4 %	14.5 %	10.6 %
No	87.1 %	79.8 %	83.1 %	91.3 %	90.0 %	84.3 %	89.0 %	91.9 %	84.6 %	79.2 %	88.2 %	80.0 %	75.9 %	80.5 %	85.1 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Percentage of the population reporting severe and moderate disability in 14 EU countries, by sex, age group 16–64, 1996

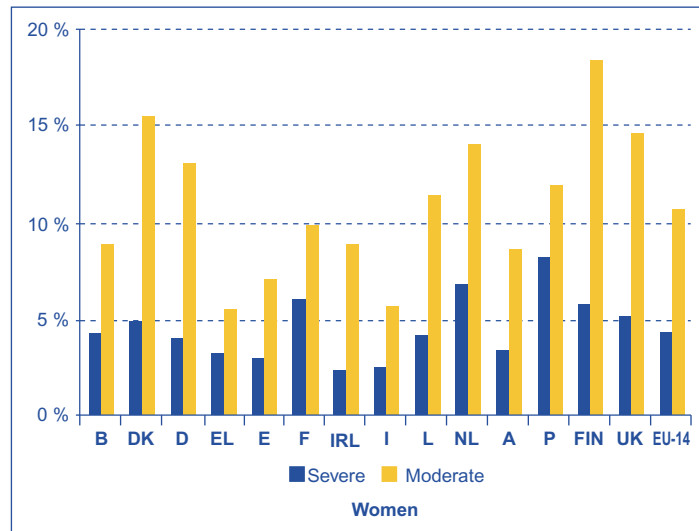
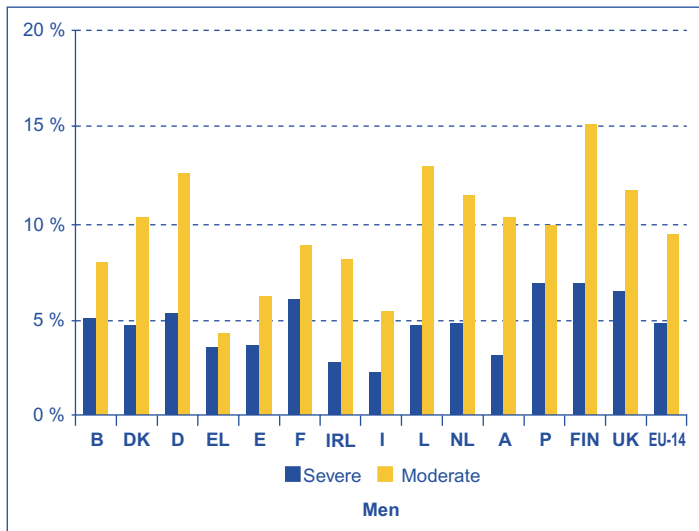


Chart 3. Age-specific percentages of persons reporting disability

The percentage of persons reporting a disability (all levels combined) increases with age. This trend can be seen in all of the 14 countries under consideration, although the rate of progression differs from one country to another. Finland shows the most rapid progression and reaches the highest level of disability prevalence from the age of 40 onwards, with more than 52 % of 60–64 year-olds reporting a disability. Belgium, Greece, Ireland and Italy have the smallest percentage in each age group (about 20 % for 60–64 year-olds).

Age-specific percentages of persons reporting disability, all levels combined, in 14 EU countries, age group 16–64, 1996

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
16 to 19	3.0 %	11.6 %	7.0 %	1.8 %	2.6 %	7.6 %	3.4 %	3.3 %	12.7 %	11.4 %	3.3 %	6.1 %	10.2 %	12.4 %	6.6 %
20 to 24	4.5 %	9.9 %	8.5 %	1.5 %	1.9 %	7.5 %	6.0 %	1.9 %	5.6 %	12.3 %	3.0 %	8.4 %	12.9 %	8.7 %	6.1 %
25 to 29	6.7 %	10.4 %	8.6 %	2.7 %	3.2 %	8.1 %	8.0 %	2.4 %	6.8 %	9.9 %	5.1 %	8.8 %	12.1 %	11.1 %	7.2 %
30 to 34	6.9 %	10.6 %	8.0 %	3.9 %	4.8 %	9.6 %	8.0 %	3.4 %	10.5 %	12.2 %	5.6 %	10.8 %	10.6 %	13.8 %	8.3 %
35 to 39	10.4 %	16.3 %	11.1 %	3.9 %	6.1 %	12.7 %	9.2 %	3.9 %	14.0 %	15.6 %	8.8 %	14.7 %	13.2 %	15.2 %	10.5 %
40 to 44	14.3 %	13.9 %	12.9 %	5.9 %	8.2 %	13.3 %	12.8 %	6.1 %	12.8 %	17.1 %	9.3 %	17.3 %	19.5 %	15.5 %	12.1 %
45 to 49	14.6 %	19.5 %	16.8 %	9.5 %	9.6 %	17.5 %	14.1 %	7.1 %	20.4 %	21.8 %	16.7 %	18.5 %	26.5 %	20.8 %	15.5 %
50 to 54	20.2 %	23.9 %	25.4 %	13.9 %	15.7 %	20.9 %	15.1 %	13.0 %	25.4 %	24.9 %	22.4 %	25.1 %	35.0 %	24.9 %	21.1 %
55 to 59	27.3 %	31.7 %	33.5 %	16.5 %	24.5 %	31.1 %	16.3 %	15.6 %	29.2 %	30.7 %	30.1 %	37.9 %	52.9 %	35.7 %	28.9 %
60 to 64	22.2 %	35.6 %	35.1 %	23.6 %	32.2 %	34.3 %	23.8 %	22.5 %	32.4 %	34.8 %	31.4 %	45.7 %	52.6 %	32.6 %	31.7 %
Total	12.9 %	17.4 %	17.3 %	8.2 %	9.9 %	15.3 %	10.9 %	7.8 %	16.5 %	18.5 %	12.5 %	18.4 %	22.9 %	18.8 %	14.5 %

Age-specific percentages of persons reporting disability, all levels combined, in 14 EU countries, age group 16-64, 1996

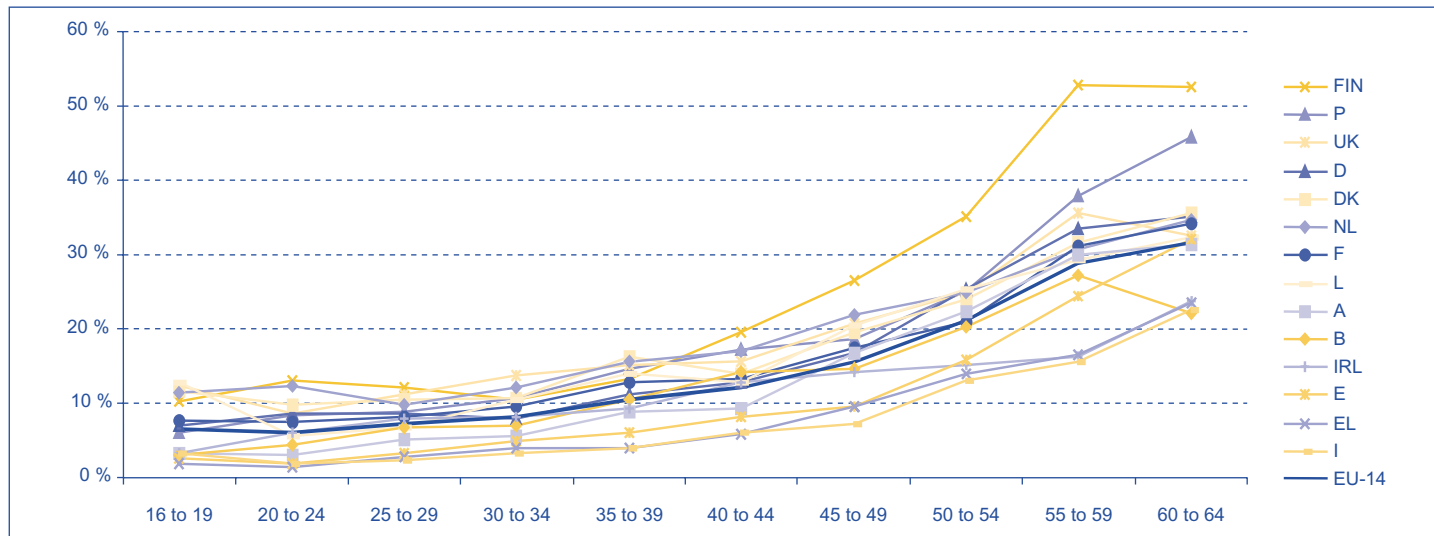


Chart 4. Age structure of the populations reporting severe, moderate and no disability

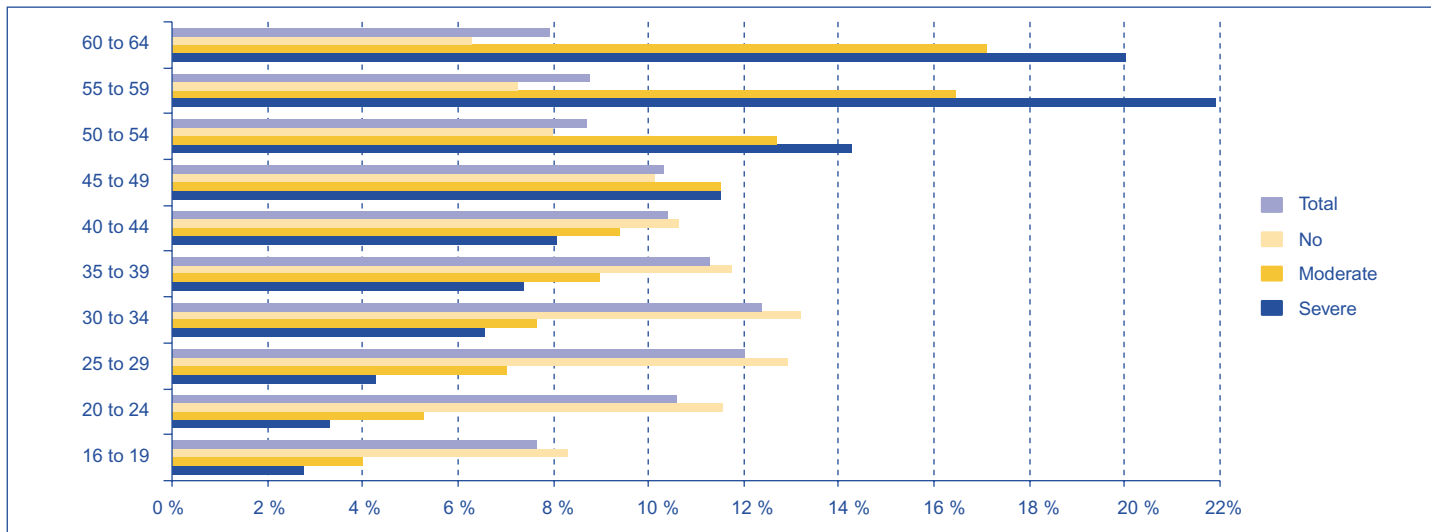
The age structure of the groups reporting severe, moderate and no disability differs. Not surprisingly, given that the probability of reporting a disability increases with age, the population with no disability is younger on average. Almost 60 % of the population reporting no disability is under 40 years old, while this is only 24 % for those reporting a severe disability. More than 40 % of those reporting severe disability and 14 % of those reporting no disability are 55 or older.

These age structure differences will impact on comparisons of these groups' social participation. In this publication, attention will be given to the possible age effect on differences between people with and without a disability.

Age structure of the population groups reporting severe, moderate and no disability, EU-14, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Total
16 to 19	2.7 %	4.0 %	8.3 %	7.6 %
20 to 24	3.3 %	5.3 %	11.6 %	10.6 %
25 to 29	4.3 %	7.0 %	12.9 %	12.0 %
30 to 34	6.5 %	7.7 %	13.2 %	12.4 %
35 to 39	7.4 %	9.0 %	11.7 %	11.3 %
40 to 44	8.1 %	9.4 %	10.6 %	10.4 %
45 to 49	11.5 %	11.5 %	10.1 %	10.3 %
50 to 54	14.2 %	12.7 %	8.0 %	8.7 %
55 to 59	21.9 %	16.5 %	7.2 %	8.8 %
60 to 64	20.0 %	17.1 %	6.3 %	7.9 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Age structure of the populations reporting severe, moderate and no disability, EU-14, 1996



Part 2. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Chart 5. Disability and marital status

Analysing the entire 16–64 age range is not very appropriate as a means of highlighting the correlation between disability and marital status, because a part of this group is younger than the average age at marriage. The effects become much clearer if we consider the age range between 30 and 64 years. Those reporting no disability are more often married (78 %) than those reporting moderate disability (73 %) or severe disability (67 %). Only 12 % of those reporting no disability have never been married at the time of the survey, as against 14 % of those reporting severe disability.

