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In brief

- This review article describes the labor market situation of people with disabilities in Germany, including key institutional regulations, support services and current reforms.
- People with disabilities continue to face significant disadvantages in the German labor market. A particular challenge lies in ensuring their long-term employability.
- Germany has a wide range of instruments to promote participation in working life. These include individual protection and support measures, as well as an employment obligation for employers. While these instruments create incentives, they can also have unintended consequences.
- Sheltered workshops for people with disabilities (WfbM) offer employment, rehabilitation, and social participation within the secondary labor market. However, transitions into the general labor market are extremely rare, and working conditions and pay have been criticized.
- In general, current reforms aim to strengthen inclusive employment and transitions into the general labor market. Evaluating the effectiveness of these policies remains an essential task for both researchers and policymakers.

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Summary

This article provides an overview of the labor market situation of people with (severe) disabilities in Germany, as well as the main institutional regulations, support measures, and recent reform initiatives. It synthesizes existing statistics and research findings rather than presenting an independent empirical analysis. The article focuses on how the participation of people with disabilities in working life is supported by the institutional framework and which challenges remain. This issue is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of demographic change: as the workforce ages, health impairments and disabilities, which frequently develop during working life, are also gaining importance.

Existing evidence shows that people with severe disabilities continue to face substantial disadvantages in the German labor market. Their labor force participation is lower and their unemployment rate higher than in the overall population. Moreover, the onset of a disability during working life can result in a permanent withdrawal from the labor market. Maintaining existing employment is therefore a key objective alongside improving access to the labor market.

Germany has established a comprehensive system to promote labor market participation. It includes special dismissal protection, vocational rehabilitation, and technical and financial assistance. At establishment level, disability representation bodies and inclusion officers are intended to support workplace inclusion. Another key instrument is the mandatory employment quota for employers with at least 20 employees. Empirical evidence suggests that the associated noncompliance fine can increase the employment of people with severe disabilities, while also generating unintended adjustments by firms.

Inclusion firms and sheltered workshops constitute further important elements of the German system. Sheltered workshops in particular remain subject to criticism. While they provide employment, vocational rehabilitation, and opportunities for social participation, transitions to the general labor market are extremely rare. Low earnings, limited opportunities for professional development, and the lack of formal recognition of acquired skills are additional concerns. These issues raise questions about the extent to which the current workshop system fulfills its objective of inclusion.

Recent reforms aim to strengthen employment in the general labor market, improve support for employers, and facilitate transitions from sheltered workshops to regular employment. They indicate an increased policy focus on inclusive employment. However, there is currently no scientific evidence on whether these recent measures actually improve the employment prospects of people with disabilities or promote sustainable transitions into regular employment. Evaluating their effectiveness therefore remains an important task for future research.

Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Beitrag gibt einen Überblick über die Arbeitsmarktsituation von Menschen mit (Schwer-)Behinderungen in Deutschland sowie über zentrale institutionelle Regelungen, Unterstützungsangebote und aktuelle Reformansätze. Er bündelt hierzu bestehende Statistiken und Forschungsergebnisse und stellt keine eigenständige empirische Untersuchung dar. Im Mittelpunkt steht die Frage, wie die Teilhabe von Menschen mit Behinderungen am Arbeitsleben institutionell gefördert wird und welche Herausforderungen dabei weiterhin bestehen. Zusätzliche Bedeutung gewinnt diese Frage durch den demografischen Wandel: Mit einer alternden Erwerbsbevölkerung steigt auch die Relevanz gesundheitlicher Einschränkungen und Behinderungen, die häufig erst im Laufe des Erwerbslebens entstehen.

Die bestehenden Befunde zeigen, dass Menschen mit Schwerbehinderungen auf dem deutschen Arbeitsmarkt weiterhin deutlich benachteiligt sind. Ihre Erwerbsbeteiligung ist geringer und ihre Arbeitslosenquote höher als die der Gesamtbevölkerung. Zudem kann der Eintritt einer Behinderung während des Erwerbslebens zu einem dauerhaften Rückzug aus dem Arbeitsmarkt führen. Neben der Verbesserung des Zugangs zum Arbeitsmarkt kommt deshalb insbesondere dem Erhalt bestehender Beschäftigungsverhältnisse eine zentrale Bedeutung zu.

