

## HEALTH STATUS OF THE POPULATION AS OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

During the 2021 Census, information was obtained on three main characteristics of the health status of the population: self-assessment of health, presence of limitations in daily activities due to a health problem (persons with a limitation) and people with disabilities.

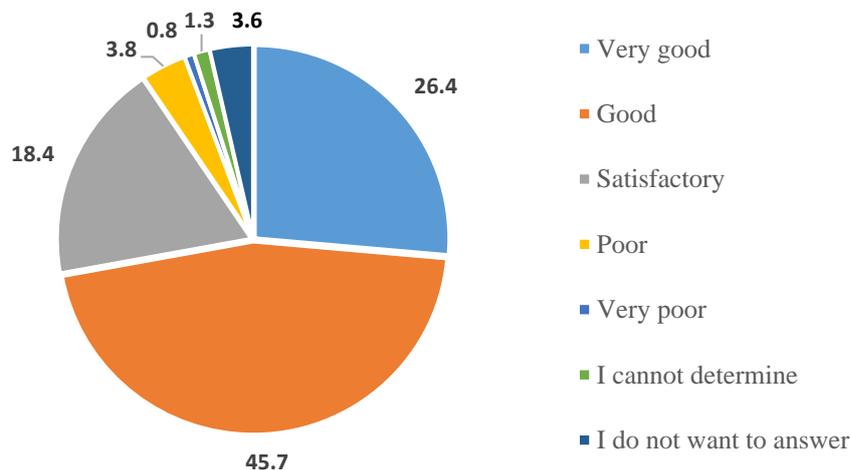
According to the national legislation and census methodology, questions on the topic of health status are voluntary. Since part of the country's population was not covered during the census, and data were added for it from administrative sources, the structures and the corresponding coefficients characterizing the health status of the population were calculated for the total number of respondents, and not for the entire population.

### Self-assessment of health

Researchers assume that people comprehensively assess the presence or absence of disease, functional limitations, and limitation of activities of daily living due to health-related causes. The question asked 'How is your health in general?' is a subjective assessment of individuals with a five-point response scale and refers to health in general and not to the current state of health.

As of September 7, 2021, the largest is the number and relative share of persons who self-define their health as **good** - 2 700 039 (45.7%), followed by **very good** - 1 558 163 (26.4%), and **satisfactory** - 1 086 981 (18.4%). 221 988 and 46 819 people, or 3.8 and 0.8%, assessed their health as **bad** and **very bad**, respectively (Fig. 1). The persons who indicated that **they could not determine** were 77 354 (1.3%). 211 764, or 3.6% of respondents, answered '**I do not want to answer**'.

**Fig. 1. Structure of the population according to self-reported health status as of September 7, 2021<sup>1</sup>**



Self-assessment of health largely depends on the gender and age of individuals (Fig. 2). Men are more positive and more often define their health as very good and good (74.8%) compared to women (69.6%). There is no gender difference in the distribution of persons who cannot define their health - 1.2% of men

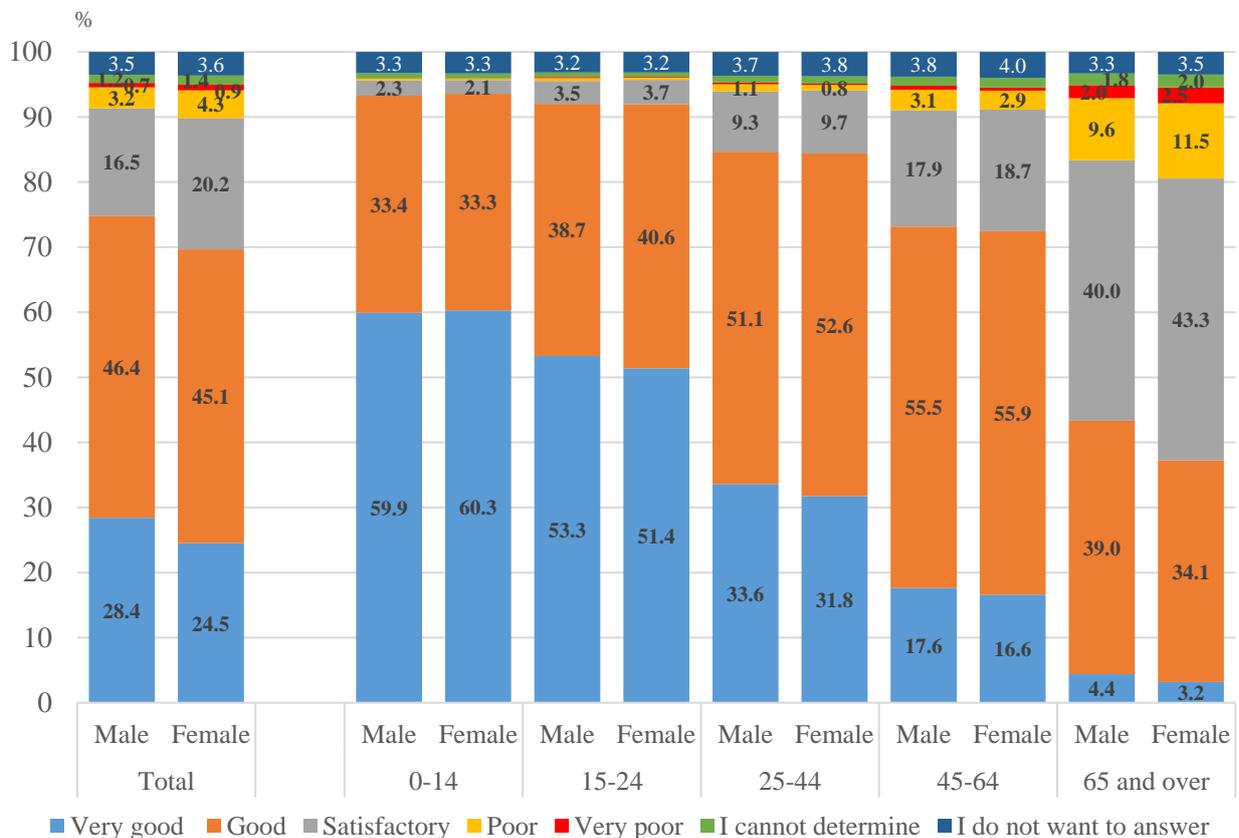
<sup>1</sup> In the presentation of the structure of the population by self-assessment of health and the calculation of the relative shares of the relevant categories, the persons added from administrative sources are not included, due to the peculiarity of the issue and the need for self-assessment by the enumerated persons.