The probability of being married, no longer married or never having been married is strongly correlated with age. The population reporting a disability, given its older age structure, has more people who have reached the average age at marriage than the population without a disability. A standardisation for the age effect is useful. Taking the age structure of the entire ECHP population as a reference, we found accentuated differences compared to that found without standardisation in the age range 16–64. Using the raw data, the differences in the age structure of the various groups under consideration partly obscure the fact that at young ages, the probability of being married is much lower for those reporting a disability, and the chance of having never been married much higher. In the 30–64 age bracket, the gap is almost the same when using standardised and raw figures.

Distribution of the population with severe, moderate and no disability according to marital status, age groups 16–64 and 30–64, EU-14, 1996

	16–64				30–64			
	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Total	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Total
Married	62.9 %	65.5 %	60.5 %	61.1 %	67.4 %	73.0 %	77.8 %	76.6 %
Never married	19.7 %	21.1 %	32.0 %	30.3 %	14.0 %	12.1 %	12.3 %	12.4 %
Were married	17.4 %	13.4 %	7.5 %	8.6 %	18.6 %	14.9 %	9.9 %	11.0 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Marital status, in %, of those with severe, moderate and no disability, EU-14, 1996

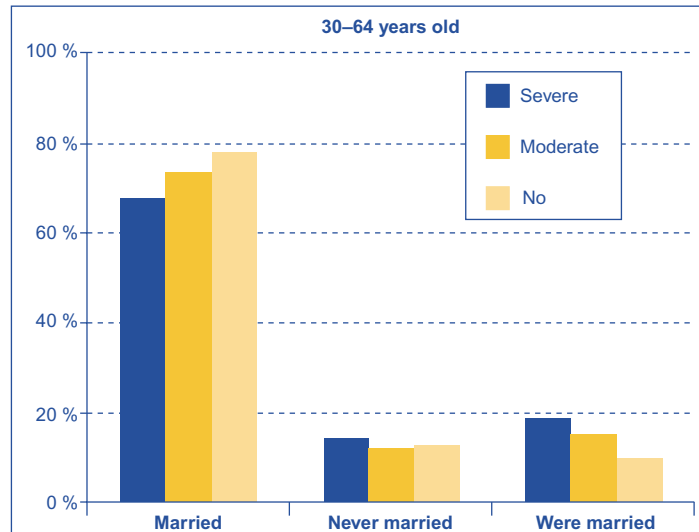
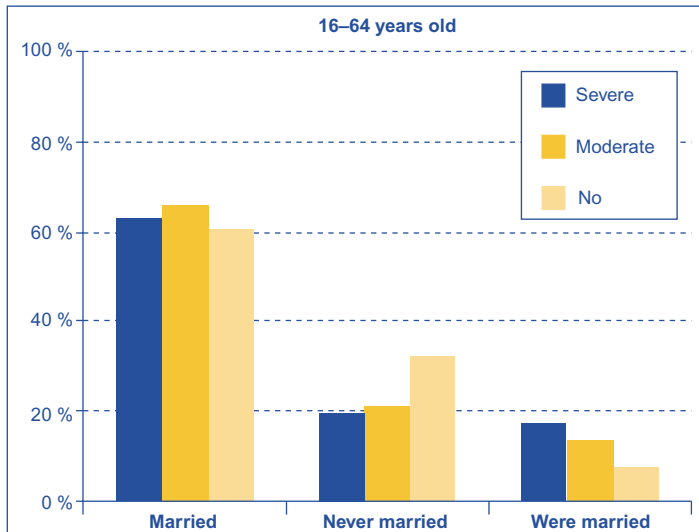


Chart 6. Disability and level of education

Among those who report a severe disability, 58 % have not completed the second stage of secondary education, against 41 % of those who report no disability. Persons with a severe disability are little more than half as likely as persons with no disability to have reached the third level of education (9 and 18 % respectively). There might be a selection effect when disability at a young age is a problem for entering or remaining in the educational system, but also, where disability occurs after school age, those with a lower level of education may be more likely to have a disability.

In general, the age effect is important in the average level of education of a population: the younger generation has benefited from social policies aimed at keeping children at school and from longer educational cycles in recent decades. The average level of education of the overall population has risen from generation to generation. The standardisation on a common age structure (the age structure of the ECHP) leads to a decrease in the probability of reaching the third level of education for those reporting a severe disability. This highlights the smaller likelihood that people reporting a disability will reach the third level of education in young ages compared with persons not reporting a disability; such a difference at young ages may show the effect of disability as a barrier to educational attainment.

Distribution of the population with severe, moderate and no disability according to level of education (highest level completed), ages 16–64, EU-14, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Total
Still at school	2.6 %	2.7 %	3.6 %	3.5 %
Third level	9.3 %	14.2 %	17.7 %	17.0 %
Second level	30.5 %	35.1 %	37.8 %	37.2 %
Less than second level	57.6 %	48.0 %	40.8 %	42.3 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Definition of the educational classes:

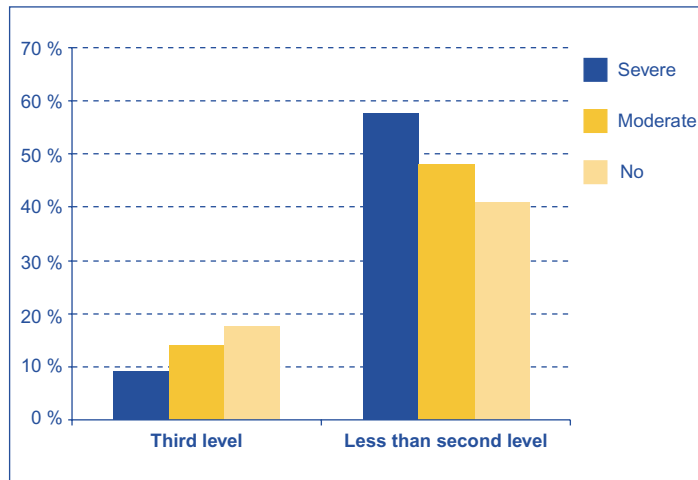
Still at school: still at school or not applicable

Third level: recognised third level of education (ISCED 5–7)

Second level: second stage of secondary education (ISCED 3)

Less than second level: less than second stage of secondary education (ISCED 0–2).

Probability of having achieved the third level of education or less than the second level of education as highest level for the population with severe, moderate and no disability, ages 16–64, EU-14, 1996



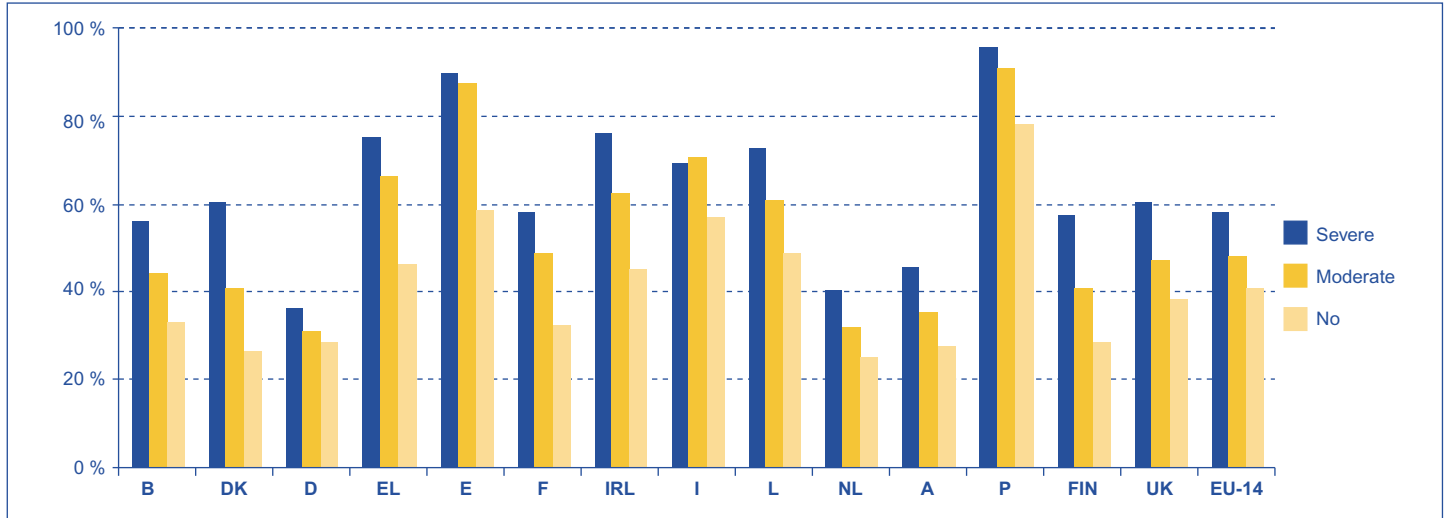
The direction of this difference is the same in all EU countries, although its magnitude varies considerably. A part of the variation between countries can probably be explained by differences in educational systems, and in the resulting difficulty of using a harmonised classification. For instance, the category 'Still at school or not applicable' was not applied in the same way in Portugal, Finland and the United Kingdom as it was in France and Italy. The resulting distribution will therefore not have the same significance in these countries. However, these figures can be compared within each country for those reporting a disability and those not reporting a disability. For instance, regarding the chance of not reaching the second level of education, in Greece and Spain, the figures show a gap of more than 20 points between those with a moderate disability and those with no disability; the gap between persons with a severe disability and persons with a moderate disability is much smaller. In the other countries, the gradient is smoother between those with severe, moderate and no disability; it is almost non-existent in Germany, where the proportion of the population in this educational category is small. The outcomes for the proportion of those reaching the third level of education tend to mirror the outcomes for the second level. Finland displays the largest difference between groups with severe and moderate disabilities in terms of their likelihood of achieving the third level of education. One explanation may be that the notion of disability is interpreted differently across Europe. Large differences such as in Finland could mean that the notion of 'moderate disability' is less selective there compared to the notion of 'severe disability'. In Spain, by contrast, the population reporting moderate disability is similar to the population reporting severe disability, as regards the probability of being in the third level or in less than the second level of education.

Distribution of the population with severe, moderate and no disability according to education levels (highest level completed) by country, ages 16–64, 1996

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
Severe disability															
At school or n/a(*)	3 %	2 %	1 %	1 %	—	5 %	1 %	16 %	4 %	—	1 %	—	—	—	3 %
Third level	14 %	14 %	14 %	8 %	5 %	8 %	3 %	2 %	11 %	10 %	2 %	1 %	7 %	11 %	9 %
Second level	28 %	24 %	49 %	15 %	5 %	29 %	20 %	12 %	12 %	50 %	51 %	4 %	35 %	29 %	30 %
Less than second level	56 %	60 %	36 %	75 %	90 %	58 %	76 %	69 %	73 %	40 %	46 %	96 %	57 %	60 %	58 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
Moderate disability															
At school or n/a(*)	8 %	2 %	1 %	0 %	—	8 %	3 %	9 %	4 %	2 %	—	—	—	—	3 %
Third level	25 %	25 %	18 %	9 %	5 %	14 %	6 %	3 %	10 %	13 %	6 %	2 %	22 %	18 %	14 %
Second level	23 %	32 %	50 %	25 %	8 %	30 %	30 %	17 %	25 %	53 %	59 %	7 %	37 %	35 %	35 %
Less than second level	44 %	41 %	31 %	66 %	87 %	49 %	62 %	71 %	61 %	32 %	35 %	91 %	41 %	47 %	48 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
No disability															
At school or n/a(*)	14 %	3 %	2 %	3 %	—	13 %	8 %	2 %	7 %	3 %	1 %	1 %	—	0 %	4 %
Third level	25 %	32 %	20 %	20 %	18 %	20 %	13 %	7 %	16 %	18 %	7 %	6 %	31 %	25 %	18 %
Second level	27 %	39 %	50 %	31 %	24 %	34 %	34 %	35 %	28 %	54 %	65 %	15 %	41 %	37 %	38 %
Less than second level	33 %	27 %	28 %	46 %	58 %	32 %	45 %	57 %	49 %	25 %	28 %	78 %	28 %	38 %	41 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

(*) Still at school or not applicable.