Deutschland verfügt über ein umfangreiches System zur Förderung der beruflichen Teilhabe. Dazu gehören individueller Kündigungsschutz, Leistungen der beruflichen Rehabilitation und technische oder finanzielle Unterstützung am Arbeitsplatz. Auf betrieblicher Ebene sollen unter anderem Schwerbehindertenvertretungen und Inklusionsbeauftragte die Teilhabe fördern. Eine zentrale Rolle spielt zudem die gesetzliche Pflicht für Arbeitgeber ab 20 Beschäftigten, einen Mindestanteil von schwerbehinderten Menschen zu beschäftigen. Empirische Befunde zeigen, dass die andernfalls zu zahlende Ausgleichsabgabe die Beschäftigung schwerbehinderter Menschen fördert, aber auch unerwünschte betriebliche Anpassungsreaktionen hervorrufen kann.

Neben dem allgemeinen Arbeitsmarkt bilden Inklusionsbetriebe und Werkstätten für behinderte Menschen (WfbM) wichtige Bestandteile des deutschen Systems. Insbesondere die Werkstätten stehen jedoch in der Kritik. Zwar bieten sie Beschäftigung, berufliche Rehabilitation und soziale Teilhabe, Übergänge in den allgemeinen Arbeitsmarkt bleiben jedoch äußerst selten. Kritisiert werden zudem niedrige Einkommen, begrenzte Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten und die fehlende Nutzbarkeit der dort erworbenen Qualifikationen. Damit stellt sich die Frage, inwieweit das bestehende Werkstattsystem seinem Inklusionsauftrag gerecht wird.

Vor diesem Hintergrund zielen jüngere politische Reformen darauf ab, die (inklusive) Beschäftigungschancen auf dem allgemeinen Arbeitsmarkt zu verbessern, die Arbeitgeber besser zu unterstützen und die Übergänge aus den Werkstätten in reguläre Beschäftigung zu flexibilisieren. Ob die neuen Maßnahmen die Arbeitsmarktchancen von Menschen mit Behinderungen tatsächlich verbessern und nachhaltige Übergänge in reguläre Beschäftigung fördern, ist bislang jedoch wissenschaftlich nicht untersucht. Die Evaluation dieser Reformen stellt daher eine wichtige Aufgabe für die weitere Forschung dar.

1 Introduction

Declining fertility rates and longer life expectancy have led to older people making up an increasing proportion of the population in industrialized countries (OECD 2023). The demographic shift towards an ageing population represents an increasing challenge for societies and labor markets. Getting older is often linked to long-term health impairments including disabilities, as disabilities mostly develop over the course of a lifetime (Meyer & Mok 2019). Thus, promoting the integration in the labor market and maintaining the employability of employees despite disability is of central importance.

The German labor market is strongly affected by the demographic transition: Between 2001 and 2025, the share of employees subject to social security contributions aged 55 and above increased substantially, rising from just 9.7 percent to 24.4 percent (Federal Employment Agency 2026a). Population ageing is also reflected in an increase in the share of disabled individuals. While 6.7 million individuals (8.1% of the population) were classified as having a severe disability in 2001, this number rose to 7.9 million individuals (9.3% of the population) in 2023 (Federal Statistical Office 2024).

In this context, it is important to note that disability is a multidimensional concept, which poses a number of challenges for measurement and standardization. Disability is subjective, with varied experiences and effects. Furthermore, establishing a universally comparable definition is challenging due to differing socio-economic and institutional frameworks across countries (Jones 2021). Accordingly, this article adopts the official definition of a recognized (severe) disability used in Germany.¹ This definition encompasses physical, mental or psychological disorders that are atypical for the patient's age group and have long-term health consequences. The disorder must impair the patient's ability to participate in social life. Anyone wishing to acquire disability status must undergo a formal procedure carried out by the local pension office (Versorgungsamt). For this procedure, the applicant must submit all medical documents related to the relevant health impairment(s) from treating physicians. The pension office evaluates the degree of disability (dod) on a scale ranging from 20 to 100. An individual is severely disabled if the dod is equal to or greater than 50. In 2023, 22 percent of severely disabled individuals had a dod of 100, while 35 percent had a dod of 50. Physical causes, in particular organ disorders, account for the majority of severe disabilities (58%), followed by mental/emotional (15%) and cerebral disorders (9%) (Federal Statistical Office 2024). Individuals with a dod between 30 and 50 may be considered severely disabled in the labor market if the disability restricts their ability to find and maintain employment (equivalent status).² Applying for official recognition of a disability is generally voluntary. Individuals with a degree of disability of 30 or 40 may also voluntarily decide whether to apply for equivalent status, where eligible. Once a disability status has been officially recognized, individuals are generally free to decide whether to disclose this