and 1.4% of women who answered the question. 3.5% of men and 3.6% of women do not want to answer the question.

Age has a significant influence on the given self-assessment of health. For children aged 0 - 14 years, the health of 93.3% of boys and 93.6% of girls was assessed as very good or good. There is no gender difference in determining their health as poor (0.2%) and very poor (0.1%), as well as for those who are not defined (0.8%) or do not wish to answer the question (3.3%).

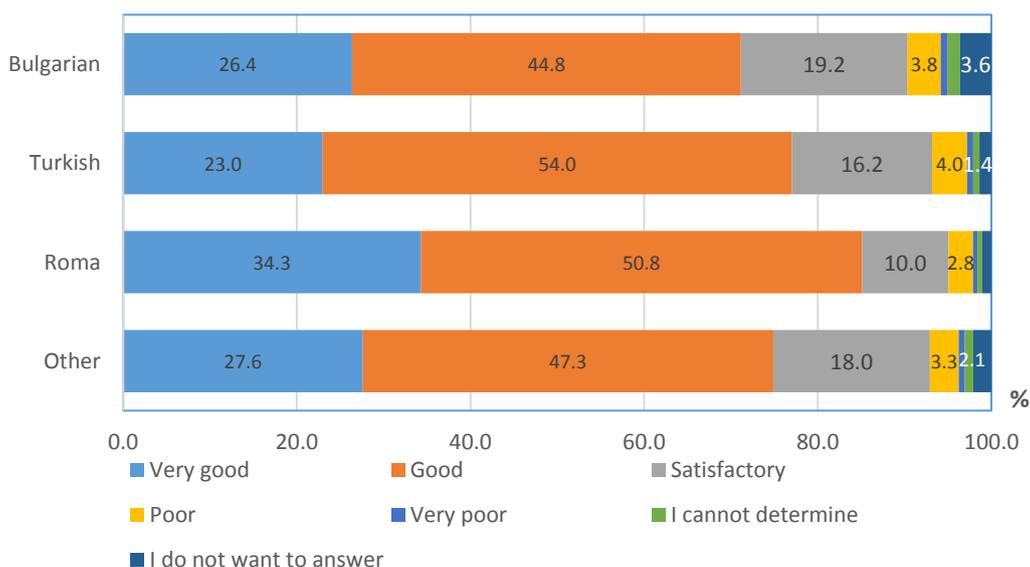
As age increases, the number and correspondingly the share of the population with good or very good health decreases, while the number of persons who rate their health as satisfactory, poor and very poor increases. Among the oldest, aged 65 and over, 43.4% of men and 37.3% of women assessed their health as very good and good. It is satisfactory for 40.0% of men and 43.3% of women. In this age group, the share of persons who cannot assess their health is the largest - 1.8% of men and 2.0% of women who answered the voluntary question.

**Fig. 2. Self-assessment of health by sex and age groups as of September 7, 2021**



There are significant differences in the self-assessment of health depending on the ethnic group to which the enumerated persons are assigned. Those who identify themselves as Bulgarian are the most critical in their self-assessment of their health. Compared to other ethnic groups, among them, the share of persons defining their health as good or very good is the smallest (71.1%). 19.2% of self-identified Bulgarians rate their health as satisfactory, and 4.6% - as bad or very bad. In this group, there are the largest shares of those who cannot assess their health (1.4%) or do not want to answer the question (3.6%).