Probability of having reached less than second level of education (highest level completed) for those with severe, moderate and no disability, in EU-14 countries, ages 16–64, 1996



Probability of having reached third level of education (highest level completed) for those with severe, moderate and no disability, in EU-14 countries, ages 16–64, 1996

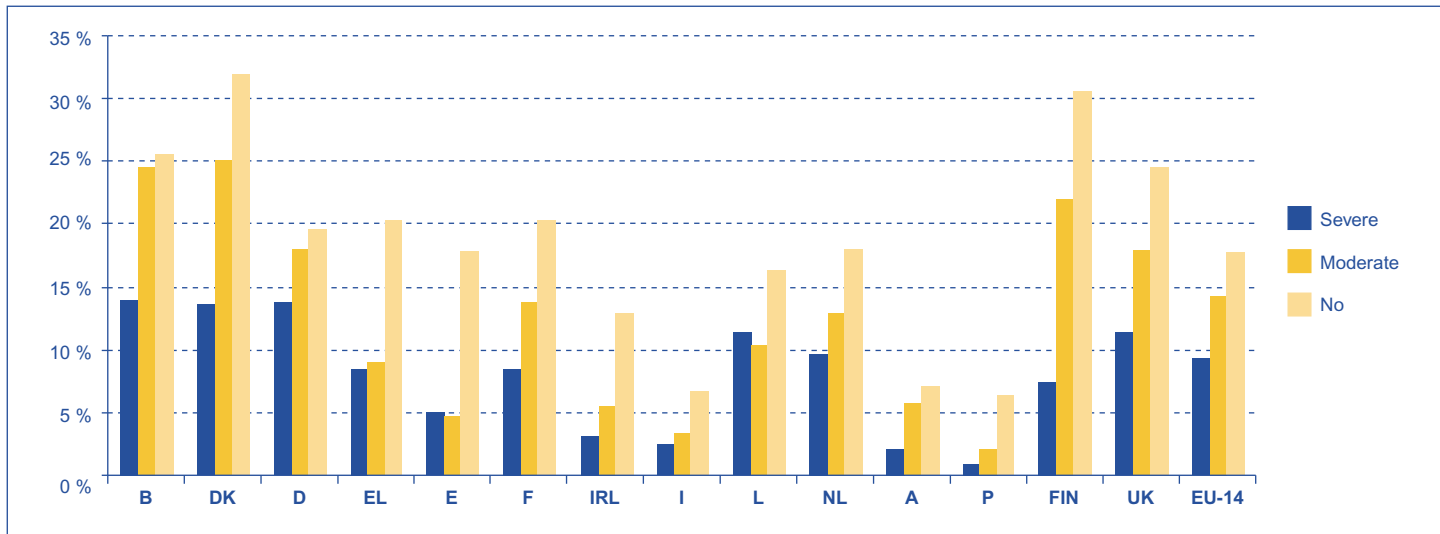


Chart 7. Disability and activity status

At the level of the EU-14 countries, in the age range from 16 to 64 years, 62 % of those reporting no disability, 46 % of those reporting a moderate disability and 24 % of those reporting a severe disability are in work. Almost 70 % of those reporting a severe disability and somewhat less than half of those reporting a moderate disability are inactive; among those reporting no disability, 30 % are inactive. In these three population groups, the remaining 8 % is unemployed. It should be noted that the 'raw' activity status variable (respondent's own answers to the activity question) is used here.

If the analysis is limited to a more restricted age group (25 to 59 years), excluding the youngest and oldest groups, most of whom are inactive, the proportion of those working is higher in all population groups, but much higher in those reporting no disability, as illustrated in the graphs below. Among those with no disability in this age range, 72 % are working and 22 % are inactive. Among those reporting a moderate disability, more than half are in work and 35 % are inactive. Of those reporting severe disability, fewer than 30 % are in work and 61 % are inactive. There is also a difference in terms of unemployment: 7 % of persons with no disability are unemployed, compared with 10 % of those with a severe disability. Thus, when focusing on the most common activity period of life, the proportion of inactive persons is nearly three times higher among those with a severe disability than among those with no disability.

Distribution of the population with severe, moderate and no disability according to activity status, age groups 16–64 and 25–59, EU-14, 1996

	16–64			25–59		
	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Working	24 %	46 %	62 %	29 %	56 %	72 %
Unemployed	8 %	8 %	8 %	10 %	9 %	7 %
Inactive	68 %	46 %	30 %	61 %	35 %	22 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Distribution of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability according to activity status, ages 25–59, EU-14, 1996

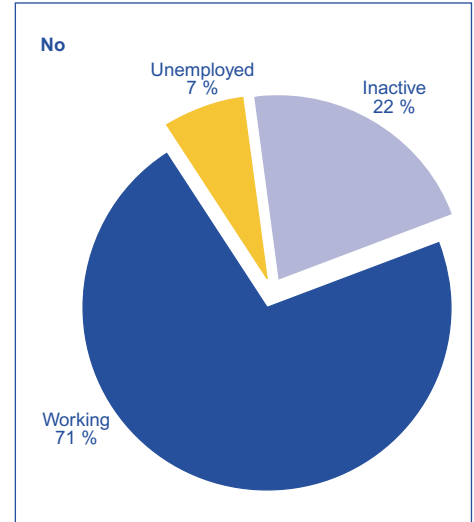
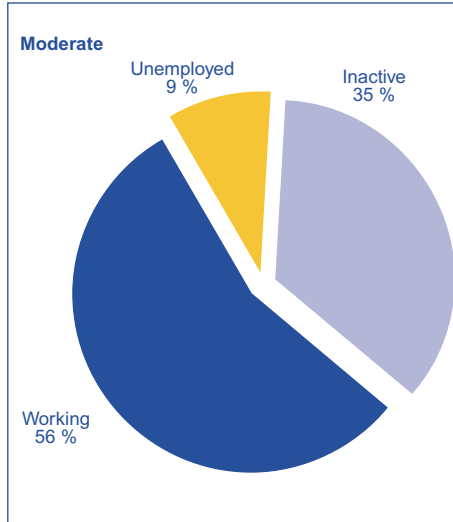
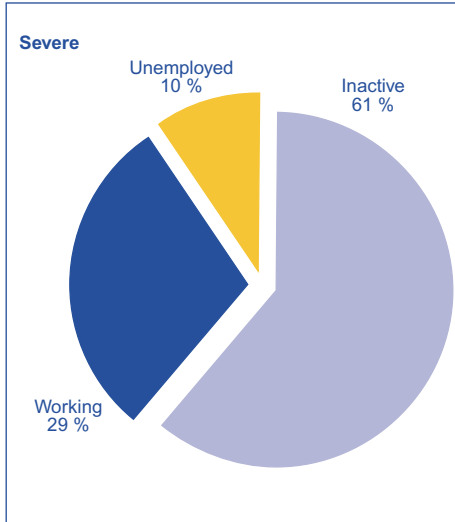
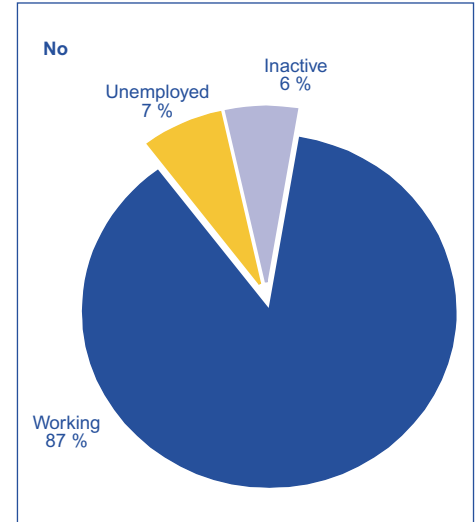
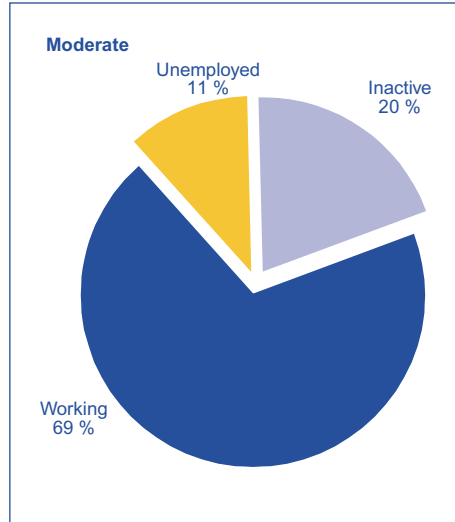
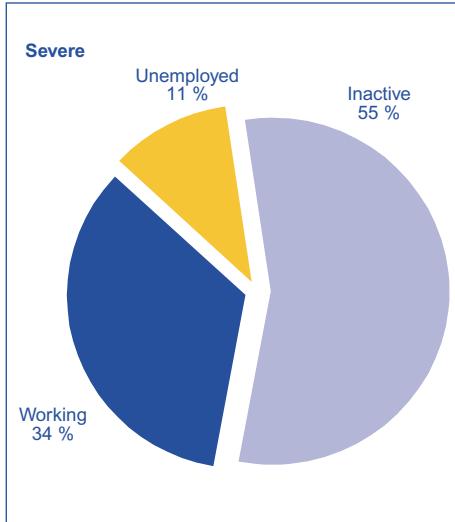


Chart 8. Activity status by sex and country

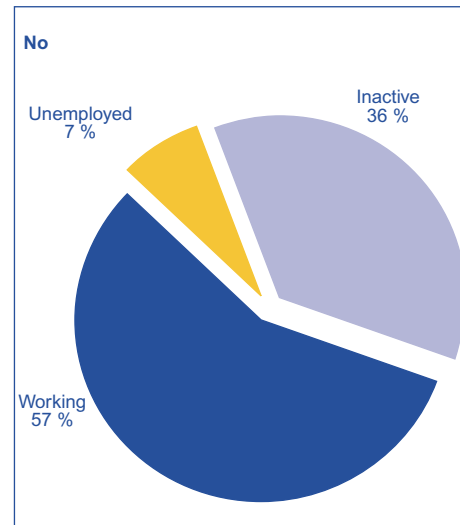
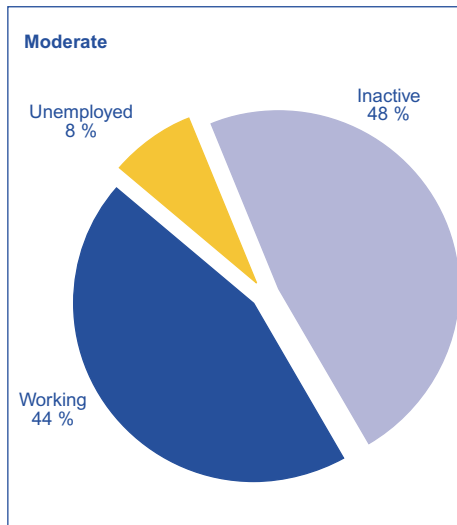
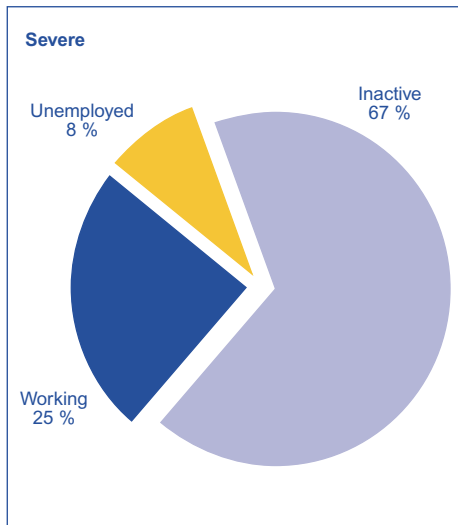
The figures again highlight the differences between the population groups with and without a disability, and the differences between men and women. The graphs show the large proportion of women who are inactive, irrespective of their disability status. Due to these differences, the chance of being in work varies according to disability status and sex. In the 16–64 age group, 75 % of men with no disability work, as opposed to just 24 % of those with a severe disability. Although employment rates are much lower, the difference also exists for women (49 %, as against 20.5 %). In other words, in the 16–64 age group, for instance, men with a moderate disability are more than twice as likely to be in work, and men with no disability 2.7 times as likely as men reporting a severe disability. For women, the relative probabilities are not as high as for men, but are still high: those with a moderate disability are 1.8 times as likely, and those with no disability 2.4 times as likely to be in work as women with a severe disability.

Distribution of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability according to activity status, by sex, ages 25–59, EU-14, 1996

Men



Distribution of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability according to activity status, by sex, ages 25–59, EU-14, 1996
Women



Percentage of being in work among the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, by sex, age groups 16–64 and 25–59, EU-14, 1996

	Age group 16–64			Age group 25–59		
	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Both sexes	24.3 %	46.2 %	61.9 %	29.4 %	55.5 %	71.5 %
Men	27.9 %	57.6 %	75.1 %	34.0 %	69.0 %	87.1 %
Women	20.5 %	36.7 %	49.3 %	24.8 %	44.4 %	56.8 %

Relative probability of being in work for those with moderate or no disability compared to those with a severe disability (base 1), by sex, age groups 16–64 and 25–59, EU-14, 1996

