Statistics Poland

NEWS RELEASE

25.11.2026

Employed, unemployed and economically inactive persons (preliminary results of the Polish Labour Force Survey in the third quarter of 2026)[1]

59.0%

Activity rate of persons aged 15-89

In the third quarter of 2026, economically active persons accounted for 59.0% of the population aged 15-89. This share increased compared with the second quarter of 2026, while remaining unchanged compared with the third quarter of 2025.

Economic activity of the population aged 15-89 by the LFS

In the third quarter of 2026, the number of economically active persons aged 15-89 amounted to 17 904 thousand, of which: 17 272 thousand constituted employed persons, while 632 thousand – the unemployed. The population of economically inactive persons in this age group comprised 12 432 thousand persons. Among persons at the working age[2], the economically active population numbered 17 015 thousand, including 16 390 thousand employed and 625 thousand – unemployed persons. The economically inactive population at working age amounted to 3 568 thousand persons.

The economically active population was higher compared with the second quarter of 2026, but lower compared with the third quarter of 2025

Population of economically active persons aged 15-89 in the third quarter of 2026 increased compared with the second quarter of 2026 (by 95 thousand, i.e. by 0.5%), but decreased compared with the third quarter of 2025 (by 19 thousand, i.e. by 0.1%). Among persons at working age, the number of economically active persons was higher than in the second quarter of 2026 (by 91 thousand, i.e. 0.5%), but lower than in the third quarter of 2025 (by 41 thousand, i.e. by 0.2%).

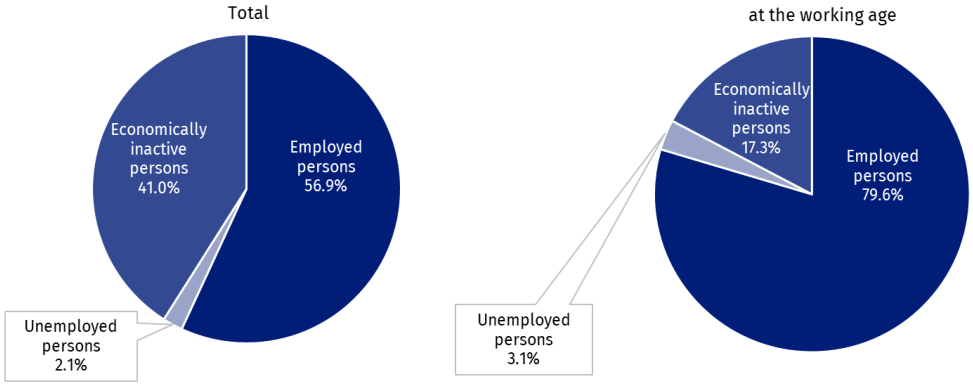
Table 1. Economic activity of the population aged 15-89

Specification	2025	2026			
	quarter 3	quarter 2	quarter 3	+/- compared with	
				quarter 2/2026	quarter 3/2025
	in thousands				
Total	**30 363**	**30 340**	**30 336**	**-4**	**-27**
Economically active persons	17 923	17 809	17 904	95	-19
Employed persons	17 361	17 234	17 272	38	-89
Unemployed persons	562	574	632	58	70
Economically inactive persons	12 440	12 531	12 432	-99	-8
of which at the working age					
Total	**20 673**	**20 600**	**20 583**	**-17**	**-90**
Economically active persons	17 056	16 924	17 015	91	-41
Employed persons	16 505	16 359	16 390	31	-115
Unemployed persons	552	565	625	60	73
Economically inactive persons	3 617	3 676	3 568	-108	-49

[1] The LFS results refer to the resident population i.e. staying or intending to stay in the country's territory for at least 12 months, living in households. Generalisation of the survey results over the general population has been carried out with the use of the data on resident population in Poland, coming from the balances, for which the basis (initial base) are the results of the Population and Housing Census 2021/National Census 2021. Data for the period from the first quarter of 2021 to the third quarter of 2023 was recalculated in line with the new generalisation basis. See methodological notes at the end of this news release.

[2] 18-64 years for man, 18-59 years for women.

Chart 1. Structure of the population aged 15-89 and at the working age by status on the labour market in the third quarter of 2026



The activity rate for the population aged 15-89 was 59.0% and increased compared with the second quarter of 2026 by 0.3 pp., while remained unchanged compared with the third quarter of 2025. The indicator was higher for men than for women – in the third quarter of 2026: 65.5% versus 53.1% (respective values for persons at the working age were 82.7% for the total population of that age: 84.6% for men and 80.5% for women). Corresponding indicators for urban and rural residents accounted respectively for: 59.4% and 58.5% (at the working age: 84.7% and 79.8%).

Within the scope of population aged 15-89, the ratio of the number of not working persons (unemployed and economically inactive) to the employed persons decreased compared with the previous quarter, but increased compared with the third quarter of 2025. In the third quarter of 2026, there were 756 unemployed or economically inactive persons aged 15-89 per 1 000 employed persons (in the second quarter of 2026 – 760 persons and in the third quarter of 2025 – 749 persons).