**Fig. 3. Self-assessment of health by ethnic groups as of September 7, 2021**

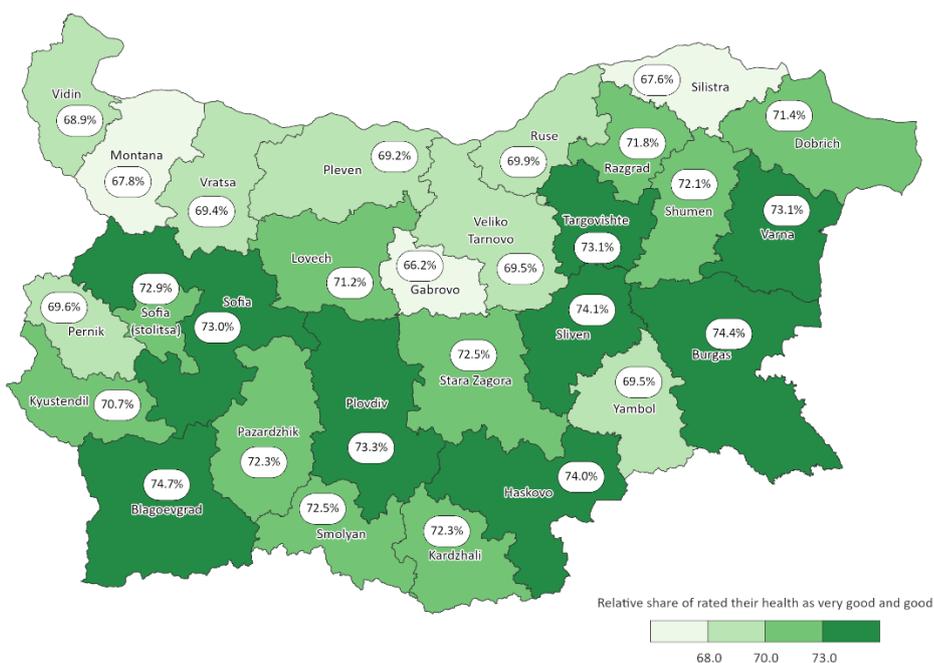


The most positive are persons from the Roma ethnic group, 85.1% of whom define their health as very good or good. Compared to the rest of the ethnic groups in the country, the Roma have the lowest shares of persons defining their health as satisfactory (10.0%), bad or very bad (3.3%), as well as the share of those who do not want to answer the question ( 1.1%). Only 0.5% of Roma cannot assess their health.

**Territorial distribution of the population according to self-reported health status**

People who assessed their health as very good and good as of September 7, 2021, made up 72.1% of those who answered the question.

**Fig. 4. Relative share of persons who assessed their health as very good and good, by districts as of September 7, 2021**



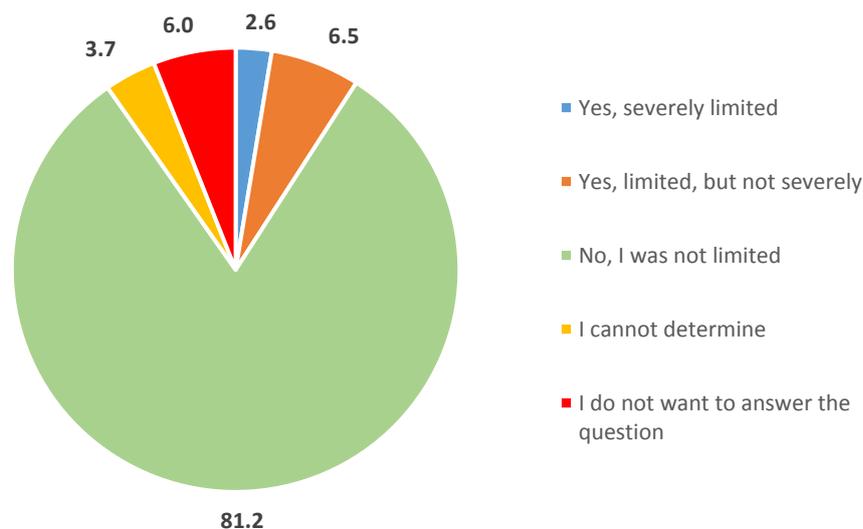
In a territorial aspect, the share of these persons is higher in 13 districts, being the largest in the districts of Blagoevgrad (74.7%), Burgas (74.4%), Sliven (74.1%) and Haskovo (74.0%) (Fig. 4) . The share of persons in very good and good health is the lowest in the districts of Gabrovo (66.2%), Silistra (67.6%) and Montana (67.8%). For Shumen district, the value of the indicator is identical to the general one for the country.

### Persons with limitations

Self-reported health status is a summary characteristic that can be supplemented with information about persons with limitations due to a health problem in the last six months or more. The two questions should be considered independently of each other, as the presence of a limitation does not always lead to a negative self-assessment of health, especially at young ages.

As of September 7, 2021, 153 242 people, or 2.6% of those who responded to the voluntary question, had been **severely limited** in performing their usual activities due to a health problem in the past six months or more (Fig. 5). **Limited, but not so severely**, were 381 805, or 6.5%. 4 795 642 people, or 81.2%, were **not limited**. 220 500 people, or 3.7%, **cannot determine**, and 351 919, or 6.0% of the people **do not want to answer the question**.

**Fig. 5. Relative share of persons with limitations during the last six months or more due to a health problem as of September 7, 2021**

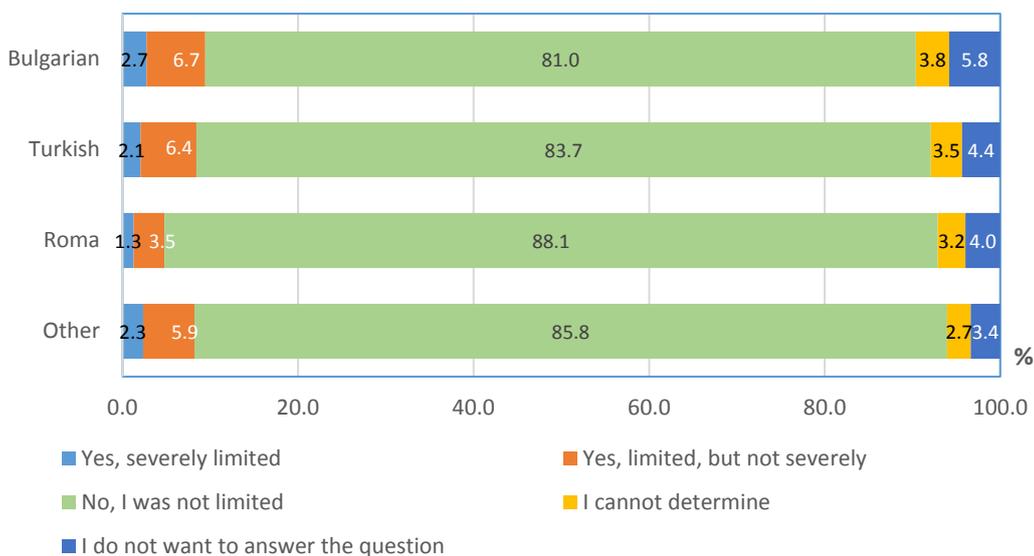


Age is a determining factor in the distribution of persons with disabilities. Among children up to 14 years of age, 2.0% were limited in performing the activities people usually do due to a health problem, and 88.4% had no limitations in the past six months or more. With increasing age, the share of persons with disabilities increases to 8.8% in the age group 45 - 64 years and 19.8% among the oldest 65 years and older.