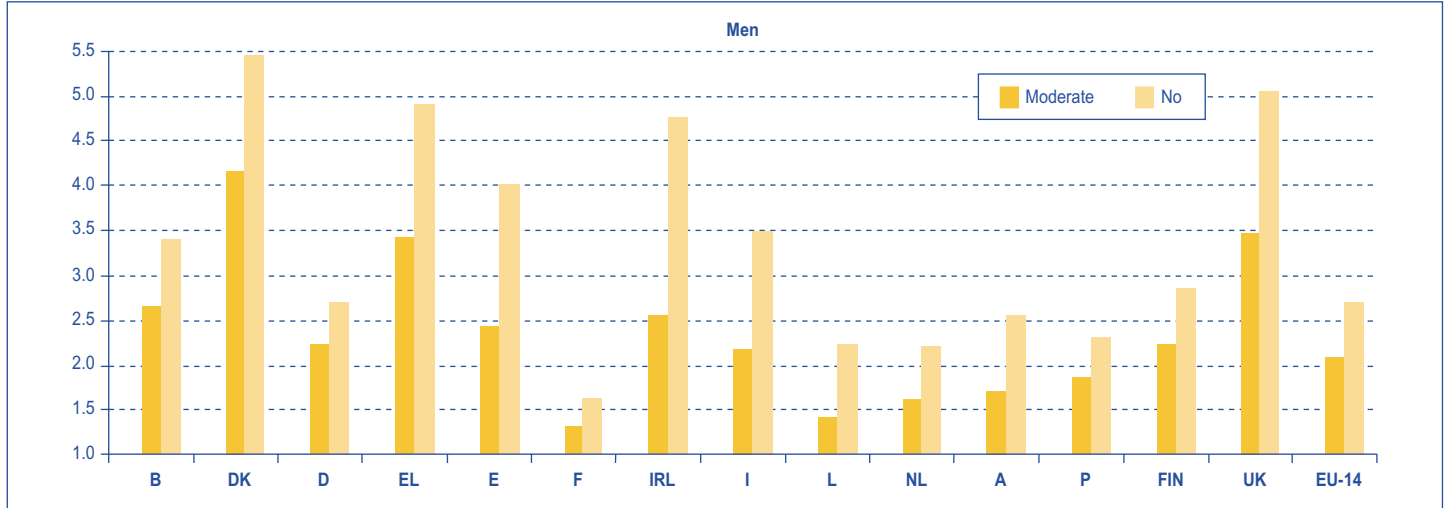
	Age group 16–64			Age group 25–59		
	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Both sexes	1.00	1.90	2.55	1.00	1.89	2.43
Men	1.00	2.06	2.69	1.00	2.03	2.56
Women	1.00	1.79	2.40	1.00	1.79	2.29

The figures on the relative likelihood of being in work vary between countries. France has the lowest level of differentiation in terms of the likelihood of being in work, between people with and without a disability: men with no disability are nearly twice as likely to be in work as those with a severe disability. In some other countries, such as Denmark or the United Kingdom, the differentiation is greater: men without a disability are five times as likely to be in work as men with a severe disability. Differences between countries are less marked for women than for men. These differences between countries may reflect the degree of social integration of those with a disability in the labour force. However, they may also reflect differences in the groups classified as having/not having a disability, due to different interpretations of the ECHP question.

Percentage of being in work among the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, by country and sex, age 16–64, 1996

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
Both sexes															
Severe	18.3 %	17.1 %	26.4 %	16.7 %	13.1 %	36.8 %	13.7 %	15.3 %	28.7 %	26.1 %	28.4 %	30.7 %	21.6 %	17.4 %	24.3 %
Moderate	36.9 %	52.0 %	53.8 %	36.3 %	28.7 %	50.5 %	27.1 %	29.6 %	40.2 %	44.0 %	48.6 %	52.9 %	49.8 %	46.6 %	46.2 %
No	56.3 %	76.3 %	69.3 %	57.8 %	49.5 %	64.0 %	57.2 %	49.0 %	62.4 %	62.4 %	69.6 %	69.2 %	61.1 %	71.6 %	61.9 %
Men															
Severe	20.4 %	15.0 %	30.3 %	15.9 %	16.6 %	45.4 %	15.2 %	18.8 %	35.6 %	36.0 %	31.9 %	34.7 %	23.0 %	16.6 %	27.9 %
Moderate	54.2 %	62.3 %	67.3 %	54.2 %	40.2 %	59.0 %	38.7 %	40.5 %	49.5 %	57.1 %	54.5 %	64.1 %	50.8 %	57.7 %	57.6 %
No	69.2 %	81.7 %	81.4 %	77.6 %	66.6 %	73.2 %	72.2 %	65.4 %	78.6 %	78.8 %	81.5 %	80.0 %	65.5 %	84.3 %	75.1 %
Women															
Severe	15.9 %	19.2 %	21.5 %	17.5 %	9.0 %	28.5 %	11.8 %	12.2 %	20.8 %	19.5 %	25.3 %	27.7 %	19.9 %	18.2 %	20.5 %
Moderate	22.6 %	45.0 %	41.4 %	23.8 %	18.9 %	43.1 %	16.6 %	19.4 %	29.5 %	33.8 %	41.7 %	44.3 %	49.1 %	39.1 %	36.7 %
No	44.5 %	70.5 %	57.7 %	39.2 %	32.7 %	55.1 %	42.4 %	33.0 %	46.4 %	45.5 %	58.1 %	59.0 %	56.6 %	60.7 %	49.3 %

Relative probability of being in work for those with moderate or with no disability compared to those with severe disability (base 1),
by country and sex, age 16–64, 1996



Relative probability of being in work for those with moderate or with no disability compared to those with severe disability (base 1),
by country and sex, age 16–64, 1996

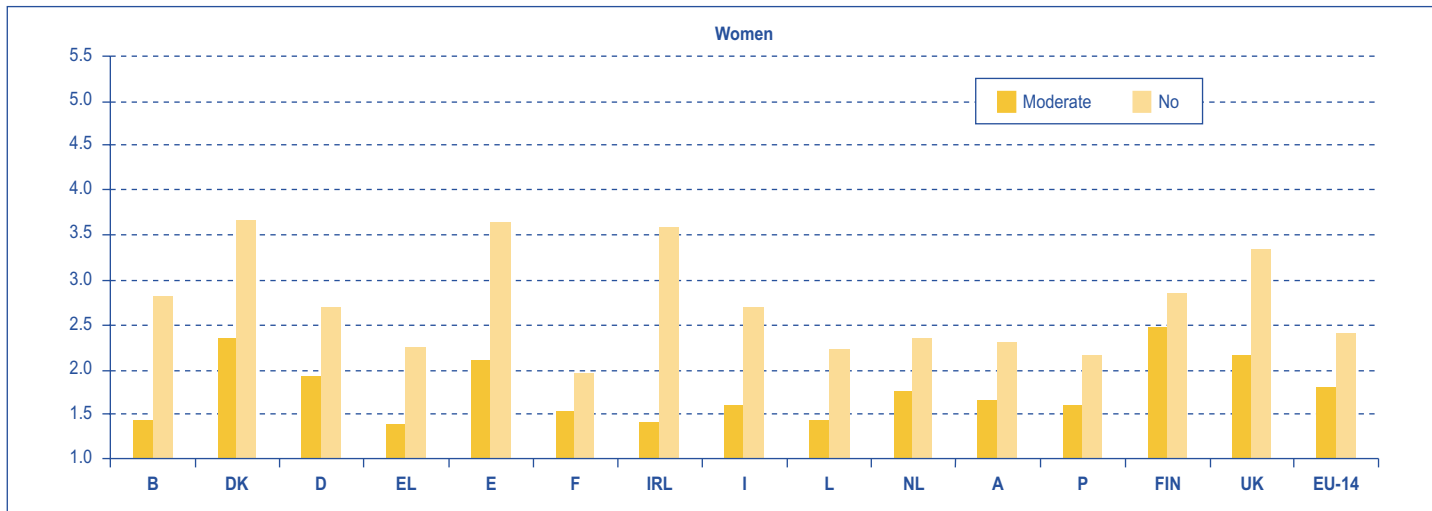


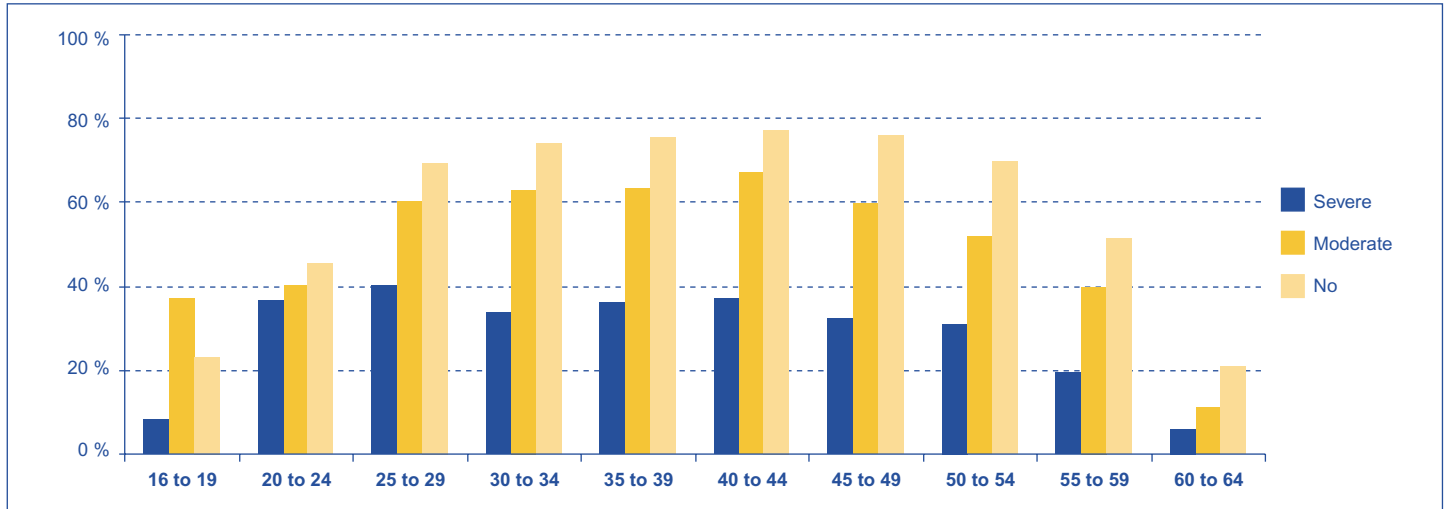
Chart 9. Activity status by age

In every age group except for the first (which mainly comprises persons still in education), there is a higher probability of persons reporting no disability being in work and a lesser likelihood of their being inactive. The gap for inactivity gets wider up to middle age and narrows in the older age groups. In terms of unemployment, the gradient formed by the three levels of disability is less marked, but those reporting no disability generally have a lower level of unemployment.

Distribution of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability according to activity status, by age group, EU-14, 1996

	16 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 to 39	40 to 44	45 to 49	50 to 54	55 to 59	60 to 64	16 to 64	25 to 59
Severe disability												
Working	8.1 %	36.5 %	40.2 %	33.6 %	36.1 %	37.1 %	32.6 %	30.8 %	19.4 %	5.8 %	24.3 %	29.0 %
Unemployed	10.6 %	20.2 %	20.9 %	17.0 %	9.8 %	8.1 %	10.9 %	8.6 %	6.5 %	1.0 %	8.1 %	10.0 %
Inactive	81.3 %	43.2 %	38.8 %	49.4 %	54.1 %	54.8 %	56.6 %	60.6 %	74.1 %	93.1 %	67.6 %	61.0 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
Moderate disability												
Working	36.9 %	40.3 %	60.2 %	62.9 %	63.5 %	67.2 %	59.5 %	51.7 %	39.7 %	11.2 %	46.2 %	56.0 %
Unemployed	11.2 %	12.8 %	11.4 %	8.7 %	11.6 %	8.0 %	7.8 %	9.2 %	9.5 %	1.3 %	8.2 %	9.0 %
Inactive	52.0 %	46.9 %	28.5 %	28.4 %	24.9 %	24.8 %	32.6 %	39.1 %	50.8 %	87.5 %	45.6 %	35.0 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %
No disability												
Working	23.1 %	45.3 %	69.2 %	74.0 %	75.3 %	77.5 %	75.9 %	70.1 %	51.5 %	21.0 %	61.9 %	72.0 %
Unemployed	8.5 %	14.7 %	10.9 %	7.7 %	6.2 %	5.5 %	5.4 %	4.8 %	6.2 %	2.0 %	7.7 %	7.0 %
Inactive	68.4 %	39.9 %	19.8 %	18.3 %	18.4 %	17.0 %	18.7 %	25.1 %	42.3 %	77.1 %	30.3 %	22.0 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Percentage being in work of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, by age, EU-14, 1996



Percentage being inactive of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, by age, EU-14, 1996

