
Poland: Wiosna report, the pandemic causes the number of poor people to grow. Huge problems for children, old and disabled people

In 2020, coronavirus is just one of the problems that are affecting 1.6 million Poles, including 300 thousand children (4% of the total population of the country), who live below the extreme poverty threshold: this has been stated by the authors of the yearly report of Wiosna, a national association that supports the needier ones. In Poland, the minimum income amounts to 614 zloty, or Pln (135 euros), per person a month, or 1,658 Pln (365 euros) per household, considering a household composed of two adults and two children. On average, the less wealthy can afford to spend about 3 euros a day. The people most at risk are those who live in the country, have a low level of education and a disability. Disabled people, according to the estimates of the Polish statistics bureau, amount to 3.5 to 4 million. One out of three of them manages to have a profitable job. Wiosna reckons that in 2020, because of the pandemic, the number of poor people in Poland will increase up to 3.7 million and points out that even just a minor misfortune or accident can bring one in four citizens without savings under the minimum threshold. In addition, only half of those who have set aside some savings over the years can survive without earning anything for longer than one month. So, while a fifth of the population, that is, over 7 million people, are aged over 65, 39.4% of Poles are at risk of poverty. One out of three old people receive a pension of under 1,800 Pln (394 euros). One in two over-80s is a woman living on her own and often very lonely: in the Internet age, nearly 7% of old people do not even have a telephone. Even now, 17% of old people say they have not enough means to get the essentials, including paying the bills and buying medicines, but it has been estimated that in 30 years' time the number of over-60s in Poland will account for 40% of the population.

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