The ranking of ethnic groups by the structure of persons with limitations in the last six months or more due to a health problem is similar to self-reported health. Among persons of the Bulgarian ethnicity, 81.0% were not limited in their daily activities in the last six months or more due to a health problem. The relative shares of severely limited persons (2.7%) and limited but not severely (6.7%) are larger compared to those among the other ethnic groups of the population. Here, the shares of persons who do not wish to answer the question and those who cannot determine the presence of a limitation in their activity are larger.

Almost 84% of the Turkish ethnic group and 88% of the Roma have no limitations in their daily activities. For this category of persons among other ethnic groups, the relative share is close to 86%. 8.5% of the Turkish ethnic group and 4.8% of the Roma have limitations (severely and not severely). For persons from other ethnicities, the share is 8.2%.

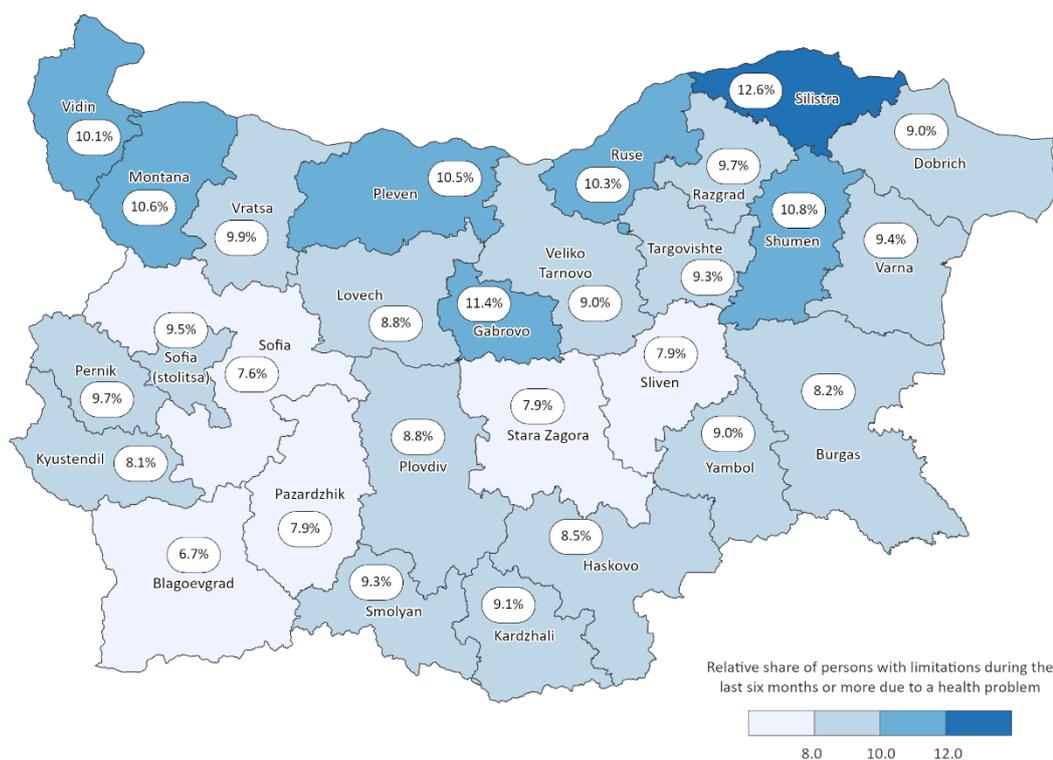
**Fig. 6. Relative share of persons with limitations during the last six months or more due to a health problem by ethnic groups as of September 7, 2021**



### Territorial distribution of the population according to the presence of limitations

The relative share of persons with limitations as of September 7, 2021, in total for the country is 9.1%. In a territorial aspect, the values of the indicator vary from 6.7% in Blagoevgrad district to 12.6% in Silistra district. In half of the districts, the share of persons with limitations is greater than the national one, with the highest shares, apart from Silistra district, being the districts of Gabrovo (11.4%), Shumen (10.8%), Montana (10.6%) and Pleven (10.5 %). The districts with the lowest shares of persons with limitations are Blagoevgrad (6.7%), Sofia (7.6%), Sliven, Stara Zagora and Pazardzhik (7.9% each).

**Fig. 7. Relative share of persons with limitations during the last six months or more due to a health problem by district as of September 7, 2021**



## People with disabilities

People with disabilities are persons with permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability, certified by REMC/NEMC. According to national legislation, the degree of permanently reduced working capacity, respectively the type and degree of disability, are determined in percentages relative to the capabilities of a healthy person.

It is important to note that in the processing of the data within the framework of Census 2021 for the non-covered persons added from administrative sources, information previously provided by NEMC was used. In this way, data were added on the availability of an expert decision from REMC/NEMC, as well as the necessary information contained in it, for 38 631 persons<sup>2</sup>, as a result of which the scope and quality of information about people with disabilities among the entire population of the country were increased. In the 2021 Census, the share of persons for whom there is no information on the presence of permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability is much smaller - 10.9% for the population aged 16 and over and 17.2% for children. For comparison, in the previous census conducted in 2011, among the population aged 16 and over, there was no answer for 29.4% of the enumerated persons aged 16 and over, and for children - for 44.9% of them.

As of September 7, 2021, 654 547 persons have **recognized permanently reduced working capacity or degree of disability**. Of these, 22 248 are children, and 632 299 are persons aged 16 and over (table 1)<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the Data Processing Agreement concluded between NEMC and NSI, an extract from NEMC's information database for the period 1.01.2018 - 7.09.2021 was received. For persons not found in the database, questions on the census questionnaire remain unanswered.