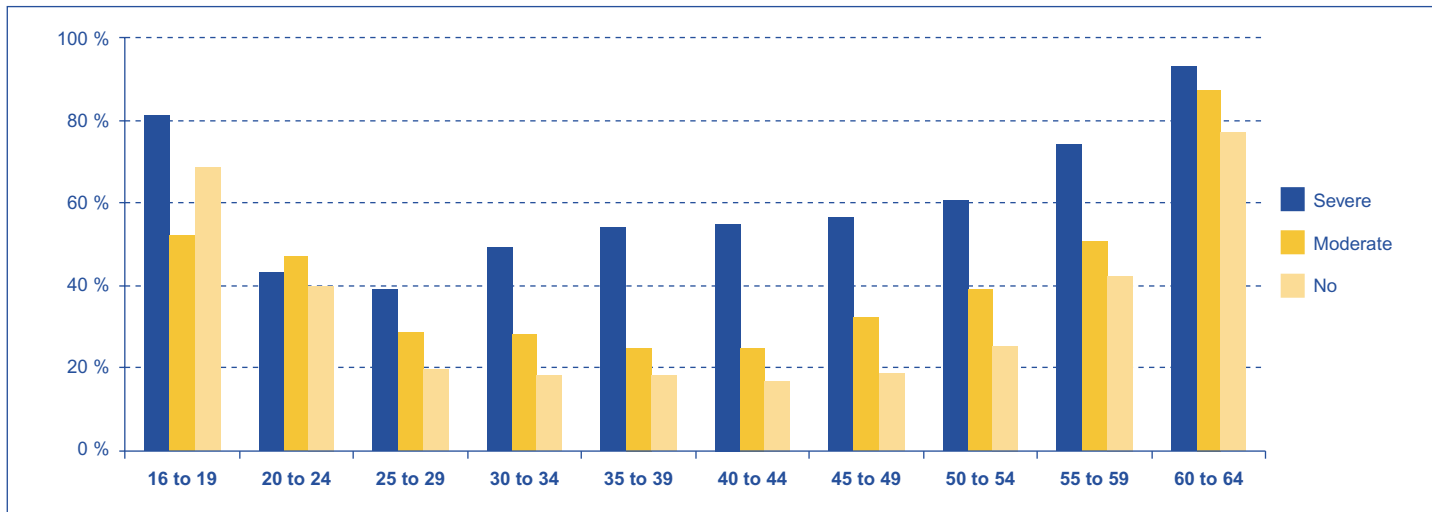


Chart 10. Main reasons for not seeking work

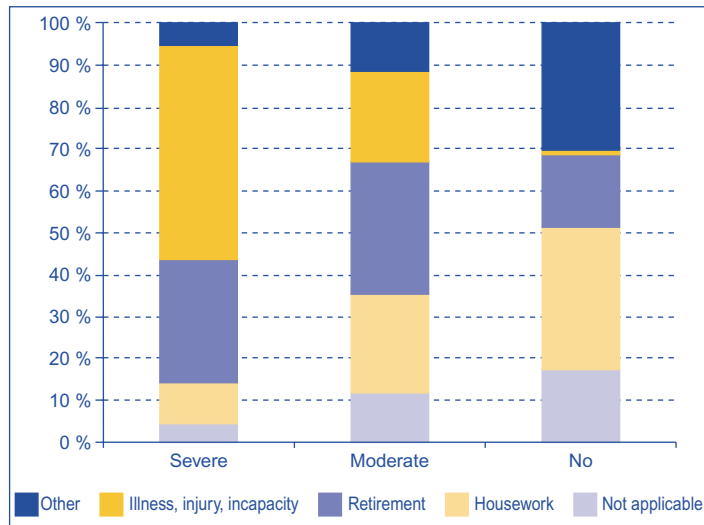
Among the group which is inactive and reports a severe disability, health problems (illness, injury, incapacity) are the main reason for not seeking work. Retirement is also a more important reason than among the two other groups. Among the reasons included under 'Other', education must be an important item in the population without a disability, as 20 % of this group is below the age of 25.

Standardisation on the age structure of the ECHP (ages 16 to 64) considerably reduces the differences observed for retirement as a reason for not working between people with and without a disability, but there is still a difference. After standardisation, for those reporting a moderate disability, housework becomes the main reason for not working followed by retirement. The standardisation increases the differences observed for illness and injury as a reason for not working.

However, this pattern is gender differentiated. Most inactive women who report no disability give housework as the main reason for not seeking work, followed by retirement. For women with a severe disability, 'illness, injury, incapacity' come first, followed by retirement, and then housework. Men reporting no disability most commonly cite other reasons (mostly another activity) for not seeking work, followed by retirement.

Main reasons for not seeking work for those inactive among the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, EU-14, age 16–64, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Not applicable	4 %	12 %	17 %
Housework	10 %	24 %	34 %
Retirement	29 %	31 %	17 %
Illness, injury, incapacity	51 %	22 %	1 %
Other	5 %	11 %	30 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %



Main reasons for not seeking work for those inactive among the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, by sex, EU-14, age 16–64, 1996

	Men			Women		
	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Not applicable	3.1 %	9.1 %	14.6 %	5.8 %	13.0 %	18.2 %
Housework	0.9 %	0.8 %	1.5 %	17.6 %	34.8 %	46.5 %
Retirement	33.9 %	48.6 %	33.5 %	25.2 %	23.1 %	11.1 %
Illness, injury, incapacity	57.5 %	31.0 %	1.9 %	45.8 %	17.3 %	0.9 %
Other	4.5 %	10.5 %	48.5 %	5.5 %	11.7 %	23.2 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Chart 11. Number of hours of work

Fewer people among those reporting a disability are in work, and among those who do work, a larger proportion works less than 30 hours a week compared to the population with no disability. Among men who report a severe disability and who are in work, 6.5 % work less than 30 hours per week, compared with 3 % of men who do not report a disability. Women who work less than 30 hours per week represent 37 % of those with a severe disability, and 23 % of those without any disability .

Percentage of persons who work less than 15 hours per week, between 15 and 30 hours per week, and more than 30 hours per week (when working) in the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, by sex, EU-14, age 16–64, 1996

	Both sexes			Men			Women		
	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Less than 15 hours	0.2 %	0.3 %	0.1 %	0.0 %	0.1 %	0.1 %	0.5 %	0.5 %	0.2 %
15–30 hours	19.2 %	14.6 %	11.1 %	6.5 %	3.8 %	2.9 %	37.0 %	28.8 %	23.1 %
More than 30 hours	80.6 %	85.1 %	88.8 %	93.5 %	96.1 %	97.0 %	62.6 %	70.6 %	76.8 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Percentage of those who work less than 30 hours per week (when working) in the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, by sex, EU-14, age 16–64, 1996

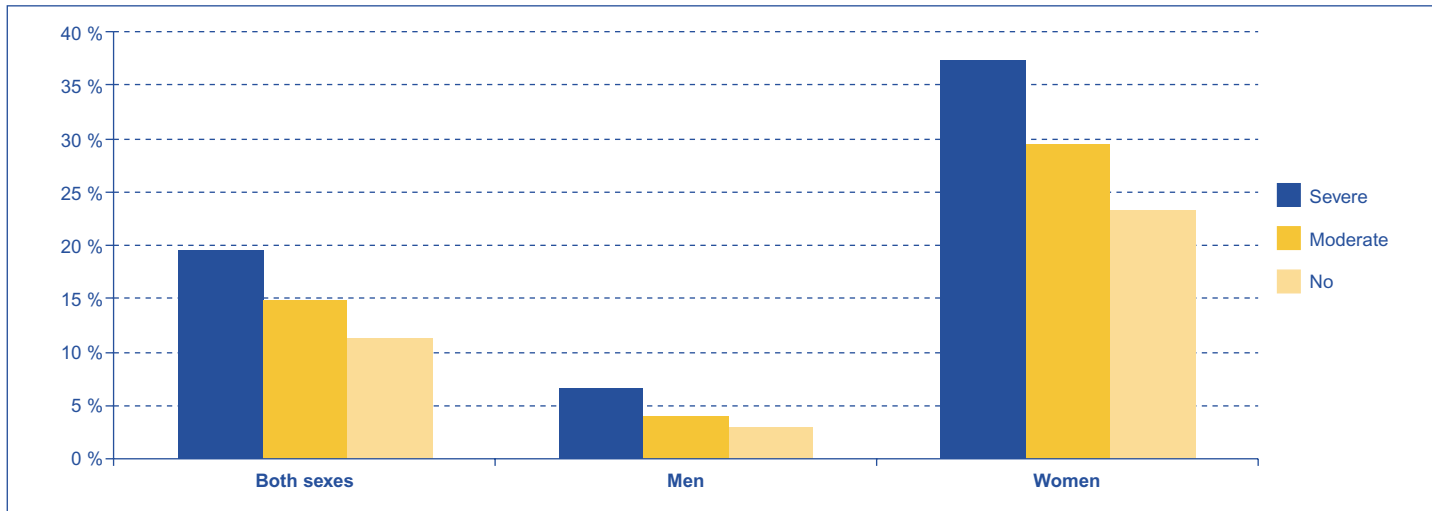


Chart 12. Main reasons for not working full-time

The reasons for not working full-time (less than 30 hours per week) differ according to disability status and sex. Housework is the main reason for not working full-time for women, while illness/disability or lack of opportunity are the main reasons for men. Education and training account for nearly 21 % of men with no disability who are in part-time work, 10–11 % of those reporting a moderate disability and zero of those with a severe disability. The age structure of the population groups, which is much younger for those with no disability, partly explains this difference, together with greater access to education and training for those with no disability.

Main reasons for not working full-time (less than 30 hours per week) among persons of working age, according to disability status, EU-14, 1996

	Both sexes			Men			Women		
	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Education/training	1.4 %	4.1 %	5.7 %	—	10.6 %	20.8 %	1.7 %	2.9 %	3.3 %
Housework	26.9 %	37.4 %	44.3 %	—	1.8 %	5.3 %	32.9 %	43.5 %	50.7 %
Illness/disability	33.4 %	17.3 %	1.0 %	67.7 %	34.7 %	1.8 %	25.7 %	14.3 %	0.8 %
Want to but cannot work full-time	12.8 %	16.6 %	19.8 %	17.0 %	26.5 %	32.8 %	11.8 %	14.9 %	17.7 %
Chose to work part-time	15.4 %	18.6 %	18.9 %	12.7 %	14.3 %	19.4 %	16.0 %	19.3 %	18.8 %
Other reason	10.2 %	6.2 %	10.4 %	2.6 %	12.1 %	19.9 %	11.9 %	5.2 %	8.8 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Main reasons for not working full-time (less than 30 hours per week) among persons of working age, according to disability status, EU-14, 1996

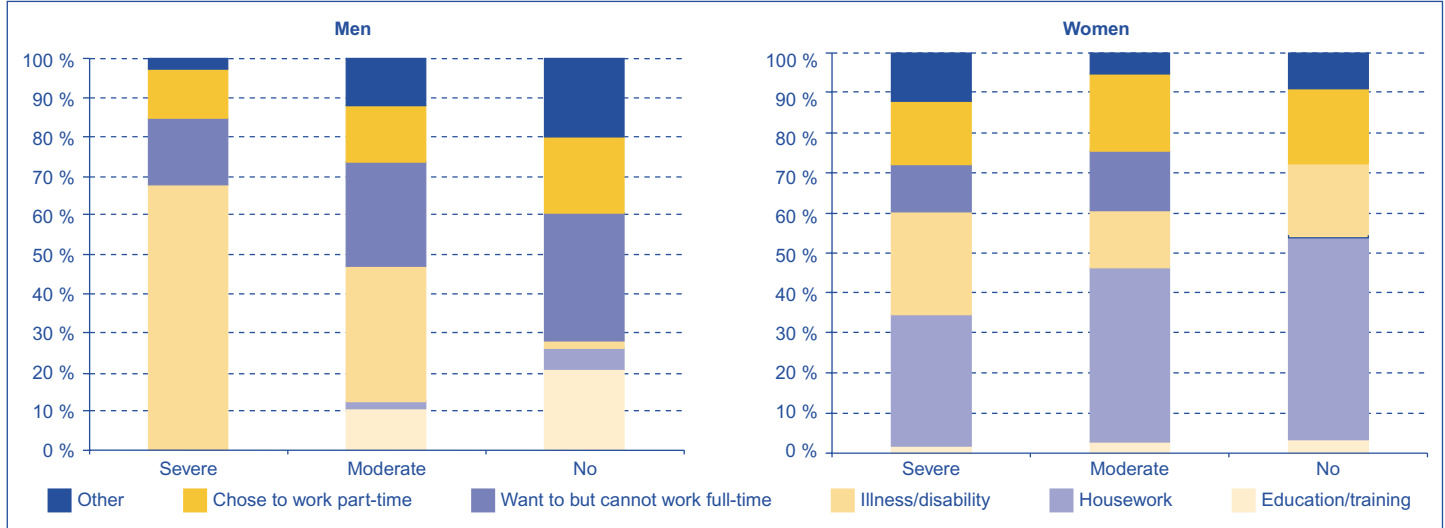


Chart 13. Occupational classes

Among persons who are in work, the proportion in the white-collar occupations is larger in the population with no disability than in the population reporting a severe or moderate disability. By contrast, the proportion of persons with a disability who have blue-collar occupations is higher than that of persons with no disability.

The higher risks to health and safety of blue-collar occupations may partly explain the higher percentage of people with a severe disability in these occupations. Also, the lower level of education in the population with a disability may be partly responsible for more limited access to the qualified professions.

In the area of occupations and differences in opportunity for those with and without disability, the age effect may also interfere: the population with a severe disability is older than the population with no disability. The probabilities of being in the various occupations are not the same in each age group: for instance, very young workers (16 to 20 years) are often the least educated and have unskilled occupations. However, the age effect on occupation is complex and combines the health selection effect and the cumulation of qualification and experience leading to upward mobility: upward professional mobility during working life is more common among persons in good health, and downward mobility more common among persons whose health has deteriorated. If we standardise on the age structure of the total working population, the differences between the population group with no disability and the group with disabilities in terms of being employed as 'officials and professionals' at one end of the social scale and machine 'operators and assemblers' at the other, become wider.