The indicator describing the relation of not working persons to the number of employed persons was lower than in the second quarter of 2026, but higher than in the third quarter of 2025

56.9%
Employment rate of persons aged 15-89

In the third quarter of 2026, employed persons accounted for 56.9% of the population aged 15-89. The employment rate increased slightly compared with the second quarter of 2026, by 0.1 pp., while decreased by 0.3 pp. compared with the third quarter of 2025.

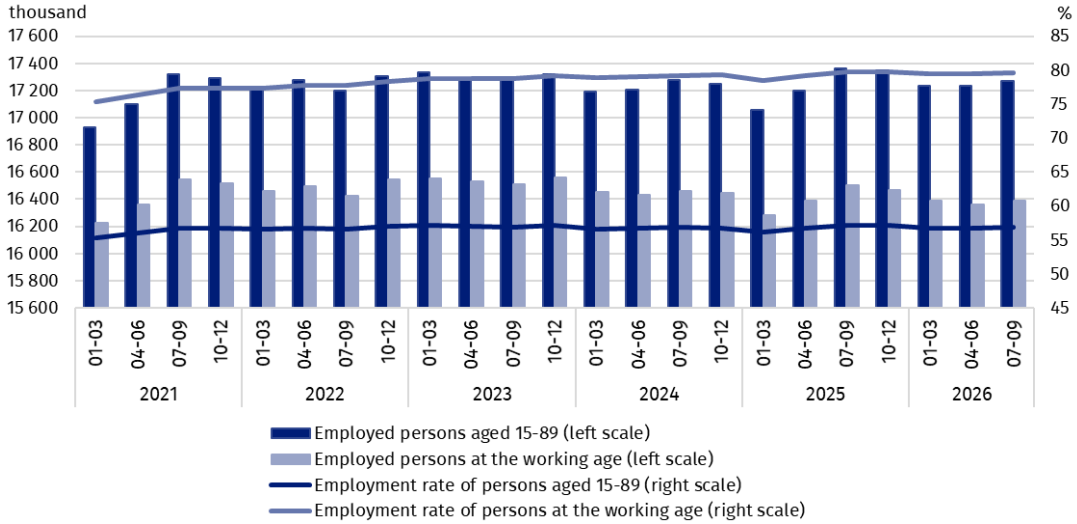
Employed persons aged 15-89 by the LFS

In the third quarter of 2026, population of employed persons (featured by the international criteria[3] used in the LFS) aged 15-89 amounted to 17 272 thousand persons and increased by 38 thousand persons, i.e. by 0.2%, compared with the second quarter of 2026, while decreased by 89 thousand persons, i.e. by 0.5%, compared with the third quarter of 2025.

The number of working-age persons in the third quarter of 2026 amounted to 16 390 thousand. Compared with the second quarter of 2026, there was an increased in this group of persons – by 31 thousand, i.e. by 0.2%, while compared with the third quarter of 2025 – a decrease by 115 thousand, i.e. by 0.7%.

[3] See methodological notes at the end of this news release.

Chart 2. Employed persons and employment rate of persons aged 15-89 and at the working age

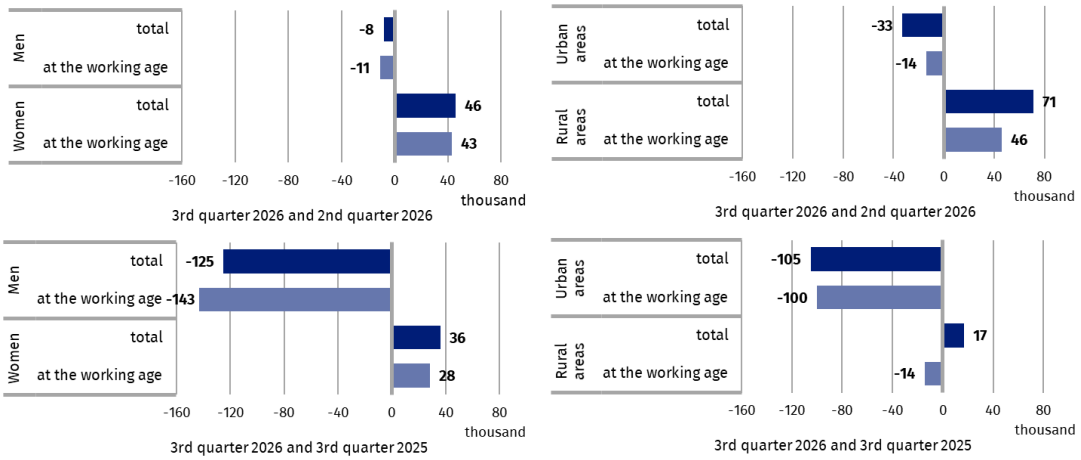


The size of the working population changes throughout the year i.e. due to the seasonality of certain types of work

In the third quarter of 2026, in the population of employed persons, taking into account division by sex, men still predominated constituting 53.3% (i.e. 9 198 thousand persons) of this group. Regarding the place of residence – there were more employed persons living in urban areas (60.4%, i.e. 10 439 thousand), which is a direct consequence of the higher population in urban than rural areas.