<sup>3</sup> The distribution of persons by age is according to national legislation.

## 1. Persons with disabilities based on permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability as of September 7, 2021

Permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability	Number	Structure - %
<b>Aged 16 and over - total</b>	<b>632299</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Up to 50%	53782	8.5
From 50 up to 70%	218038	34.5
From 71 up to 90%	225342	35.6
Over 90%	135137	21.4
<b>Children - total</b>	<b>22248</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Up to 50%	2341	10.5
From 50 up to 70%	8984	40.4
From 71 up to 90%	5931	26.7
Over 90%	4992	22.4

Among persons aged 16 and over in the structure by degree of permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability, the largest is the number and, accordingly, the relative share of persons in the group from 71 to 90% - 225 342, or 35.6% of persons with disabilities for which information is available on this matter. Next comes the group from 50 to 70%, in which 218 038 persons, or 34.5%, apply. The group with the most severe disabilities - over 90%, includes 135 137 persons aged 16 and over, or 21.4% of persons with disabilities in this age group. The share of persons with up to 50% permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability is the smallest - 53 782, or 8.5%.

The distribution of children by degree of disability shows that the most numerous is the group of those with 50 to 70% type and degree of disability - 8 984, or 40.4% of children with disabilities. The group from 71 to 90% follows - 5 931 children, or 26.7%. With the most severe disabilities - over 90%, there are 4 992 children, or 22.4%, and the smallest group of children with up to 50% type and degree of disability - 2 341, or 10.5%.

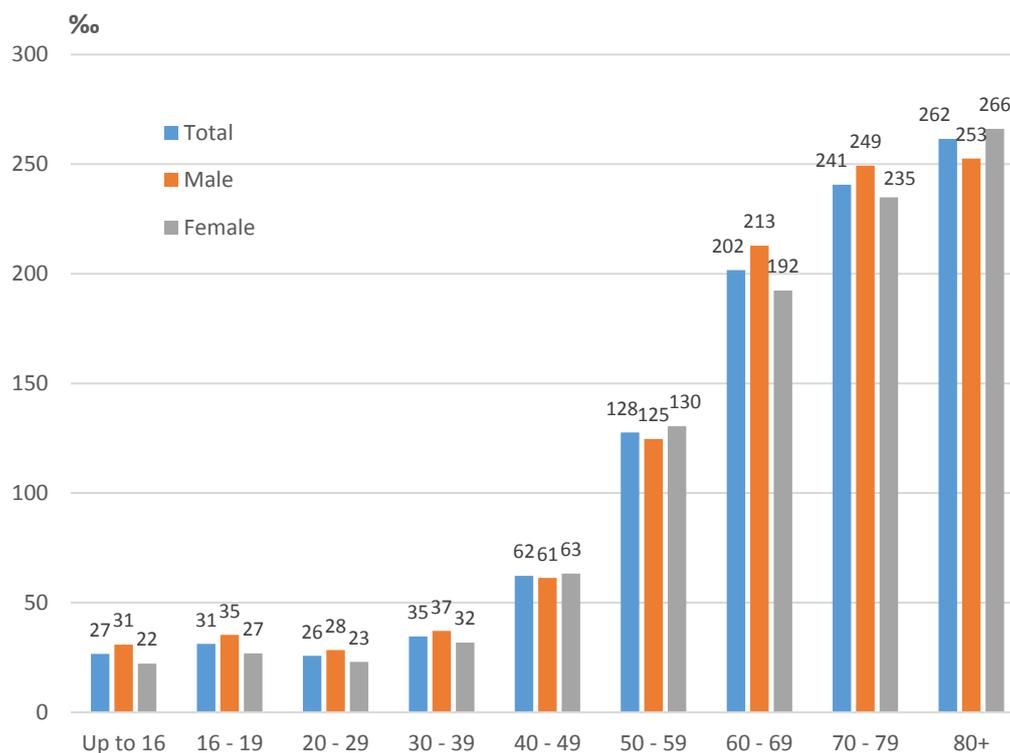
For the analysis of the number of people with disabilities according to various socio-demographic characteristics, intensity coefficients are calculated. The indicator is a ratio of the number of persons with disabilities per 1 000 people of the relevant population who answered the question.

As of September 7, 2021, **for every 1 000 people aged 16 and over, 124 are disabled**. The value of the coefficient is higher for women (129 per 1 000 women) than for men (118 per 1 000 people of the relevant population). Among boys under the age of 16, 31 per 1 000 boys have a disability. For girls, the indicator is 22 per 1 000 people of the relevant population.

As age increases, the number of persons with disabilities increases (Fig. 8). For persons up to 16 years of age, 27 per 1 000 people are disabled, while among the elderly population aged 80 and over, the indicator is 262 per 1 000.

The absolute number of persons with permanently reduced working capacity or degree of disability is the largest in the age group 60 - 69 years - 175 267 persons. Out of 1 000 people in this age group, 202 are disabled.