Distribution of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability according to occupational class, for those in work, EU-14, age 16–64, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals	13.5 %	20.2 %	21.5 %
Technicians	13.5 %	15.0 %	15.4 %
Clerks, service workers, shop and market workers	22.8 %	22.7 %	26.4 %
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	5.7 %	4.0 %	2.9 %
Craft and related trades workers	21.8 %	17.7 %	15.6 %
Plant and machine operators and assemblers, elementary occupations	21.6 %	18.3 %	15.6 %
Missing, armed forces, miscellaneous	1.1 %	2.1 %	2.6 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Distribution of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability according to occupational class, for those in work, EU-14, age 16–64, 1996

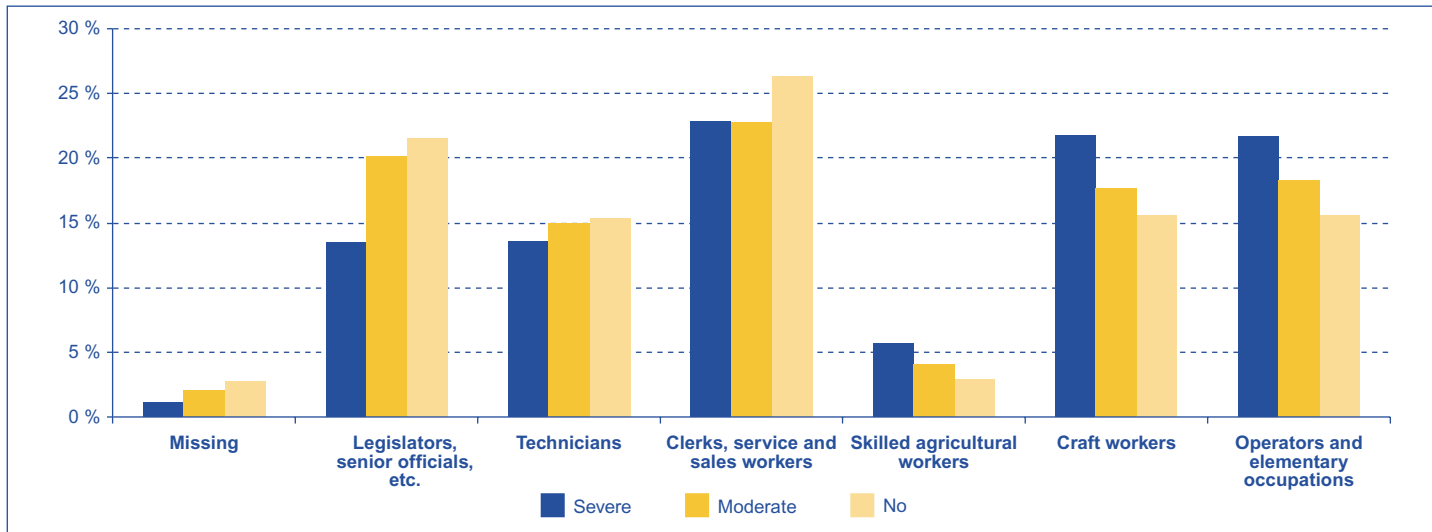


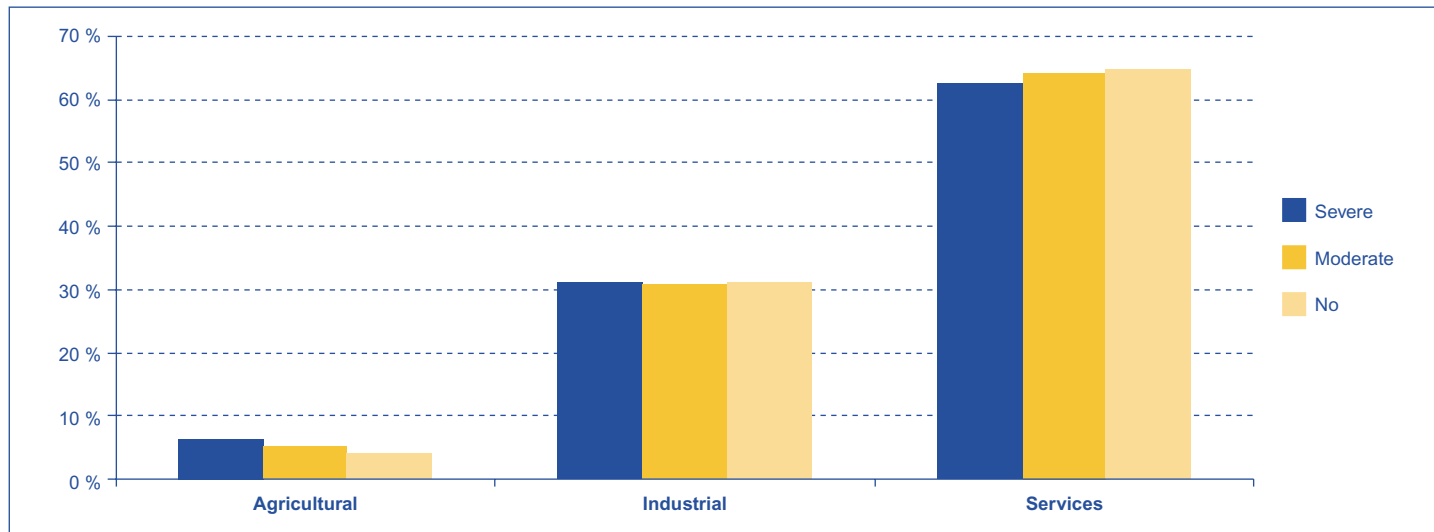
Chart 14. Sectors of activity

Among those working, most are in the services sector; the industrial sector comes second and agriculture third. It is in the last sector that the relative differences by disability status are the largest: 6 % of those with a severe disability and 4 % of those with no disability are in the agricultural sector.

Distribution of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability (and in work) according to sectors of activity, age 16–64, EU-14, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Total
Agricultural	6 %	5 %	4 %	4 %
Industrial	31 %	31 %	31 %	31 %
Services	63 %	64 %	65 %	65 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Distribution of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability (and in work) according to sectors of activity, age 16–64, EU-14, 1996



Part 3. SOURCES OF INCOME, BENEFITS

Chart 15. Sources of income

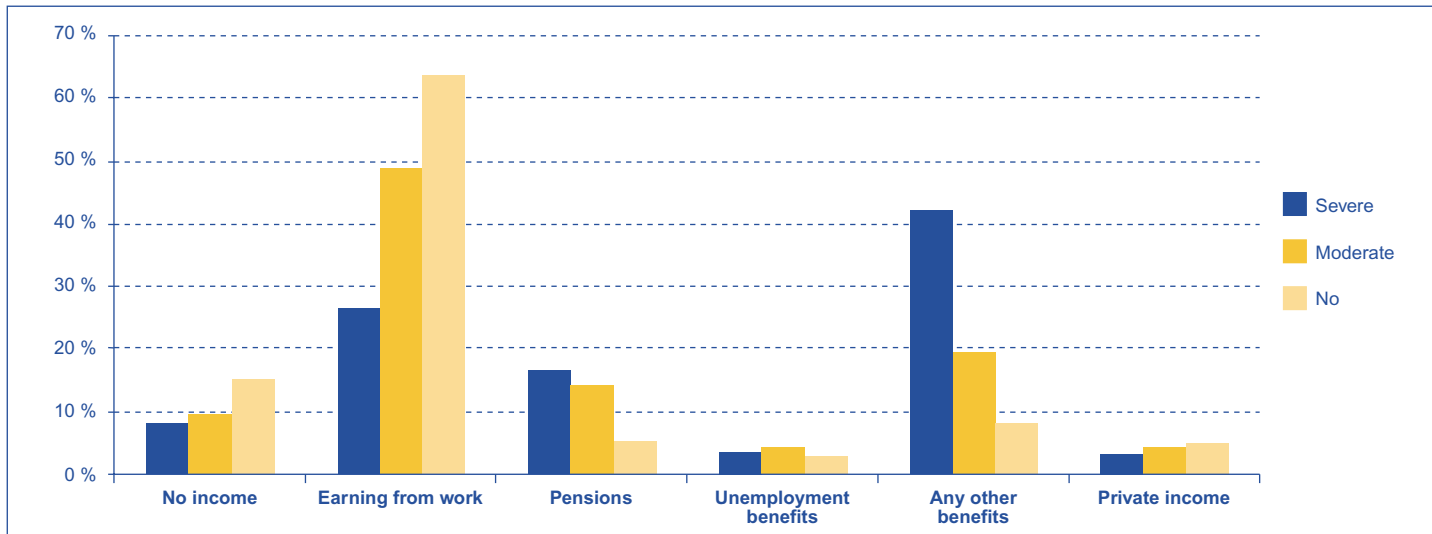
Pensions, unemployment/redundancy benefits and other benefits or grants are important sources of income for persons who report a disability. The probability of having an income is higher for those with a disability than for those without a disability, due to access to benefits. The probability of having an earned income is smaller for those with a disability than for those with no disability.

29 % of persons with a severe disability have an earned income or other private income, 59 % receive a pension or benefit (excluding unemployment benefit) and 8 % have no income. The corresponding figures for persons with no disability are 69, 13 and 15 % respectively. These differences are explained by several factors: firstly, the different age structures of these population groups have an impact on the proportion of persons receiving a pension, with more retired people having severe disabilities and more young people and students having none; secondly, differences in marital status have an influence on the need for a personal income; and thirdly, different levels of employment opportunity (including the opportunities for full-time employment), determine the likelihood of people having a sufficient earned income. And finally, people with a severe disability more often have access to benefits, which can reduce the need for an earned income.

Source of income of the population groups with severe, moderate and no disability at working age (16–64 years), EU-14, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
No income	8 %	10 %	15 %
Earned income	26 %	49 %	64 %
Pensions	17 %	14 %	5 %
Unemployment/redundancy benefits	3 %	4 %	3 %
Any other benefits or grants	42 %	19 %	8 %
Private income	3 %	4 %	5 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Source of income of the populations with severe, moderate and no disability at working age (16–64 years), EU-14, 1996



The country-specific figures show national differences in the probability of having an income or earned income, for people with and without a disability. Regarding the probability of having an income (on the individual level; not household level), the picture varies considerably from one country to another. In some countries (Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal), the range of available benefits is such that persons with a disability actually have a higher chance of having an income than persons with no disability; in some other countries (for instance, the Nordic countries or the United Kingdom) the two groups have the same chance of having an income. This equality of opportunity masks different overall probabilities of having an income. In Denmark, for example, the probability is close to 100 %, while it is about 85 % in the Netherlands. Unequal opportunity can also coincide with an overall low probability of having an income: in Italy, only 78 % of persons with a disability and 66 % of those with no disability state that they have an income. As said earlier, factors such as gender, family structures and different systems of social protection may have an influence on the extent to which a person needs an individual income.

Probability and relative chance (base 1 for no disability) of having an income and earned income, for the population with severe, moderate and no disability at working age (16–64 years), by country, 1996

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
Having an income															
Severe	95 %	99 %	95 %	82 %	82 %	94 %	95 %	77 %	90 %	85 %	94 %	86 %	99 %	97 %	92 %
Moderate	90 %	98 %	93 %	79 %	74 %	92 %	95 %	78 %	88 %	85 %	95 %	82 %	97 %	98 %	90 %
No	88 %	99 %	94 %	71 %	67 %	93 %	91 %	66 %	85 %	84 %	90 %	76 %	97 %	98 %	85 %
Severe	1.08	1.00	1.01	1.14	1.23	1.02	1.05	1.17	1.06	1.00	1.04	1.14	1.01	0.99	1.08
Moderate	1.02	0.99	0.99	1.11	1.11	0.99	1.04	1.19	1.03	1.00	1.05	1.08	1.00	1.00	1.07
No	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Having an earned income															
Severe	20 %	21 %	29 %	22 %	13 %	36 %	17 %	18 %	38 %	29 %	34 %	28 %	22 %	22 %	26 %
Moderate	36 %	53 %	58 %	37 %	27 %	56 %	31 %	29 %	43 %	44 %	50 %	47 %	51 %	50 %	49 %
No	57 %	79 %	71 %	53 %	52 %	68 %	59 %	49 %	64 %	66 %	68 %	64 %	66 %	76 %	64 %
Severe	0.36	0.27	0.41	0.41	0.25	0.53	0.29	0.36	0.60	0.45	0.50	0.45	0.32	0.29	0.41
Moderate	0.63	0.67	0.82	0.70	0.52	0.82	0.53	0.59	0.68	0.67	0.73	0.74	0.77	0.67	0.76
No	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Relative chance (base 1 for no disability) of having an income and earned income, for the population with severe and moderate disability at working age (16–64 years), by country, 1996