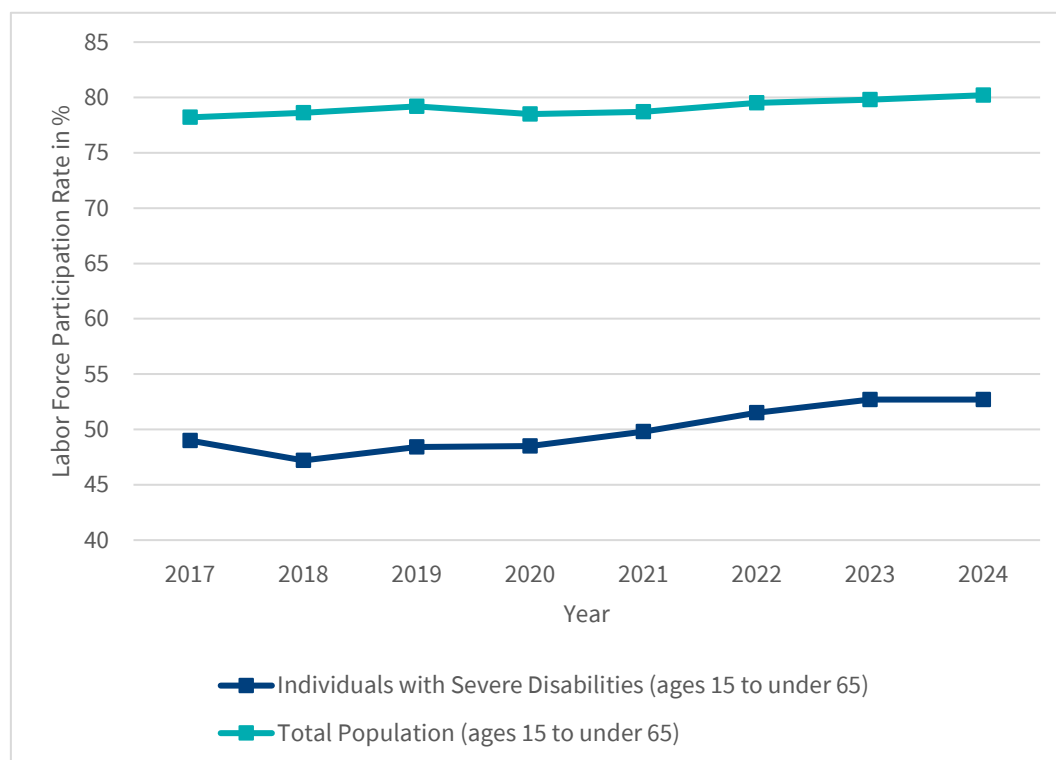
¹ Note that defining disability in terms of official recognition has become increasingly uncommon in contemporary social policy discourse (Rauch & Reims 2020). However, official statistics still rely on this conceptualization, which is why the empirical evidence and the discussion in this article are mainly shaped by this official definition.

² An application for equivalent status must be submitted to and approved by the local public employment agency.

status to their employer, irrespective of whether they have severe disability or equivalent status.³ Once approved, the disability status is normally valid for five years. A disability status is granted indefinitely only if the severity of the disability is unchangeable or deteriorates over time.

When it comes to employment opportunities, people with disabilities in Germany have substantially lower chances than the nondisabled population. In 2023, the labor force participation rate for severely disabled people aged 15 to 64 was just about 52.7 percent, compared to 80.2 percent for the total population (Federal Employment Agency 2025a). The unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities in 2025 remains higher with 12 percent compared to the reference rate of 7.6 percent (Figure 2). In an international OECD comparison, Germany stands out for the notably pronounced gap in unemployment rates between individuals with and without disabilities (OECD 2022).⁴