**Fig. 8. Persons with disabilities by sex and age groups per 1 000 people of the population as of September 7, 2021**

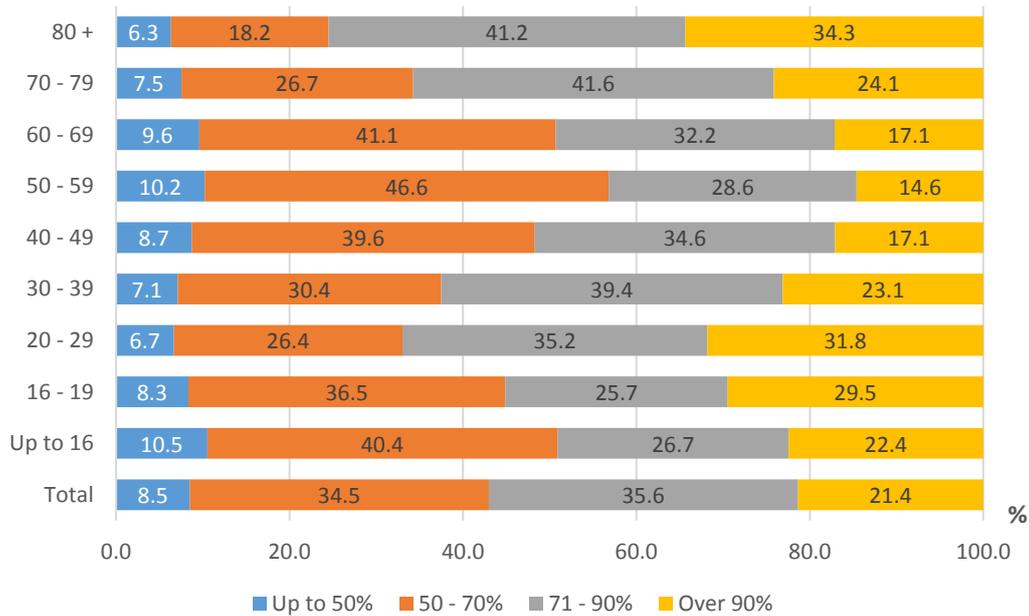


As age increases, the structure of disabled people also changes depending on the degree of disability (Fig. 9). In all age groups, the smallest relative shares are those for whom the lowest degree (up to 50%) of reduced working capacity has been established. As age increases, the share of people who have up to 50% permanently reduced working capacity or degree of disability decreases, and among the oldest - 80 years and older, this share is 6.3%.

Persons with permanently reduced working capacity from 50 to 70% have the largest relative share in the age group of 50 - 59 years (46.6%), 60 - 69 years (41.1%) and among children - 40.4%.

The group with the highest percentage of permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability (over 90%) in the country as a whole constitutes 21.4% of all persons with disabilities. Its share is lowest in the 50 - 59 age group (14.6%), and highest among the oldest (34.3%).

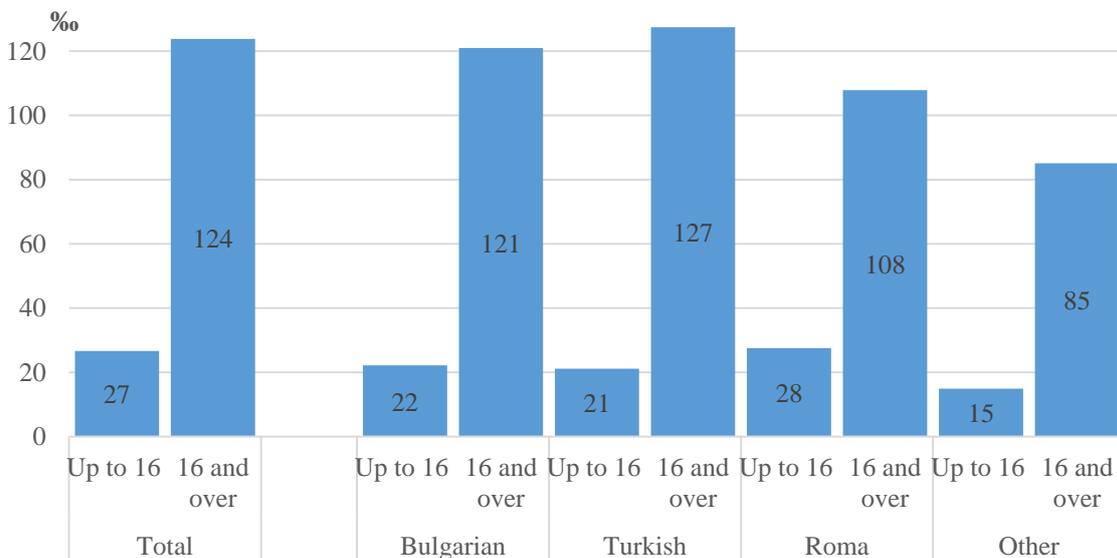
**Fig. 9. Persons with disabilities by age and percentage of lost working capacity/type and degree of disability as of September 7, 2021**



**Persons with disabilities and ethnicity**

Among persons aged 16 and over, depending on the ethnic group to which they identify themselves, the intensity is highest for the Turkish ethnic group - 127 per 1 000 are persons with disabilities (Fig. 10). Among Bulgarians per 1 000 people aged 16 and over, 121 have been diagnosed with disabilities. Among the Roma, this indicator is 108 per 1 000 people of the population of this age. The lowest value of the coefficient is for persons who self-identified as belonging to other ethnic groups - 85 per 1 000 people.

**Fig. 10. Persons with disabilities by ethnicity and age groups per 1 000 people of the population as of September 7, 2021**