Chart 3 presents the directions and magnitude of changes in the population of employed persons aged 15-89 and at the working age compared with the previous quarter and the same quarter of the previous year, depending on sex and place of residence of the employed persons.

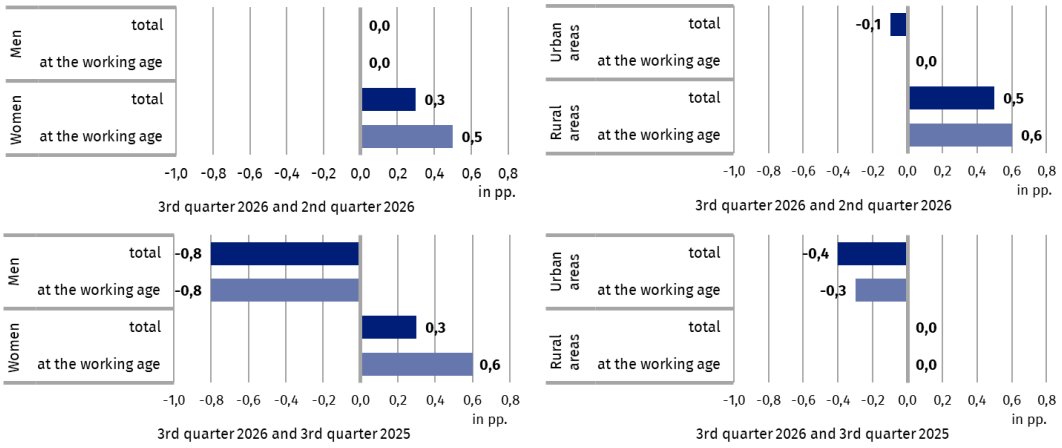
Chart 3. Changes in the number of employed persons aged 15-89 and at the working age between the 3rd quarter of 2026 and the 2nd quarter of 2026 as well as the 3rd quarter of 2025



In the third quarter of 2026, the total employment rate amounted to 56.9% and increased slightly compared with the second quarter of 2026, by 0.1 pp., while decreased by 0.3 pp. compared with the third quarter of 2025. Among the population at the working age, the employment rate was 79.6% and increased by 0.2 pp. compared with the second quarter of 2026, but decreased by 0.2 pp. compared with the third quarter of 2025.

Chart 4 presents changes in the employment rate for the population aged 15-89 and at the working age compared with the previous quarter and the same quarter of the previous year, depending on sex and place of residence of the employed persons.

Chart 4. Changes in the employment rate of persons aged 15-89 and at the working age between the 3rd quarter of 2026 and the 2nd quarter of 2026 as well as the 3rd quarter of 2025

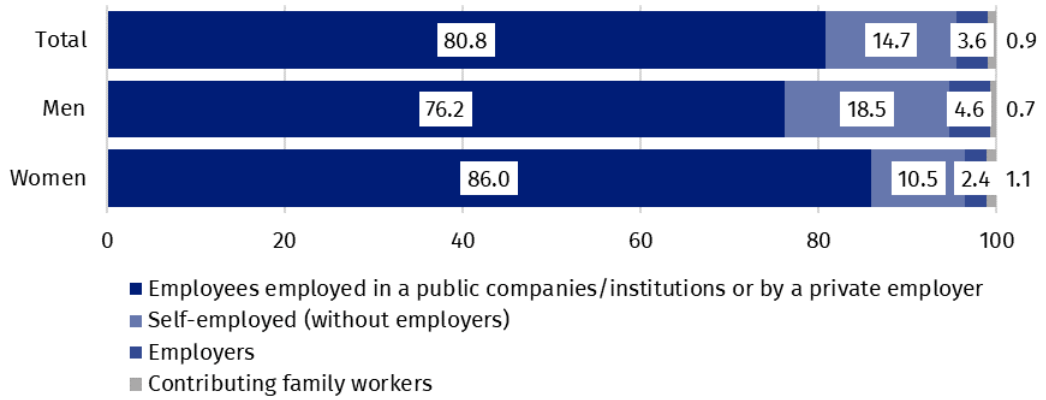


The LFS results indicate, among other things, that in the third quarter of 2026:

- full-time work was performed by 16 002 thousand persons (i.e. 92.6%), while 1 270 thousand persons worked part-time (i.e. 7.4%),
- 13 083 thousand persons worked in the private sector (75.7%) and 4 189 thousand persons worked in the public sector (24.3%),
- the average number of hours worked per employee during the reference week amounted to 39.5 hours in the main job and 40.0 hours in total in the main and second job,
- a vast majority of employees employed in public companies/institutions or by a private employer performed their work on the basis of the contract for an indefinite period (84.2%, i.e. 11 756 thousand persons),
- the sections[4] where the most people worked were: Manufacturing – 18.4% of all employed persons (3 183 thousand persons); Wholesale and retail trade – 11.6% (2 007 thousand), Education – 8.2% (1 422 thousand) and Construction – 7.8% (1 347 thousand).