Figure 1: Labor Force Participation Rate, 2017-2024

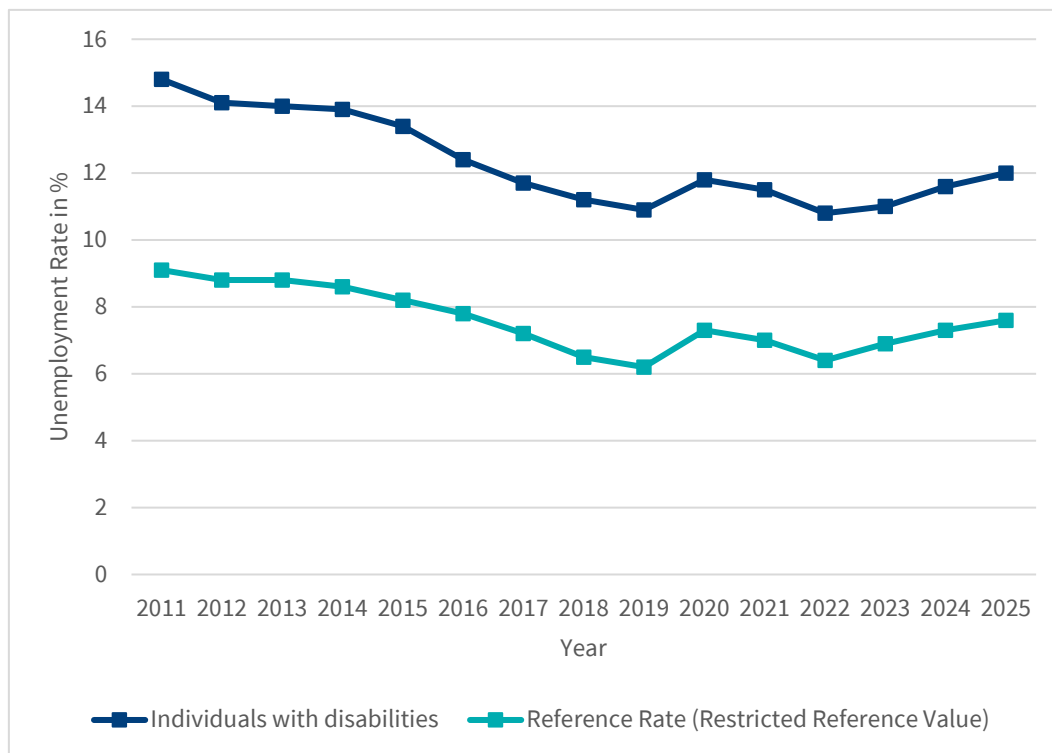


Source: Federal Employment Agency (2025a), based on data from the Federal Statistical Office and Eurostat.

³ There is only an obligation to disclose the disability status to the employer if the disability affects the job in such a way that the disability puts the disabled worker or his/her colleagues at risk.

⁴ Cross-country comparisons should be interpreted with some caution. For European countries, the OECD figures are based on harmonized EU-SILC data and a broadly consistent survey-based definition of disability. Disability is identified based on self-reported long-term health conditions and associated limitations in usual activities, rather than on national legal or administrative disability status. Accordingly, for Germany, the figures do not refer specifically to persons officially recognized as (severely) disabled under German law. Despite the harmonized survey approach, cross-country differences in self-reporting, perceptions of disability and the resulting composition of the population classified as having a disability may affect comparability.

Figure 2: Unemployment Rate, 2011-2025



Note: There is no official unemployment rate for people with severe disabilities. However, for the purposes of an annual report, the Federal Employment Agency calculates unemployment rates for people with severe disabilities based on restricted reference values. For details of the calculation, see Federal Employment Agency (2025b), p. 39.

Source: Federal Employment Agency (2025b).

As most disabilities develop during working life, maintaining employment after disability onset is crucial for the labor market integration of disabled people. However, this is often not achieved: the onset of a disability leads to a significant reduction in labor market participation, with the probability of being employed decreasing by more than 16 percentage points within five years. Many leave the labor market permanently, presumably moving into support systems outside employment. Those who remain in the labor market often reduce their working hours or switch to less physically or psychosocially demanding jobs, while changing employer plays only a minor role (Collischon et al. 2025).

Given the disadvantages people with disabilities face in the labor market, Germany has established several institutions and support schemes to promote a better integration. These are explained below alongside a discussion of their effects.

2 People with Disabilities in the General Labor Market

Generally, the General Equal Treatment Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the grounds of disability. The Act applies to all stages of the employment relationship, including recruitment, hiring, working conditions (e.g., wages), promotion, and dismissal. Thus, employers are generally not permitted to treat employees or applicants with disabilities less favorably than those without disabilities solely due to their disability. However, as described in the previous chapter, people with (severe) disabilities still face disadvantages in the labor market, which is why special institutional arrangements are in place for them.

