



Ministerstwo  
Edukacji Narodowej

# Specificity of adult education and learning in Poland

Meeting of the Finnish adult educators' union AKOL with representatives of the  
Ministry of National Education

Warsaw, April 23, 2026



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# Concept of adult education and learning

- **The understanding of the term ‘adult education’ has evolved in the recent decades**
- **Research and policy discourse have used a wide range of terms: continuing education, adult education and training, permanent education, lifelong education, lifelong lifewide learning in adulthood**
- **It is important to emphasise central position of individual, responsibility, motivation and individual learning experience**



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# Policy for adult learning and skills

- Since 2013, efforts have been made to embed in the field of education terms which are consistent with the definitions of lifelong learning (UNESCO, OECD and EU documents), including adult education and training
- At that time, the Government adopted new strategic documents, The Lifelong Learning Perspective (Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie) and The Human Capital Development Strategy (Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Ludzkiego)
- They defined basic policy terms for lifelong learning (LLL)



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# Policy for adult learning and skills

- The key factors in making LLL a reality are skills and conditions and opportunities for skills development, which are necessary for social capital enhancement, economic growth and high quality of life
- These are the central aspects of ‘The Integrated Skills Strategy 2030’ (ISS 2030) (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności) a public policy, the general part of which was adopted by the Government in January 2019, and the detailed part in December 2020 (last accessed August 2024) see here: <https://zsu2030.men.gov.pl/>



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# System solutions in adult education

- The organization of this system reflects the norms contained in Article 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland
- Constitution guarantees everyone (including adults) the right to education and free education in public schools and stipulates that education is compulsory until the age of 18
- At the same time, it imposes on public authorities the obligation to ensure universal and equal access to education for citizens



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# System solutions in adult education

- The Ministry of National Education coordinates the continuing education system for adults of all ages
- This system is comprehensively regulated by the Education Law, the Education System Act, and relevant implementing regulations (including the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of October 6, 2023, on continuing education in extracurricular settings)



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# System solutions in adult education

Under current law, continuing education in the education system provides adults with the opportunity to:

- study in schools for adults, i.e., primary schools for adults, general secondary schools for adults, vocational upper secondary schools, and post-secondary schools
- acquire and developing knowledge, skills, professional qualifications, and supplement general competencies through extracurricular (course) education for individuals who have completed compulsory schooling



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# System solutions in adult education

- Access to continuing education is ensured through the systemic integration (since 2012) of children's and youth education and adult continuing education
- This is being implemented in the field of vocational education in extracurricular forms (in vocational qualification courses, vocational skills courses, and from 2024 also in sector-specific vocational training)
- It is also possible to supplement general competencies in general competency courses



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# System solutions in adult education

- Education in public schools and vocational qualification courses is free; private education institutions offering training for the unemployed and job seekers often charge no or minimal fees
- Adapting learning forms and methods to the needs and capabilities of adults is a key point of reference for organizing continuing education and developing a diversified educational offering
- This includes learning in schools or out of school, in forms diversified in terms of duration and frequency of classes, as well as using distance learning methods and techniques