The number of full-time employed persons was higher than in the second quarter of 2026, but lower than in the third quarter of 2025

Chart 5. Structure of employed persons aged 15-89 by employment status in the main job in the third quarter of 2026 (in %)



[4] By NACE Rev. 2.1 sections

3.5%

Unemployment rate of persons aged 15-89

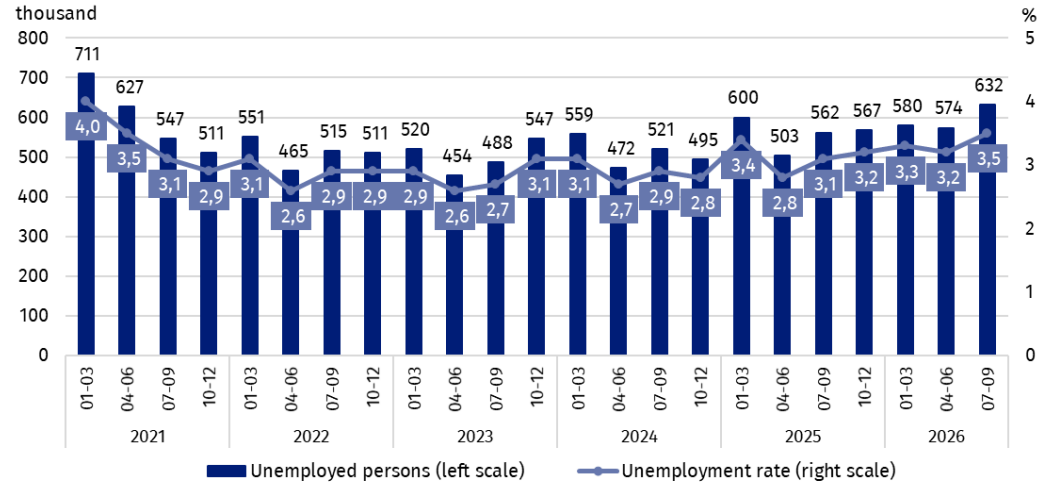
In the third quarter of 2026, unemployed persons accounted for 3.5% of the economically active population aged 15-89. The unemployment rate was higher compared with both the second quarter of 2026 (by 0.3 pp.), and the third quarter of 2025 (by 0.4 pp.).

Unemployed persons aged 15-74 by the LFS

In the third quarter of 2026, the size of the unemployed population aged 15-74 (featured by the international criteria[5] used in the LFS) amounted to 632 thousand[6] and was higher than in the second quarter of 2026 by 10.1% (by 58 thousand persons) and then in the third quarter of 2025 by 12.5% (by 70 thousand persons).

The population of unemployed persons was higher than in both the previous quarter and the corresponding period of the previous year

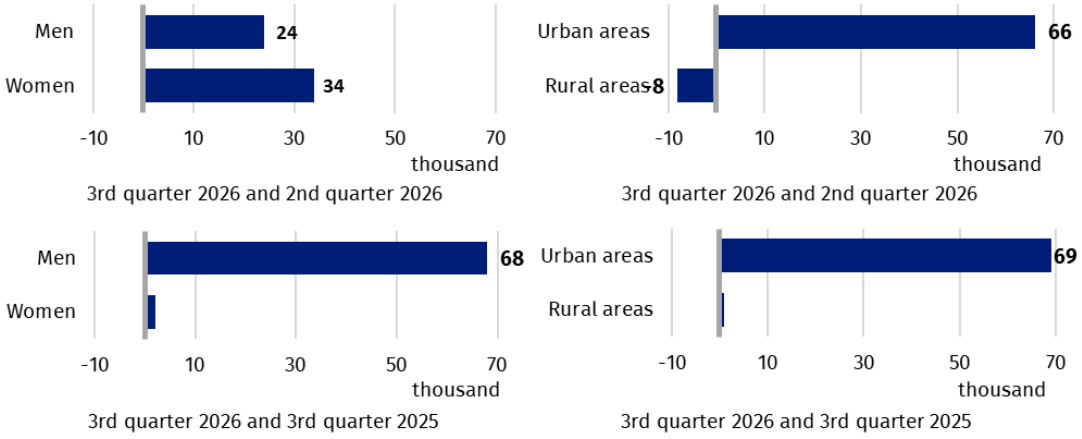
Chart 6. Unemployed persons aged 15-74 and unemployment rate of persons aged 15-89



In the third quarter of 2026, the population of unemployed men was higher than the population of unemployed women and amounted (respectively 332 thousand unemployed men versus 300 thousand unemployed women). The number of unemployed persons living in urban areas amounted to 379 thousand and in rural areas 253 thousand.