2.1 Institutional Protection and Support for Disabled Employees

A worker with a recognized (severe) disability status is institutionally better protected in the labor market in several respects. Firstly, severely disabled workers are subject to special protection against dismissal. If the severely disabled worker has worked in a firm for more than six months, the employer must obtain permission to dismiss him or her from the local integration office. However, this rule can also act as a barrier to employment. Around one in five establishments mentions the reduced flexibility with regard to dismissal protection as one reason they do not employ more people with disabilities (Hiesinger & Kubis 2022). Secondly, a severely disabled worker is entitled to more vacation time, namely additional five days per year.⁵ In addition, having a recognized disability status may help employees or job seekers obtain personal assistances in the workplace or financial support in terms of income subsidies. If participation on the labor market is endangered or limited (e.g. young people have limited chances of securing an apprenticeship or work experienced individuals cannot perform their current/previous job due to their health condition), individuals with disabilities are entitled for vocational rehabilitation programs. These comprise various special active labor market programs (e.g. training in specialized education centers) as well as technical assistances (e.g. Braille keyboard, ramps etc.) and other disability specific programs (see Reims & Schels 2022 and Rauch & Reims 2025 for an overview over programs for young people in their school-to work transition and those that aim to return to work).

2.2 Employer's Rights and Obligations

With regard to the employer, German social law contains a mandatory employment quota to promote the employment of disabled individuals, as is the case in many other OECD countries: Public and private employers with at least 20 employees have to fill at least five percent of their positions with severely disabled workers. For small firms, special rules apply: Firms with 20 to less than 40 employees must fill at least one position with a severely disabled individual per year, while firms with 40 to less than 60 employees must fill at least two positions with a severely

⁵ Note that the special protection against dismissal also applies to individuals with a *dod* of 30 or 40 who have been granted equivalent status (*Gleichstellung*), while the statutory entitlement to more vacation time applies only to individuals with a recognized severe disability (*dod* of at least 50) and not to individuals with equivalent status.

disabled individual. Firms with 60 or more employees must meet the five percent quota. The aim of this quota is to create an incentive for employers to employ disabled workers. Firms that do not comply with this obligation have to pay a noncompliance fine (Ausgleichsabgabe). The fine is based on the number of unfilled positions and is graduated according to the degree of noncompliance, currently ranging from 155-815 Euro per month and unfilled position. Firms can receive a 50 percent credit for the noncompliance fine by placing orders to sheltered workshops for people with disabilities (Werkstätten für behinderte Menschen) (see Section 3). The fine must be paid to the integration offices, which use it mainly to finance vocational rehabilitation programs and support services for severely disabled individuals.

As in almost all countries with a quota system, the employment quota is generally not met in Germany. In 2024, 60.6 percent of employers with 20 or more employees did not fulfill the employment obligation and thus had to pay the noncompliance fine. Furthermore, approximately one quarter (24.7%) did not employ any severely disabled workers. In general, public employers are better at fulfilling their quotas (Federal Employment Agency 2026b). With regard to the effectiveness of the quota system in Germany, Hiesinger (2022) estimates intended and unintended effects of the quota at the 40-employee threshold, above which firms must employ one additional severely disabled worker, during the time period 2004-2011. The author finds remarkable effects: Firms respond to the quota in the intended way and employ significantly more severely disabled workers when they are located just above the threshold. However, there are also unintended effects of the quota, as some firms purposely stay below the threshold and adjust their workforce accordingly to avoid the (increase in the) noncompliance fine. This behavior (bunching) is particularly pronounced among those firms that face the largest increase in costs at the threshold.

Firms requiring assistance in filling their open positions with individuals with disabilities can approach various institutions, including inclusion offices (Inklusionsämter), Statutory Pension Insurance, the Federal Employment Agency, chambers of commerce and the Supplementary Independent Participation Counselling Office (Ergänzende unabhängige Teilhabeberatung, EUTB). Many small and medium-sized firms have problems finding the right institution to help them hire and employ individuals with disabilities. This is why the Unified Contact Points for Employers (Einheitliche Ansprechstellen für Arbeitgeber, EAA) were introduced in 2022. They were established to help employers navigate the complex landscape of services. Furthermore, the EAA inform, council, and aim to proactively raise employers' awareness of topics and issues concerning individuals with disabilities. They thereby try to foster a greater openness towards inclusion (York et al. 2025).