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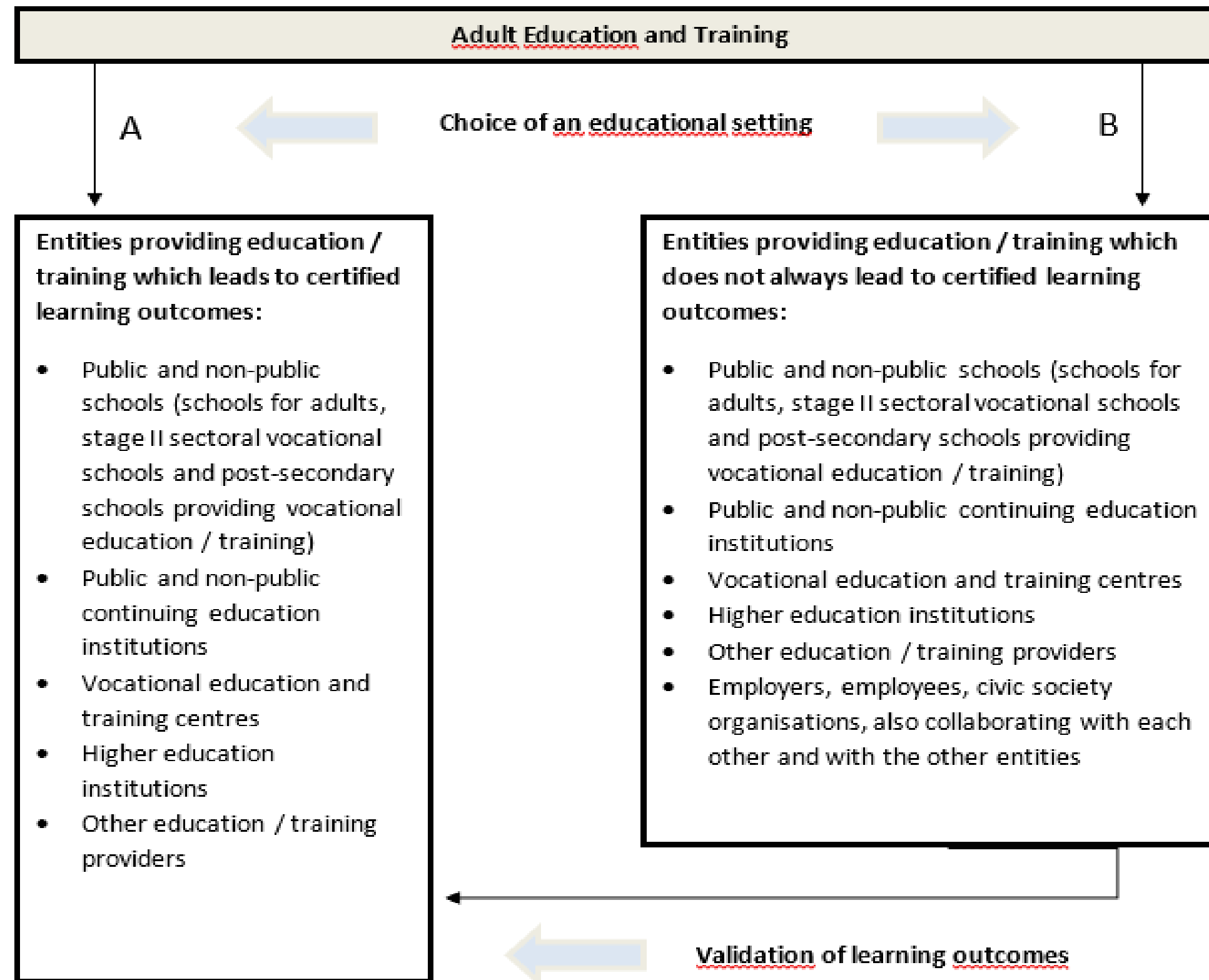


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# System of formal and non-formal adult education



# Adult participation rate in education and training

- Despite the systemic solutions described above, primarily focused on formal adult education, their participation in education and training, as monitored in European studies, is quite low
- This is determined by the method used to study adult participation in non-formal education



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# Adult participation rate in education and training

- Our national study, the Human Capital survey, coordinated by experts from the Jagiellonian University, shows significantly higher results than European surveys
- In our opinion, it is better adapted to the specific nature of adult learning in Poland, especially in the area of non-formal education