Chart 7 presents the directions and magnitude of changes in the unemployed persons population depending on sex and place of residence.

Chart 7. Changes in the number of unemployed persons aged 15-74 between the 3rd quarter of 2026 and the 2nd quarter of 2026 as well as the 3rd quarter of 2025



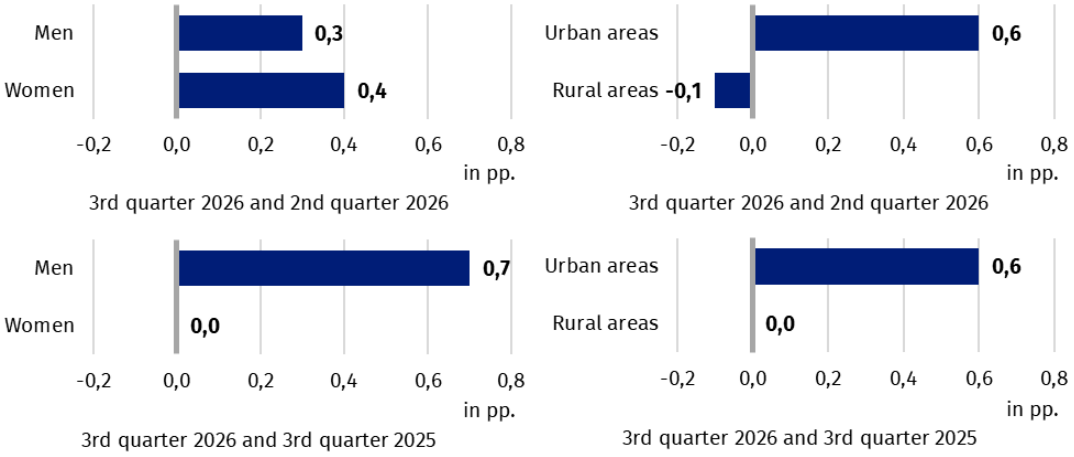
[5] See methodological notes at the end of this news release.

[6] LFS results are presented as an average value in the analysed period, in this case – an average in a quarter (unlike, for example, in the case of data on registered unemployment, where data are most often presented as of the end of the period).

In the third quarter of 2026, the percentage of unemployment persons in the population aged 15-89 according to the LFS was 2.1%[7] (this percentage was higher both compared with the second quarter of 2026 – by 0.2 pp., and compared with the third quarter of 2025 – by 0.3 pp.). The unemployment rate[8] according to the LFS amounted to 3.5% and was higher than in both the second quarter of 2026 (by 0.3 pp.) and the third quarter of 2025 (by 0.4 pp.).

Chart 8 presents changes in the intensity of unemployment by sex and place of residence of unemployed persons.

Chart 8. Changes in the unemployment rate of persons aged 15-89 between the 3rd quarter of 2026 and the 2nd quarter of 2026 as well as the 3rd quarter of 2025



Changes in unemployment rate are also noticeable when taking into account the division of population by age groups[9]. The highest unemployment rate was recorded for the youngest age group, i.e. in the age group 15-24 years – 12.7%. Significantly lower unemployment rates were observed in other age groups. The unemployment rate was 4.5% for persons aged 25-34, 2.6% for aged 35-44, and 2.6% in the group of persons of non-mobile age[10] (45-59/64).

As in previous periods, the highest unemployment rate was observed among the youngest persons, i.e. aged 15-24

Persons with tertiary education are still in the best situation – the unemployment rate in this group is the lowest – in the third quarter of 2026 it was 2.2%. For the subpopulation of persons with post-secondary and technical secondary or secondary sectoral vocational education, unemployment rate was 3.5% and for those with general secondary education – 4.6%. Among persons with basic vocational or basic sectoral vocational education the unemployment rate in the analysed quarter was 5.1%. However, the highest unemployment rate – 8.0% concerned the population with the lowest level of education, i.e., with lower secondary education or less.

To the greatest extent, unemployment affected persons with the lowest level of education

Each unemployed person was classified into one of four categories separated due to the reason of inflow to unemployment. The largest population of unemployed were those who lost their job, i.e. persons who left their last job in the last 3 months not on their own initiative (46.8%, i.e. 296 thousand persons). The share of unemployed intending to return to work after a break (lasting longer than 3 months) was 22.5% (i.e. 142 thousand), but among women this share was higher than among men and amounted to 27.0% and 18.1%, respectively. The share of unemployed who were looking for their first job amounted to

[7] Compare Chart 1. on page 2.