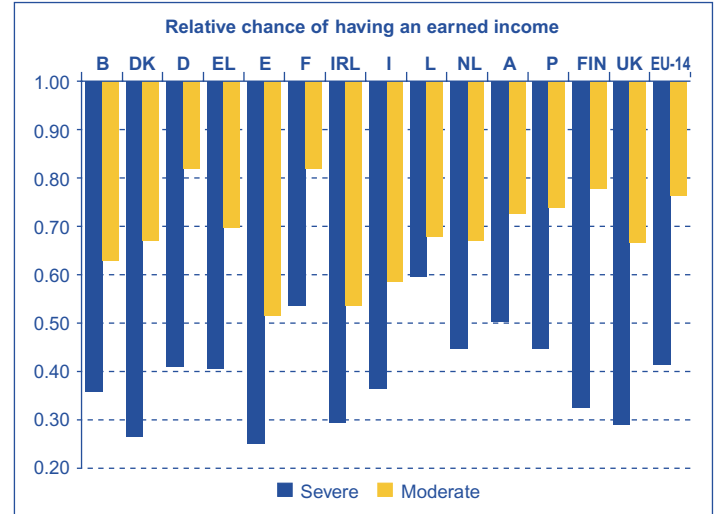
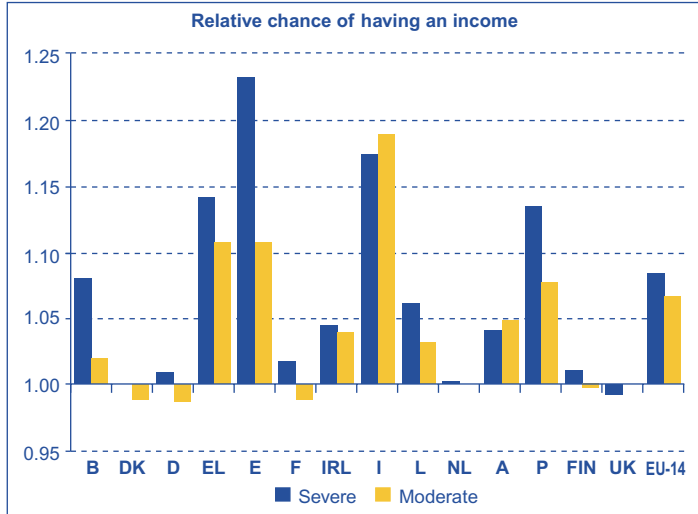


Chart 16. Sickness and disability benefits

As can be seen from the previous chart, sickness and disability benefits are important sources of income for those who report a disability. In EU-14, these benefits cover 48 % of the population reporting a severe disability. Among the remainder, as suggested before, some have earnings or private income, and this includes people who benefit from their spouse's income. However, due to the specific age structure of this population group, which includes a large proportion of old people, a substantial part of those not having such benefits might have retirement pensions. Furthermore, the question used in this study to approach disability, as specified earlier, does not refer to any administrative status: this may explain the fact that there is not a perfect correspondence between those reporting a severe disability and those having sickness and disability benefits. This also partly explains the differences that can be found between countries, in terms of the interpretation of the disability question and differences in pension and benefit systems.

Indeed, the proportion of persons on sickness and disability benefits in the European Union as a whole masks disparities between countries. In Belgium, Spain or Denmark, the sickness and disability benefits cover somewhat more than half the population reporting a severe disability. The maximum coverage is found in the United Kingdom where it reaches 65 % of this population group. The proportions in Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria and Portugal are in a range between 27 and 36 %.

Percentage of those having sickness or disability benefits among the population groups with severe, moderate and no disability at working age (16–64 years), EU-14 (confidential information in Germany), 1996

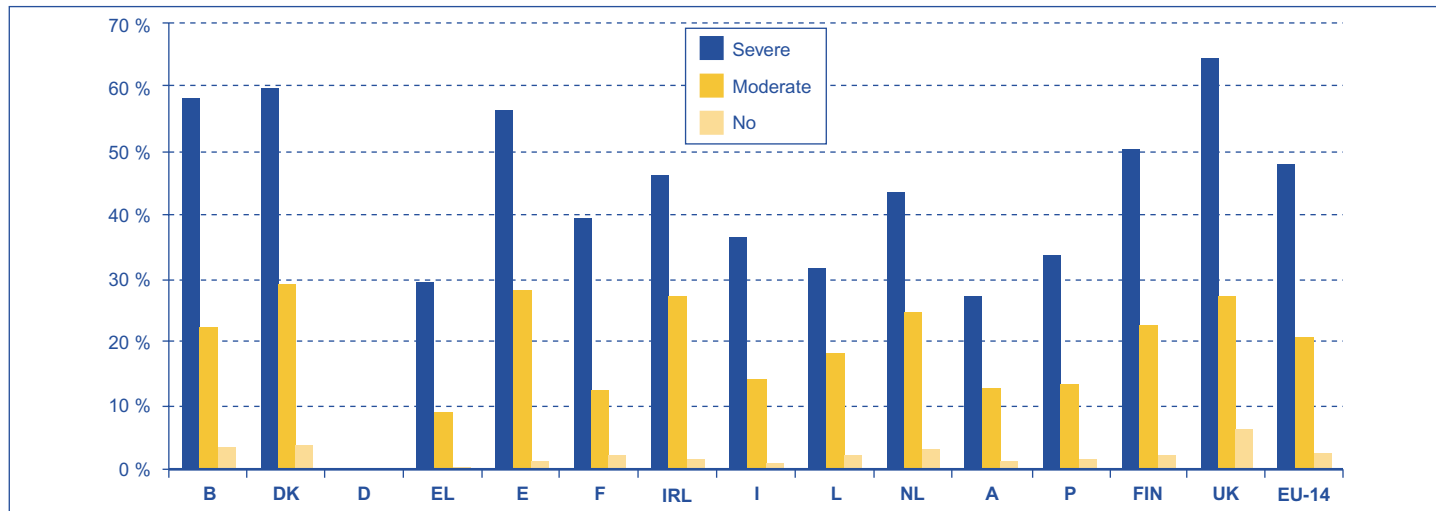
	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
No sickness/disability benefits	52 %	79 %	97 %
Sickness/disability benefits	48 %	21 %	3 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Percentage of those receiving sickness or disability benefits among the population groups with severe, moderate and no disability at working age (16–64 years), by country (confidential information in Germany), 1996

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
Severe	58 %	60 %	—	30 %	56 %	39 %	46 %	36 %	32 %	43 %	27 %	33 %	50 %	65 %	48 %
Moderate	22 %	29 %	—	9 %	28 %	12 %	27 %	14 %	18 %	25 %	13 %	14 %	23 %	27 %	21 %
No	3 %	4 %	—	0 %	1 %	2 %	2 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	1 %	2 %	2 %	6 %	3 %

— confidential data

Percentage of those receiving sickness or disability benefits among the population groups with severe, moderate and no disability at working age (16–64 years), by country (confidential information in Germany), 1996



Part 4. SATISFACTION, SOCIALISING, OWN PERCEPTION OF HEALTH

Chart 17. Satisfaction with work or main activity

Persons with a disability are less likely to be satisfied with their main activity. While 72 % of the population of working age who do not report a disability are satisfied with their main activity, the corresponding figure for persons reporting a moderate disability is 65 %, while for those reporting a severe disability, it is only 46 %. However, it should be noted that the ECHP question on satisfaction raised some difficulties (missing data, especially for the United Kingdom, and multiple response categories which have been roughly grouped into two categories for present purposes). Nevertheless, this indicator could be looked at in conjunction with information on the probability of working and working full-time as well as the reasons for not working.

Percentage of those (not) satisfied with their main activity in the population groups reporting severe, moderate and no disability, EU-14, age 16–64, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability
Not satisfied	54 %	35 %	28 %
Satisfied	46 %	65 %	72 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Percentage of those satisfied with their main activity among the population groups with severe, moderate and no disability, by country, age 16–64, 1996

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	UK	EU-14
Severe	49 %	64 %	50 %	27 %	42 %	57 %	49 %	20 %	63 %	62 %	62 %	36 %	67 %	36 %	46 %
Moderate	70 %	85 %	68 %	46 %	52 %	72 %	61 %	44 %	78 %	88 %	81 %	50 %	78 %	60 %	65 %
No	77 %	92 %	77 %	51 %	64 %	81 %	78 %	58 %	91 %	92 %	90 %	66 %	81 %	74 %	72 %

Percentage of those satisfied with their main activity among the population groups with severe, moderate and no disability, age 16–64, EU-14, 1996

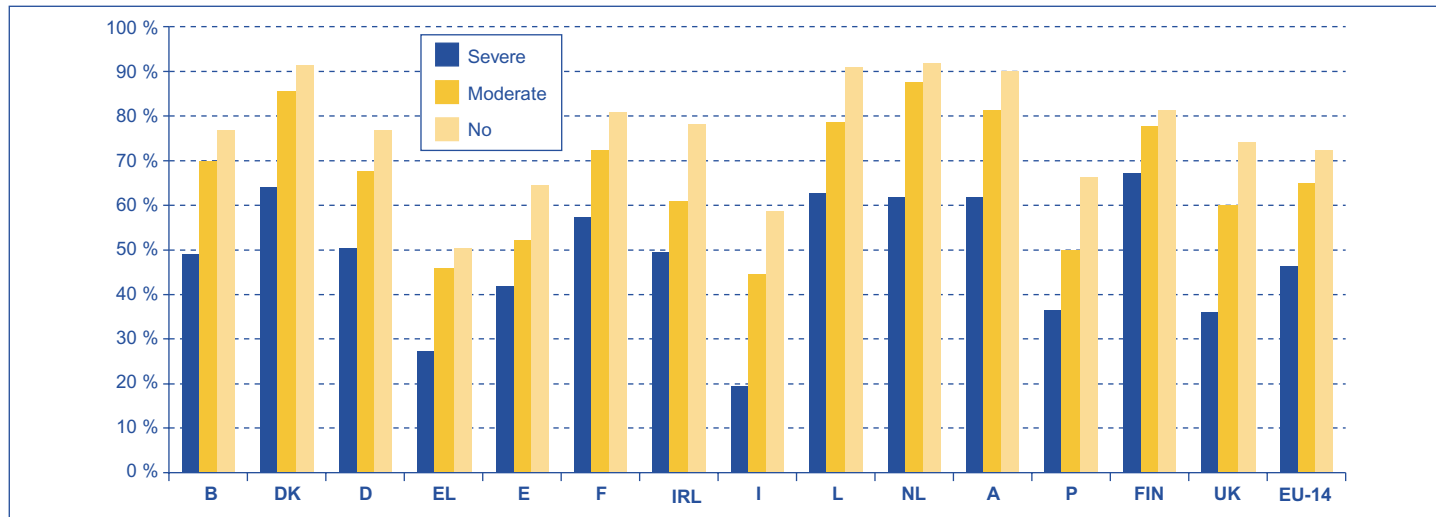


Chart 18. Social contact with friends and relatives

When looking at frequency of social interaction with friends and relatives, it appears that people with disabilities are more isolated than people with no disability: there are more than twice as many people who meet their relatives less than once or twice a month in the population reporting a severe disability than in the population reporting no disability.

When standardising on the age structure of the total population of the ECHP, the gap between those reporting a severe disability and those reporting no disability narrows, as expected: the pattern of increasing isolation with age partly induces the lower probability of meeting relatives for those with disability, but a gap remains.

Frequency of meeting friends or relatives for the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, ages 16–64, EU-14, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Total
At least once or twice a month	89 %	93 %	96 %	95 %
Less than once a month	9 %	6 %	4 %	4 %
Never	2 %	1 %	0 %	1 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Frequency of meeting friends or relatives for the population groups with severe, moderate and no disability, ages 16–64, EU-14, 1996

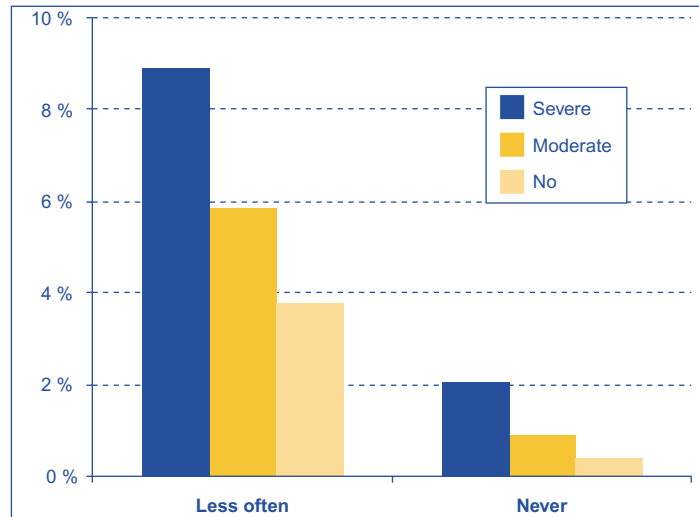
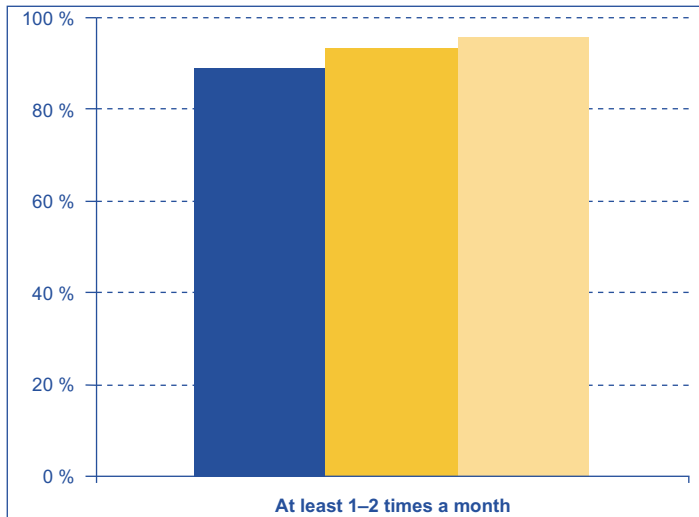