2.3 Industrial Relations

Apart from this, industrial relations in Germany play an important role in shaping employment conditions for people with disabilities and promoting workplace inclusion. First, works councils are key actors at the establishment level and are legally mandated to safeguard employee interests. This mandate explicitly includes the interests of employees with disabilities. Works councils participate in decisions related to working conditions, workplace organization, and personnel policies, and are required to promote the integration and employment security of disadvantaged groups, including employees with disabilities. Secondly, the disability

representation body (Schwerbehindertenvertretung) represents the specific interests of employees with severe disabilities. It is elected by employees with severe disabilities and those with equivalent status in the establishment. It monitors compliance with disability-related legal provisions, supports affected employees in individual cases, and works closely with the employer and works council to ensure adequate working conditions (Blank & Brehmer 2022). Thirdly, the inclusion officer (Inklusionsbeauftragter) is appointed by the employer and has an internal coordination and compliance function. This role involves ensuring the fulfillment of statutory obligations towards employees with severe disabilities, in particular regarding recruitment, workplace adjustments, and cooperation with the inclusion offices.

However, coverage by workplace representation bodies is not universal among employees with disabilities. While employers are required to appoint an inclusion officer when employing at least one individual with severe disabilities, the establishment of a works council is voluntary rather than mandatory. In 2024, only 37 percent of employees in the private sector worked in establishments with a works council (Hohendanner & Kohaut 2025). In addition, a disability representation body has to be elected in establishments with five severely disabled employees. Since many establishments employ fewer than five individuals with severe disabilities, a substantial proportion of these employees falls outside the scope of formal disability representation bodies.

2.4 Inclusion Firms

A further institutional feature of the German labor market is the existence of inclusion firms (Inklusionsbetriebe), a specific type of employer dedicated to promoting the employment of individuals with severe disabilities who face particular barriers in the general labor market (e.g., individuals with intellectual disabilities). In inclusion firms, individuals with severe disabilities must account for at least 30 percent of the workforce, while their share should generally not exceed 50 percent. These firms operate under regular market conditions while providing adapted working environments and additional support tailored to the needs of their employees. They receive financial support from funds generated through the noncompliance fine (see Section 2.2). Generally, their aim is to facilitate sustainable employment and social inclusion through participation in working life. In 2024, Germany had approximately 1,000 inclusion firms with about 30,000 employees, including almost 14,000 individuals with severe disabilities (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Inklusionsfirmen 2025). Being part of the general labor market, inclusion firms serve as a bridge between regular employment and sheltered workshops described below.

3 People with Disabilities in Sheltered Workshops

3.1 Objectives and Structure of Sheltered Workshops in Germany

Individuals deemed unfit for conventional employment work for a minimum of three hours per day, yet capable of developing or maintaining work capacities, can enter a sheltered workshop. First, individuals complete an initial training phase of three months. Second, they transition to the vocational training phase, which lasts for 24 months. Third, if the prerequisites and opportunities for the general labor market remain unfulfilled, they enter the working phase. Currently, there are approximately 700 sheltered workshops in Germany offering employment to around 300,000 individuals (BAG WfbM 2025). Since 1994, the number of occupied places has increased continuously. Individuals with intellectual disabilities constitute the majority of individuals in sheltered employment (75%); however, persons with psychological disabilities now also account for a considerable proportion (22%) (Czedik 2026).

Sheltered workshops have a triple mandate. Besides their obligation for vocational rehabilitation (1), which encompasses the provision of vocational training, maintaining, developing, improving or restoring work capacity, they are also tasked with promoting inclusion (2). This is achieved by a) giving work opportunities and daily structures within the workshops as well as by b) supporting the transition to the general labor market. The third (3) mandate stipulates that the workshop as a firm must operate in a profitable manner. The three mandates are not easily distinguishable and may consequently interfere with each other. For instance, sheltered workshops may wish to retain the most effective workers, even if they are fit for the general labor market.

Only few people take and get the chance to enter the general labor market. The transition rate from sheltered employment to the general labor market per year is less than one percent (0.3% in 2015; 0.4% in 2019) (Engels et al. 2023).