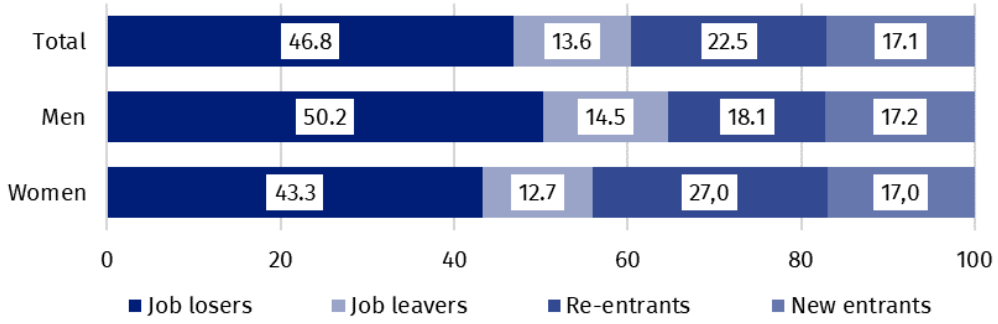
[8] In the case of the unemployment rate, the number of unemployed persons is related to the economically active population, i.e. the sum of employed and unemployed persons.

[9] The unemployment rate for persons of post-working age (men aged 65-89 and women aged 60-89) cannot be presented due to the high random sampling error of the indicator (resulting from the low number of unemployed persons in this age group, less than 10 thousand, i.e. below the data reliability threshold adopted in Polish LFS).

[10] Men aged 45-64 and women aged 45-59.

17.1% (i.e. 108 thousand) and unemployed persons who resigned from work on their own initiative was 13.6% (i.e. 86 thousand persons) of the entire unemployed population.

Chart 9. Structure of unemployed persons by the source of inflow to unemployment in the third quarter of 2026 (in %)



In the third quarter of 2026, unemployed persons had been looking for a job 8.4 months on average[11] (in the previous quarter and the year before it was 9.2 and 7.9 months respectively). Persons who were seeking a job for the longest duration were the ones aged 55-74 (an average 11.8 months), while the shortest job search duration was observed for the youngest persons i.e. aged 15-19 (4.1 months).

41.0%

The share of economically inactive persons in the total number of the population aged 15–89

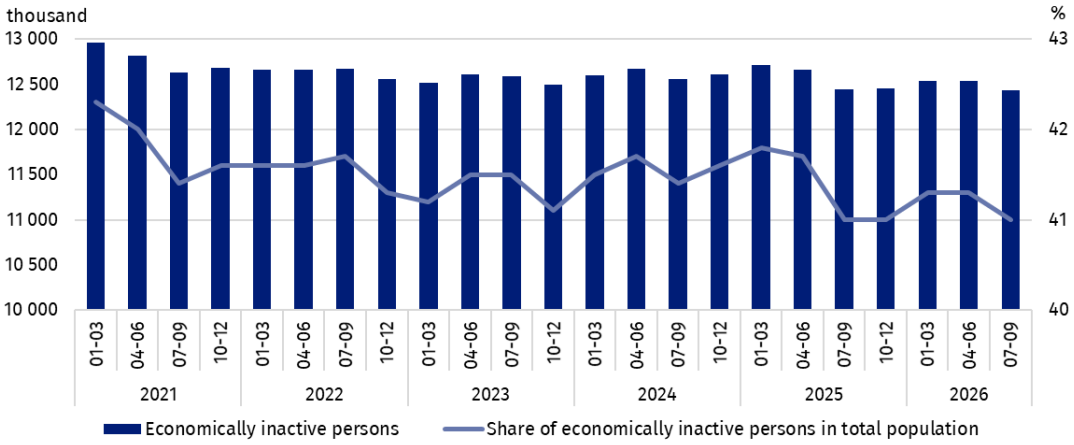
In the third quarter of 2026, economically inactive persons accounted for 41.0% of the total number of population aged 15-89. The indicator decreased by 0.3 pp. compared with the second quarter of 2026, but remained unchanged compared with the third quarter of 2025.

Economically inactive persons aged 15-89 by the LFS

In the third quarter of 2026, population of economically inactive persons aged 15-89 amounted to 12 432 thousand and decreased compared with the second quarter of 2026 – by 99 thousand, i.e. by 0.8%, while remaining at a similar level compared with the third quarter of 2025 (a slight decrease by 8 thousand, i.e. by 0.1%).