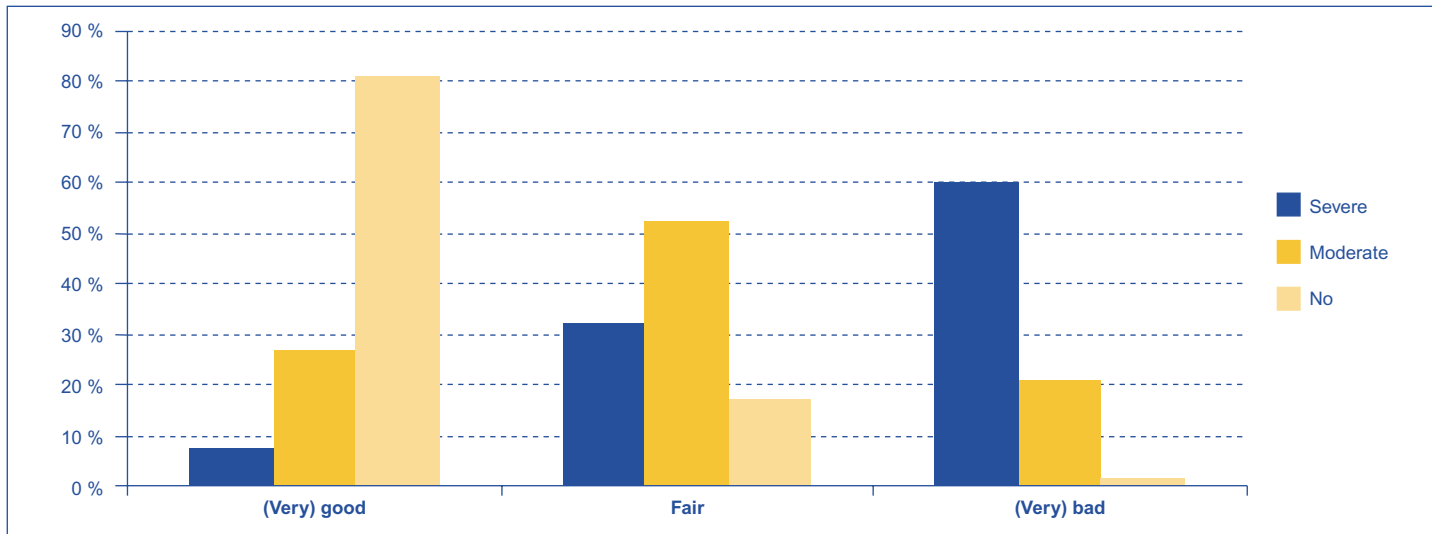
Chart 19. Own perception of health

The gradient of severity of disability follows the gradient of a person's own perception of his or her health: among persons reporting a severe disability, 60 % state that their health is bad or very bad. Of persons reporting a moderate disability, 52 % state that their state of health is 'fair', while 81 % of those with no disability state that their health is good or very good. These figures also show that 7 % of people with a severe disability feel that they are in good health. It is clear that the questions on a person's own perception of their state of health and on being hampered or not in daily life provide different but complementary information.

Own perception of health in the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, ages 16–64, EU-14, 1996

	Severe disability	Moderate disability	No disability	Total
(Very) good	7 %	27 %	81 %	73 %
Fair	33 %	52 %	17 %	21 %
(Very) bad	60 %	21 %	1 %	6 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Own perception of health in the populations with severe, moderate and no disability, ages 16–64, EU-14, 1996



Summary

Although caution is required when interpreting the results of the ECHP with a view to tackling the problems associated with disabilities, this study provides valuable insights into inequalities in the social participation of Europeans with health problems and disabilities.

In summary, compared to people who do not report a disability, those who do report a disability are less likely to be married and more likely to never have been married, have less chance of attaining the highest levels of education and are more likely not to complete their studies.

They also have a lower probability of working, and those who do work are less likely to work full-time. They are more often in blue-collar occupations and somewhat more often in the agricultural sector. Their source of income is less likely to be earnings and more likely to be a pension or benefit, for example, sickness and disability benefit, but they are less likely to have no personal income.

Finally, a much lower proportion of people reporting a disability report that they are in good health, a lower proportion is satisfied with their main activity and a higher proportion meets friends and relatives less than once a month.

Populations with a severe disability and with no disability, compared on several dimensions, age group 16–64 (30–64 for ‘never married’), EU-14, 1996

Key dimensions	Severe disability	No disability	Difference	Relative rate
Marital and educational status				
% Never married (30–64 years old)	14 %	12 %	2 %	(x 0.9)
% Reached the third level of education	9 %	18 %	9 %	(x 2.0)
Employment status				
% in working	24 %	62 %	38 %	(x 2.6)
% working more than 30 hours/week (as % of those in work)	81 %	89 %	8 %	(x 1.1)
% in the upper occupational class (legislators, managers, etc.)	14 %	22 %	8 %	(x 1.6)
% working in the agricultural sector	6 %	4 %	2 %	(x 0.7)
Source of income				
% earned income	26 %	64 %	38 %	(x 2.5)
% no income	8 %	15 %	7 %	(x 1.9)
Self-reported health, satisfaction and isolation				
% satisfied with work or main activity	46 %	72 %	26 %	(x 1.6)
% meeting friends and relatives, but less than once a month	9 %	4 %	5 %	(x 0.4)
% in good health	7 %	81 %	74 %	(x 11.6)

Relative rate: % in the population with no disability/% in the population with a severe disability.
Data from the European Community Household Panel, wave 3, 1996.

Appendix — Time series and international comparison of disability as measured by the ECHP question

The questions in waves 2 and 3 of the ECHP are screened by a question on illnesses or health problems. Only those reporting illnesses or health problems were asked about a potential disability due to those illnesses or health problems. In the first wave of the ECHP, all respondents were asked the latter question. The screening question limits the number of respondents and therefore, the number of those reporting a disability. Between the first wave and the two subsequent waves, the proportion of reported disabilities is artificially reduced by this change in the questionnaire. Therefore, a comparison of trends is not advisable.

Translation from the English reference questionnaire into the languages of other EU countries may be partly responsible for the variation from one country to the other in the proportions of reported disabilities. For instance, the wording of the question in French has a slightly different meaning to the reference question: 'Etes-vous gêné habituellement dans vos activités (professionnelles, domestiques ou de loisir) par une maladie chronique, un handicap?' Using words such as 'handicap' can affect respondents' interpretation of what is being asked.

Lastly, missing data may play a significant part in the differing replies to this question across the European Community. Although it is generally quite stable for the different countries taking part in the ECHP, one is struck by the large proportion of missing data for the United Kingdom. Without going into the impact of this difference in any detail here, crossing the missing data with other variables indicate that the missing respondents, who are young people (with half the group under the age of 35), are much closer to the population reporting no disability than to the population with a disability.

Thus, when interpreting the tables and graphs, one should bear problems of national comparability in mind, despite the use of a common survey at EU level.

Percentage of respondents and non-respondents to the question on being hampered for the three waves of the ECHP, and size of the sample in each country

	Missing			Not hampered			Severely hampered			Hampered to some extent			Size of the samples		
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
B	0 %	1 %	1 %	84 %	87 %	90 %	4 %	4 %	3 %	12 %	8 %	6 %	5 490	5 269	4 989
DK	0 %	0 %	0 %	84 %	84 %	85 %	3 %	4 %	3 %	13 %	12 %	12 %	4 778	4 547	4 126
D	0 %	2 %	2 %	80 %	82 %	82 %	5 %	4 %	4 %	15 %	12 %	12 %	8 000	7 526	7 278
EL	0 %	2 %	3 %	87 %	88 %	89 %	5 %	4 %	3 %	8 %	6 %	5 %	9 967	9 715	9 115
E	0 %	3 %	1 %	87 %	86 %	90 %	4 %	4 %	3 %	9 %	7 %	6 %	14 496	13 065	12 479
F	1 %	0 %	0 %	85 %	85 %	85 %	7 %	6 %	6 %	7 %	9 %	9 %	11 820	11 002	10 779
IRL	1 %	1 %	1 %	85 %	89 %	89 %	3 %	2 %	2 %	11 %	8 %	8 %	8 469	7 242	6 331
I	0 %	0 %	0 %	84 %	93 %	93 %	4 %	3 %	2 %	12 %	4 %	5 %	15 045	15 001	14 894
L	0 %	0 %	1 %	80 %	84 %	84 %	4 %	4 %	4 %	16 %	12 %	12 %	1 777	1 696	1 643
NL	0 %	0 %	0 %	79 %	83 %	83 %	5 %	5 %	5 %	16 %	12 %	12 %	7 896	7 693	7 787
A	—	0 %	0 %	—	84 %	87 %	—	4 %	3 %	—	12 %	10 %	—	6 149	6 001
P	0 %	1 %	1 %	78 %	84 %	83 %	6 %	6 %	6 %	16 %	9 %	10 %	9 126	9 248	9 134
FIN	—	—	0 %	—	—	78 %	—	—	6 %	—	—	16 %	—	—	7 201
UK	8 %	11 %	13 %	75 %	72 %	71 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	14 %	13 %	11 %	8 374	6 682	5 537
Total sample	1 %	2 %	1 %	82 %	85 %	86 %	5 %	4 %	4 %	12 %	9 %	9 %	105 238	104 835	107 294

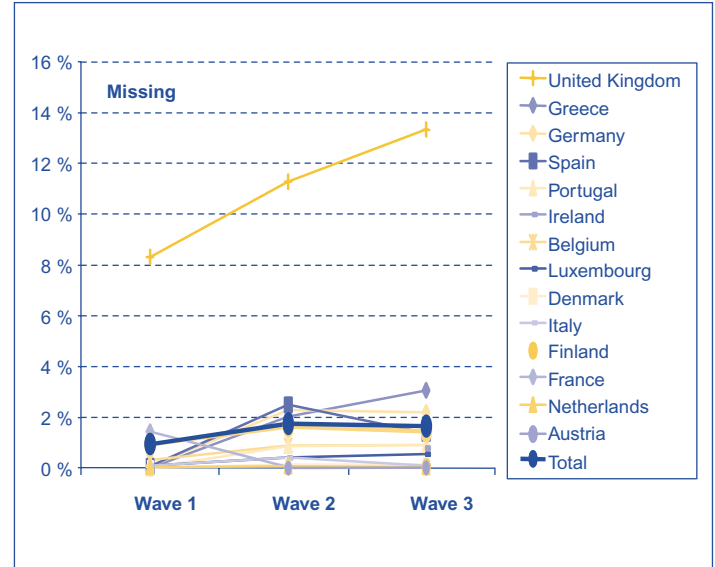
As illustrated by this table, the proportion of those reporting no disability (as defined in the introduction) increases between the first and later waves in almost all the European countries taking part in the ECHP, whereas the proportion of persons reporting a severe disability decreases (-20 %) by slightly less than the proportion of those reporting a moderate disability (-25 %).

The increase in the proportion of those who do not report a disability between the first and later waves is partly due to the screening question which operates a selection of individuals having health problems in waves 2 and 3; for most countries taking part in the successive waves of the ECHP, there is a high degree of stability from wave 2 to wave 3 in the proportions of those who are/are not hampered by health problems in their daily life. The greater decrease applying to those hampered to some extent compared to the decrease of those severely hampered indicates a greater impact of the screening question on the moderate levels of disability.

The United Kingdom is the only country displaying an atypical trend, with an increase in the proportion of those being hampered. For the United Kingdom, however, there is a high frequency of missing data relating to this question (13.3 % of the total sample, compared with no more than 3 % in the other countries). Moreover, the proportion of missing data for the United Kingdom increases between the first and later waves: this increase could be partly responsible for the particular trends observed there.

Numbers and percentages of missing data at wave 3, for the question on being hampered

Belgium	46	(0.92 %)
Denmark	6	(0.15 %)
Germany	161	(2.21 %)
Greece	279	(3.06 %)
Spain	174	(1.39 %)
France	5	(0.05 %)
Ireland	51	(0.81 %)
Italy	15	(0.10 %)
Luxembourg	9	(0.55 %)
Netherlands	3	(0.04 %)
Austria	2	(0.03 %)
Portugal	84	(0.92 %)
Finland	5	(0.07 %)
United Kingdom	739	(13.35 %)
Total	1 579	(1.47 %)



To facilitate interpretation of the results, the figures are based on the responses given, the missing responses being distributed proportionally. In some cases, standardisation for the age effect was performed; the main results are reported only in the text, all tables and graphs are 'unstandardised'.

The analysis was performed exclusively on the most recent results (wave 3, 1996). Comparability with wave 1 is not possible for this question, and the high degree of stability in prevalence between waves 2 and 3 limits the relevance of making crossed tables for these two waves.

The analysis covers the 14 EU Member States taking part in wave 3 (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland and the United Kingdom).