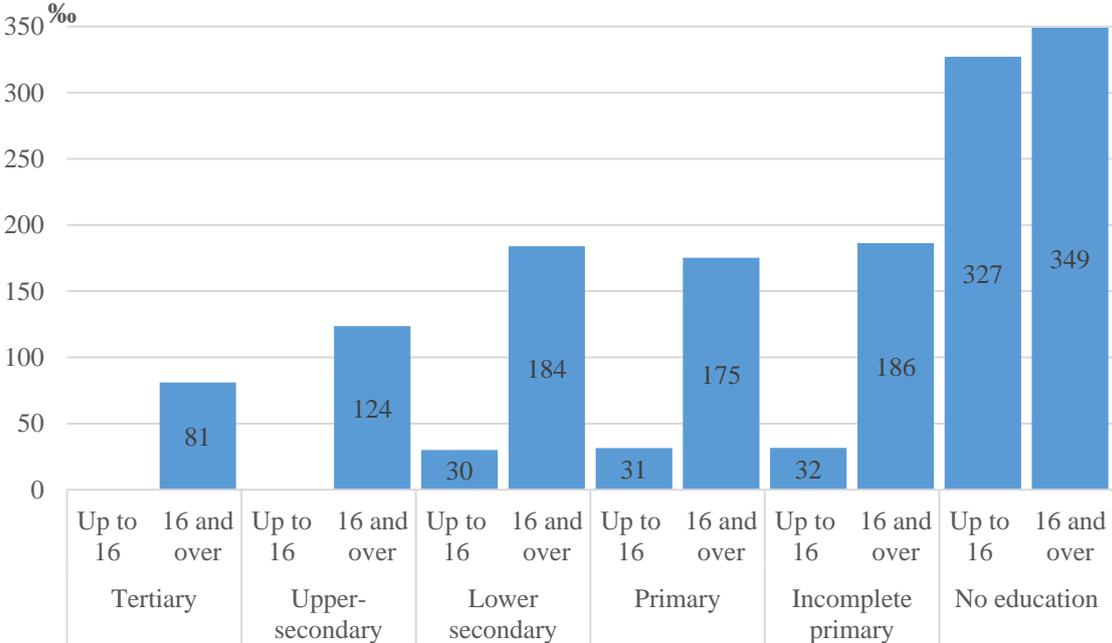
Among children, the highest prevalence rate of disabilities is for the Roma ethnic group - 28 out of 1 000 children are disabled. Among children from the Bulgarian ethnic group, the intensity is 22 per 1 000, and its value is slightly higher than that for the Turkish ethnic group (21 per 1 000). As with persons aged 16 and over, children are least likely to have disabilities among those who self-identified as another ethnic group.

**Persons with disabilities and education**

Data from the 2021 Census show that people with disabilities have a lower level of education than those without disabilities (Fig. 11). As of September 7, 2021, the highest number of persons with a recognized permanent reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability is among those who have never attended school for both children (327 per 1 000) and persons aged 16 and over (349 per 1 000). Among the population with incomplete primary education per 1 000 people over 16 years of age, 186 are disabled, and among children - 32. The intensity coefficients are similar for persons with primary and lower secondary education.

The intensity of people with disabilities is much lower among the population that has a higher degree of completed education. For every 1 000 persons aged 16 and over with upper-secondary education, 124 have reduced working capacity/degree of disability. The level of this indicator is the lowest for persons with tertiary education - 81 persons with disabilities per 1 000 persons with tertiary education among the population aged 16 and over. The established differences in the prevalence of disabilities among the population with different educational levels can be explained by the fact that people's disabilities limit their opportunities to acquire higher education and, on the other hand, people with lower or no education are exposed to greater risk of harm to their health in their employment.

**Fig. 11. Persons with disabilities by degree of completed education and age groups per 1 000 people of the population as of September 7, 2021**



## Economic activity of persons with disabilities

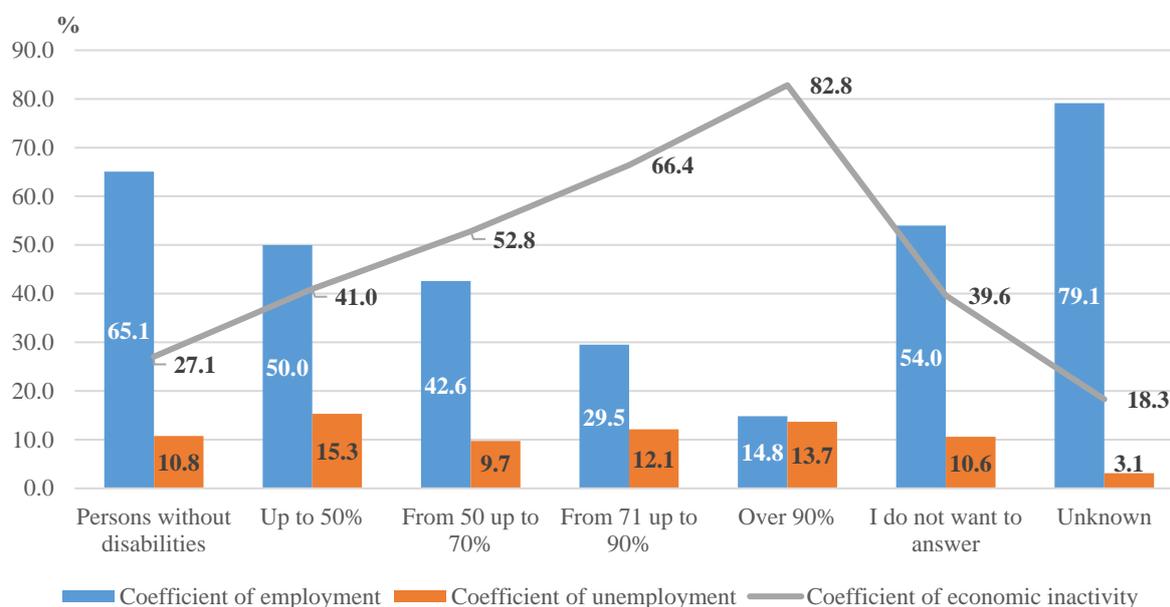
The data on the economic characteristics of the population refer to the position of persons on the labour market during the week preceding the critical moment of the census - August 31 - September 6, 2021. When calculating the indicators for comparisons and for the analysis of the labor market of disabled people, the totality of persons aged 16 - 64 years who answered the question about the presence of permanently reduced working capacity was used.