The number of economically inactive persons was lower than in the second quarter of 2026 and remained at a similar level compared to the third quarter of 2025

Chart 10. Economically inactive persons and the share of economically inactive persons in population aged 15-89

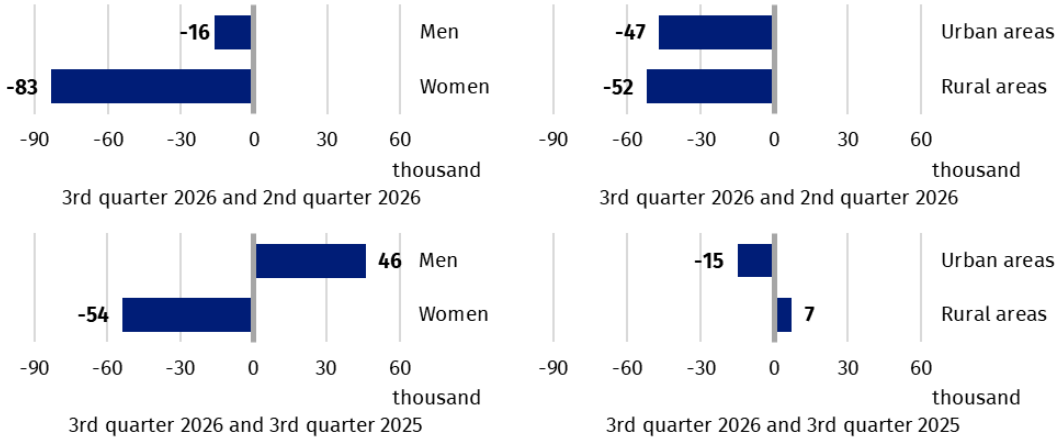


[11] The average duration of job search is the period, counted in months, during which unemployed persons are actively looking for a job (this includes the last uninterrupted period of job search).

Over half of the population of economically inactive persons in the analysed age group constituted women – their share was 59.6% (7 405 thousand). Economically inactive women accounted for 46.9% of all women aged 15-89, while analogous indicator for men was 34.5%. A majority of economically inactive persons constituted urban residents (59.6%, i.e. 7 408 thousand) than rural residents, which is connected with a higher population in urban than in rural areas. The share of economically inactive persons in the analysed age group among all urban residents was at the level of 40.6% and among rural residents amounted to 41.5%.

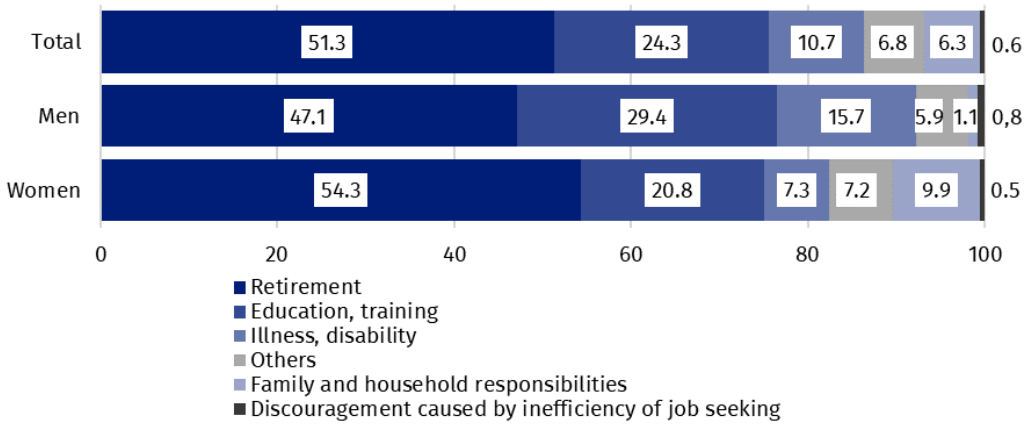
Chart 11 presents changes in the economically inactive population depending on sex and place of residence.

Chart 11. Changes in the number of economically inactive persons aged 15-89 between the 3rd quarter of 2026 and the 2nd quarter of 2026 as well as the 3rd quarter of 2025



The economically inactive population is a specific one in respect to the labour market resources. Its scope includes persons who have not entered the labour market yet (including the majority of the youth still participating in education) and persons who have definitely left the labour market or will never enter the labour market (some retirees, pensioners, persons who earn their living from other sources than work), but also persons who entered the labour market, then temporarily deactivated and who will want to re-enter the labour market after a break.

Chart 12. Structure of economically inactive persons aged 15-74 by sex and reasons for inactivity in the third quarter of 2026 (in %)



In the third quarter of 2026, over half of the economically inactive persons aged 15-74 numbering 9 510 thousand (the reason for inactivity was determined for this age group) constituted retirees (51.3%), while the second largest group were pupils and students (24.3%). It is worth noting that education and training as well as illness and disability were more often the reasons for inactivity among men (respectively 29.4% and 15.7%) than among women (respectively 20.8% and 7.3%). On the other hand, family responsibilities were much more often the reason for inactivity among women (9.9%) than men (1.1%).

Family and households responsibilities were much more often the reason for women's economic inactivity

Among the economically inactive of working age (3 568 thousand persons) the most often reasons for inactivity were: education and training – 32.6%, illness and disability – 25.1% and family responsibilities – 16.0%. Retirement as the reason for inactivity on the labour market indicated 8.5% persons at the working age, while persons discouraged with unsuccessful job search constituted 1.6% of this group.