3.2 Working Conditions, Income and Support Structures

Individuals working in a sheltered workshop receive a small salary. The monthly mean income in 2021 was 226 Euros per capita. Consequently, a significant share is dependent on disability pensions (43%) or basic income support (35%), while only 15 percent do not receive any benefits (either because they choose not to or are not required to) (Engels et al. 2023). The income that individuals receive varies considerably based on the location of work. Within the context of sheltered workshops, there exist “classical” roles on the premises of the workshop, which are distinct from off-site positions that are situated within the general labor market (ausgelagerte Einzel- oder Gruppenarbeitsplätze). In this regard, individuals from sheltered workshops are employed in off-site roles (about 9% of all work roles in sheltered workshops according to Engels et al. 2023), earning an average of 147 Euros more than their counterparts working within the workshops.

Generally, German firms are obliged to adhere to minimum wage regulations. This would also apply to sheltered workshops. Nonetheless, in accordance with their triple mandate, workers in sheltered workshops are not generally regarded as employees in the conventional sense. Instead, they frequently enter in a so-called “arbeitnehmerähnliches Beschäftigungsverhältnis” (working relationship similar to that of an employee). This is primarily due to the perception that their (current) work capacity is not deemed sufficiently “productive” and/or the employment in sheltered workshops is regarded rehabilitative. Despite their low income, individuals in sheltered employment are eligible for disability pensions after 20 years of work in a sheltered workshop.

With respect to working conditions, employment in a sheltered workshop is often characterized by monotony and can be physically demanding. While there are to some extent works councils in sheltered workshops, many of these councils lack sufficient information regarding e.g. the income structure within sheltered workshops as these factors are highly opaque. Moreover, there are very few chances for professional advancement for those employed in sheltered workshops – both within the confines of workshops and in external settings. Individuals partake in training, yet the qualifications and skills they acquired in sheltered workshops are not formally recognized by the general labor market (Engels et al. 2023).

3.3 Criticism

Therefore, the most salient issues that have been the focus of widespread criticism include automatic transitions from (special) school to sheltered workshops for young people with intellectual disabilities, a lack of employee participation, bad working conditions as well as non-transparent income distributions and generally low income. Furthermore, the efficacy of sheltered workshops in facilitating the inclusion of individuals with disabilities is questionable; they are often criticized as creating a “special world” that segregates individuals with disabilities from the general population. This stands in direct opposition to the call for inclusion articulated by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The transition to the general labor market is mainly impeded by the following factors: 1) Skills acquired in sheltered workshops are not recognized by the general labor market, 2) there are no real working opportunities in the general labor market 3) about one third of those employed in sheltered workshops would like to leave sheltered employment to enhance income, social recognition and autonomy. However, this aspiration is often hindered by fears of losing their disability pensions and/or their social support networks (Engels et al. 2023).

4 Current Developments and Conclusion

In order to further promote the integration of people with disabilities into the general labor market and to address criticism of sheltered workshops, a number of reforms have recently been introduced or are planned in Germany.

For the general labor market, the introduction of the Unified Contact Points for Employers in 2022 aims to help employers recruit and employ people with disabilities. Furthermore, the 2024 Act on the Promotion of an Inclusive Labor Market introduced a new level of the noncompliance

fine, imposing heavier penalties on firms without any employees with disabilities. This Act also aims to encourage the transition from sheltered workshops to the general labor market. This way, a severely disabled employee who was previously employed in a sheltered workshop can now be counted towards two positions relevant for the fulfillment of the employment quota instead of one. In addition, the reform was intended to focus the funds from the noncompliance fine more strongly on the promotion of employment outside sheltered settings.

Regarding sheltered workshops, the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has recently identified four areas of action in this context (BAG WfbM 2023). These include 1) pathways into the general labor market through novel concepts of training and guidance for the vocational training phase and greater use of supported employment and the budget for employment, 2) strengthening transitions from sheltered workshops to regular employment, 3) reforming workshops' income system (increasing subsidies while maintaining the exemption for the minimum wages), and 4) improving participation opportunities for individuals with complex disabilities, through the development of community based support models.

In sum, recent reforms indicate a growing policy commitment to strengthening labor market inclusion in Germany. To the best of our knowledge, there is currently no scientific evidence regarding the impact of these reforms or reform initiatives on the employment prospects of disabled individuals in the general labor market. Future research should therefore assess whether these measures effectively improve labor market inclusion and facilitate transitions from sheltered employment to regular employment. Given the ongoing criticism from the UN CRPD, demographic change and a growing shortage of skilled workers, evaluating the effectiveness of these policies remains an essential task for both researchers and policymakers.

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