There are significant differences in the labour market participation of persons with and without disabilities. There are 116 864 persons with disabilities aged 16 - 64 who are economically active, and the coefficient of economic activity is 38.9%<sup>4</sup>. 38.0% of men and 39.9% of women with disabilities are economically active.

As expected, employment is highest<sup>5</sup> (50.0%) among persons certified with up to 50% permanently reduced working capacity (Fig. 12), and the lowest (14.8%) is the indicator for persons in the group above 90%.

People with disabilities are more often economically inactive than people without disabilities. The coefficient of economic inactivity among persons without disabilities is 27.1%, while among persons with reduced work capacity up to 50%, it is 41% and reaches nearly 83% among people with more than 90% reduced work capacity. The unemployment rate of persons with reduced working capacity ranges from 10% for persons from the group with 50 to 70% reduced working capacity to 15% for those from the group with established up to 50% reduced working capacity.

**Fig. 12. Coefficients of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity of persons aged 16 - 64 by permanently reduced working capacity/type and degree of disability as of September 7, 2021**



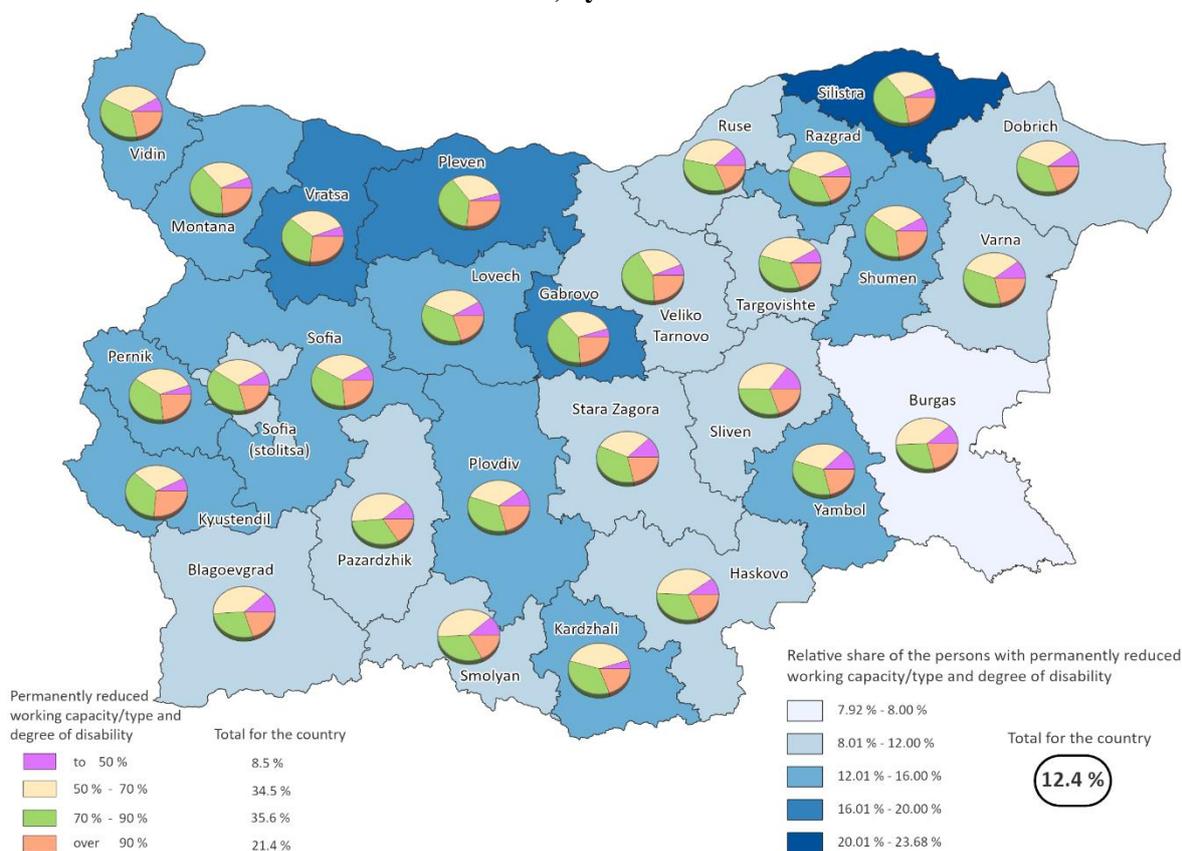
<sup>4</sup> It is calculated as a relative share of the economically active population (labour force) of the total population in the respective group.

<sup>5</sup> The employment rate represents the relative share of employed persons from the total population in the respective group.

## Territorial distribution of people with disabilities

The relative share of persons with disabilities aged 16 and over by districts varies widely - from 7.9% in Burgas to 23.7% in Silistra district (Fig. 13).

**Fig. 13. Relative share of persons with disabilities aged 16 and over as of September 7, 2021, by districts**



For 13 districts, the relative share is lower than the total for the country (12.4%). After Burgas district, the districts with the lowest shares are Blagoevgrad (8.7%), Stara Zagora (10.0%), Dobrich and Targovishte (10.7% each).

With the highest relative share of persons with disabilities aged 16 and over, after Silistra district, are the districts of Gabrovo and Pleven (17.3% each) and Vratsa (17.2%).

The relative share of children with disabilities by districts varies from 1.8% in Smolyan and Blagoevgrad districts to 7.1% in Vidin district (Fig. 14). The share of children with disabilities in 16 districts is below the national average (2.7%). With the lowest values after Smolyan and Blagoevgrad districts are Stara Zagora and Dobrich districts (2.0% each) and Silistra, Sliven and Lovech (2.1% each).

The districts of Vidin (7.1%), Vratsa and Montana (4.6% each) have the highest relative shares of children with disabilities.

**Fig. 14. Relative share of children with disabilities as of September 7, 2021, by districts**