Education and training were the most often reason for economic inactivity of persons at the working age

Methodological notes

The presented news release was prepared on the basis of the generalised results of the sample survey **Badanie Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności/BAEL** (Eng**.: Labour Force Survey/PL-LFS**).

Badanie Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności has been carried out in Poland quarterly since May 1992 and it has been improved in accordance with the International Labour Organization and Eurostat recommendations.

From the first quarter of 2021 onwards, the base of the EU-LFS methodology are definitions of the employed, the unemployed and economically inactive persons in accordance with the Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization adopted in 2013 on the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in Geneva (19th ICLS) and recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the use in all countries. **The survey object is the situation in terms of economic activity of the population, i.e. the fact of performing work, being unemployed or economically inactive persons in the reference week.** In the European Union, the implementation of the provisions of the above mentioned Resolution was carried out through introduction of new legal acts. **From 2021 onwards, EU-LFS has been one of the key surveys embraced by the framework regulation for social statistics (the so-called IESS FR[12]).** Accompanying IESS FR implementing regulations in the domain of the labour force specify the range of the core survey and module surveys, determine survey organisation and define in detail particular populations specified according to the status of persons in the labour market.

Since the fourth quarter of 2023, generalization of the survey results over the general population has been carried out with the use of the data on resident population in Poland living in households coming from the balances, for which the basis (initial base) are the results of the Population and Housing Census of 31 March 2021 (by the third quarter of 2023, the results were generalised over the general population using population data from the balances, for which the basis were the results of the National Census 2011). The component data (births, deaths and migrations) come from administrative registers. The data published in this news release and in the attached tables for the period from the first quarter of 2021 to the third quarter of 2023 have been recalculated in accordance with the new basis for generalizing results and are therefore comparable.

Starting from the first quarter of 2026, the information regarding the type of economic activities at the workplace is presented in accordance with the Polish Classification of Activities 2025 (PKD 2025), which was introduced by the Regulation of the Council of Ministers on 18 December 2024 (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1936). The PKD 2025 has been developed based on amendments made to the classification by the United Nations Organization - ISIC Rev. 5 (International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities) and the European Union classification - NACE Rev. 2.1 (Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the EU).

Compared with the PKD 2007 classification, the new PKD 2025 classification introduced changes including, among others, an increase in the number of sections from 21 to 22, as well as scope-related and structural modifications aimed at better adapting the classification to the current realities characteristics of the Polish economy which are covered by statistical observation.

[12] Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 October 2019 establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples.

In the statistical annex, data on employed persons in the reference quarter and unemployed persons previously employed are presented by three economic sectors: agriculture, industry and services. From the first quarter of 2026, following the introduction of PKD 2025, the grouping of economic activities into the three economic sectors was revised. Under PKD 2025, the agricultural sector comprises the section Agriculture, forestry and fishing; the industrial sector comprises the sections Mining and quarrying; Manufacturing; Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities; and Construction; while the services sector comprises all remaining sections.

Data according to the NACE do not add up to the total, because they do not cover not defined economic activities, moreover, only selected sections of the NACE are presented in the tables.

Due to the changes introduced, the data by PKD sections, as well as by economic sectors, are not fully comparable with the results of previous years.

Detailed information regarding the PKD classification can be found on Statistics Poland website:

https://klasyfikacje.stat.gov.pl/Pkd2025

In the third quarter of 2026, the data on the resident population as of the state on 30 June 2026 were used to generalise the survey results. The number of resident population aged 15-89 years living in households obtained after generalisation of the results of the survey is lower by about 488 thousand (persons living in institutional households and homeless persons) from the estimated number of resident population as of the state on 30 June 2026.

In the third quarter of 2026, the Labour Force Survey covered 25.9 thousand households, including 18.0 thousand households in urban areas. In each of the sampled households, persons at the age 15-89 years were surveyed, which gave a sample of 43.7 thousand persons, of whom 28.1 thousand persons were urban residents. The response rate was 62.8%.

More information on the methodology used in the survey can be found in the Methodological report and detailed survey results are available on Statistics Poland website (up to Q4 2025 in the LFS results tables and from Q1 2026 onwards in the Knowledge Databases). The web addresses are provided on the last page of this news release.

In the case of quoting Statistics Poland data, please provide information: ‘Source of data: Statistics Poland’, and in the case of publishing calculations made on data published by Statistics Poland, please provide information: ‘Own work based on Statistics Poland data.’

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Methodological report. Labour Force Survey

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Selected aspects of the labour market in Poland. Economic activity of the population before and during the COVID–19 pandemic period

Data available in databases

Knowledge Databases → Society → Labour market

Local Data Bank → Labour Market

Strateg → Statistics by theme → Labour market

Terms used in official statistics

Economic activity by LFS

Economically active population by LFS

Employed persons by LFS

Unemployed persons by LFS

Economically inactive population according to the LFS

Activity rate by LFS

Employment rate by LFS

Unemployment rate by LFS