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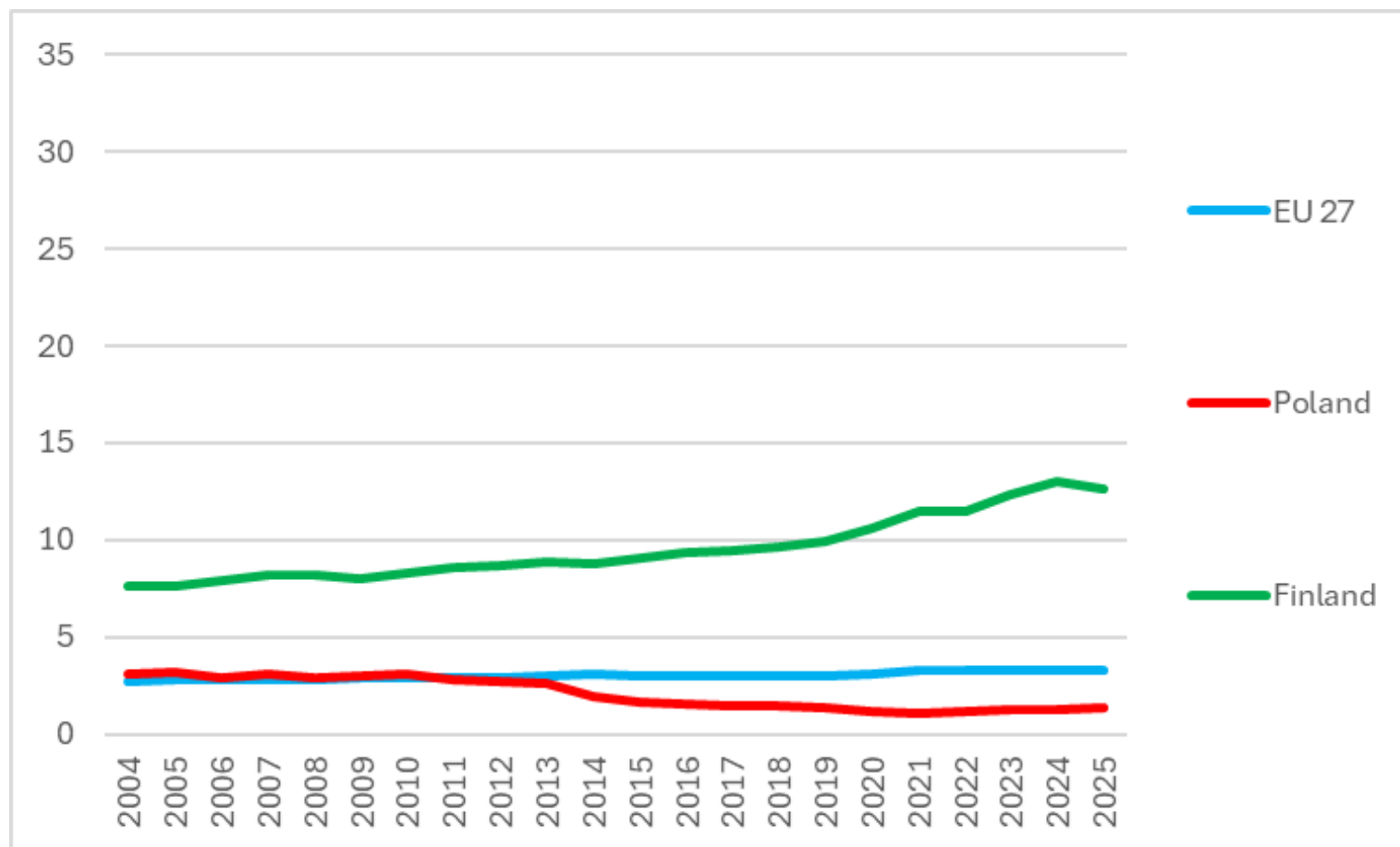
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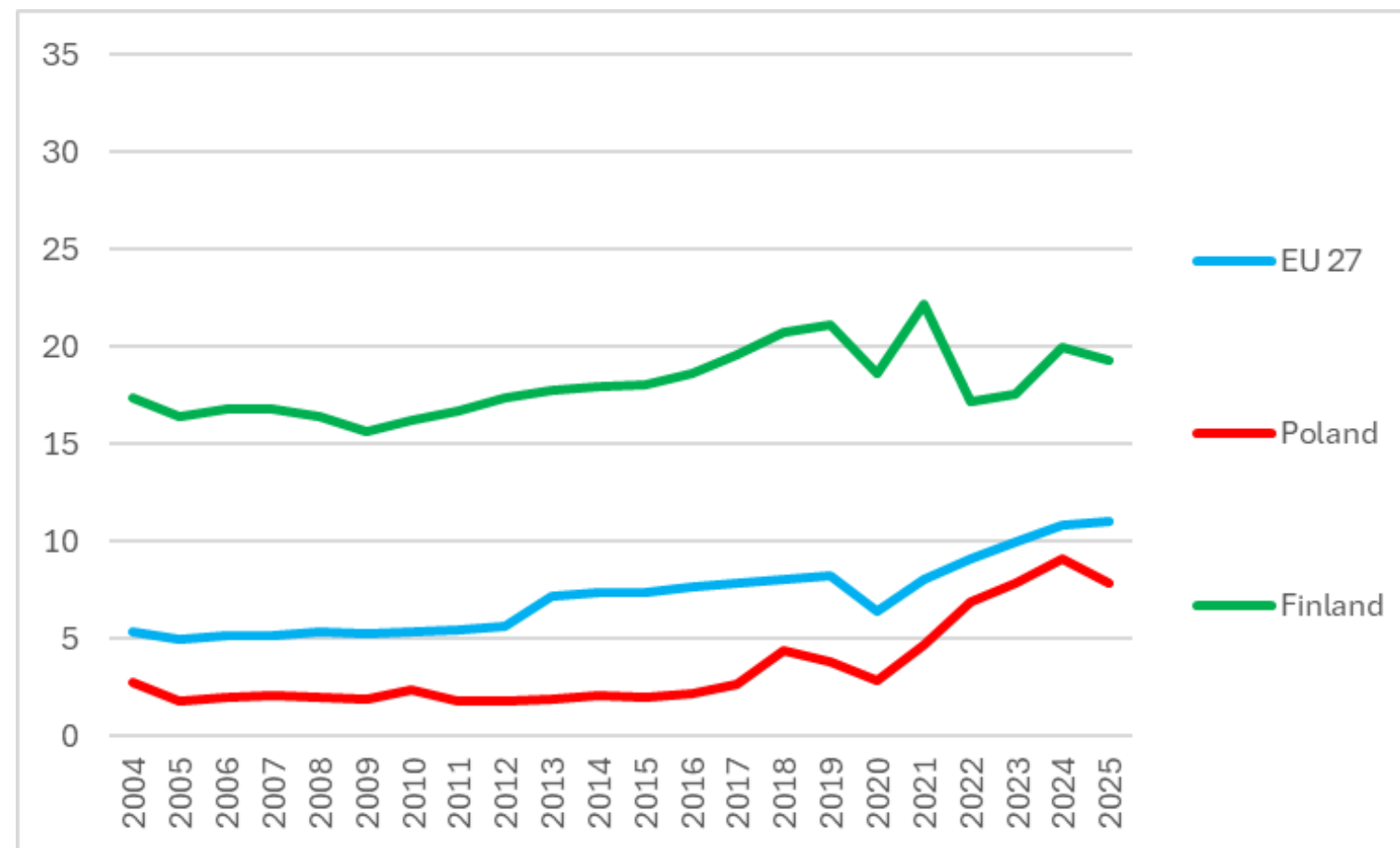


# Adult participation rate in education and training

Adult (aged 25-64) participation rate in **formal education** (last 4 weeks), Eurostat, LFS, 2025



Adult (aged 25-64) participation rate in **non-formal education** (last 4 weeks), Eurostat, LFS, 2025



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# Adult participation rate in education and training

- Interpretation of data from European research requires taking into account the specificity of adult learning in Poland against the background of the dominance of formal education in our country
- Poland is among the top countries in the EU and OECD in reducing low educational attainment level and early leavers from education and training
- We are also seeing some of the fastest progress in disseminating higher education



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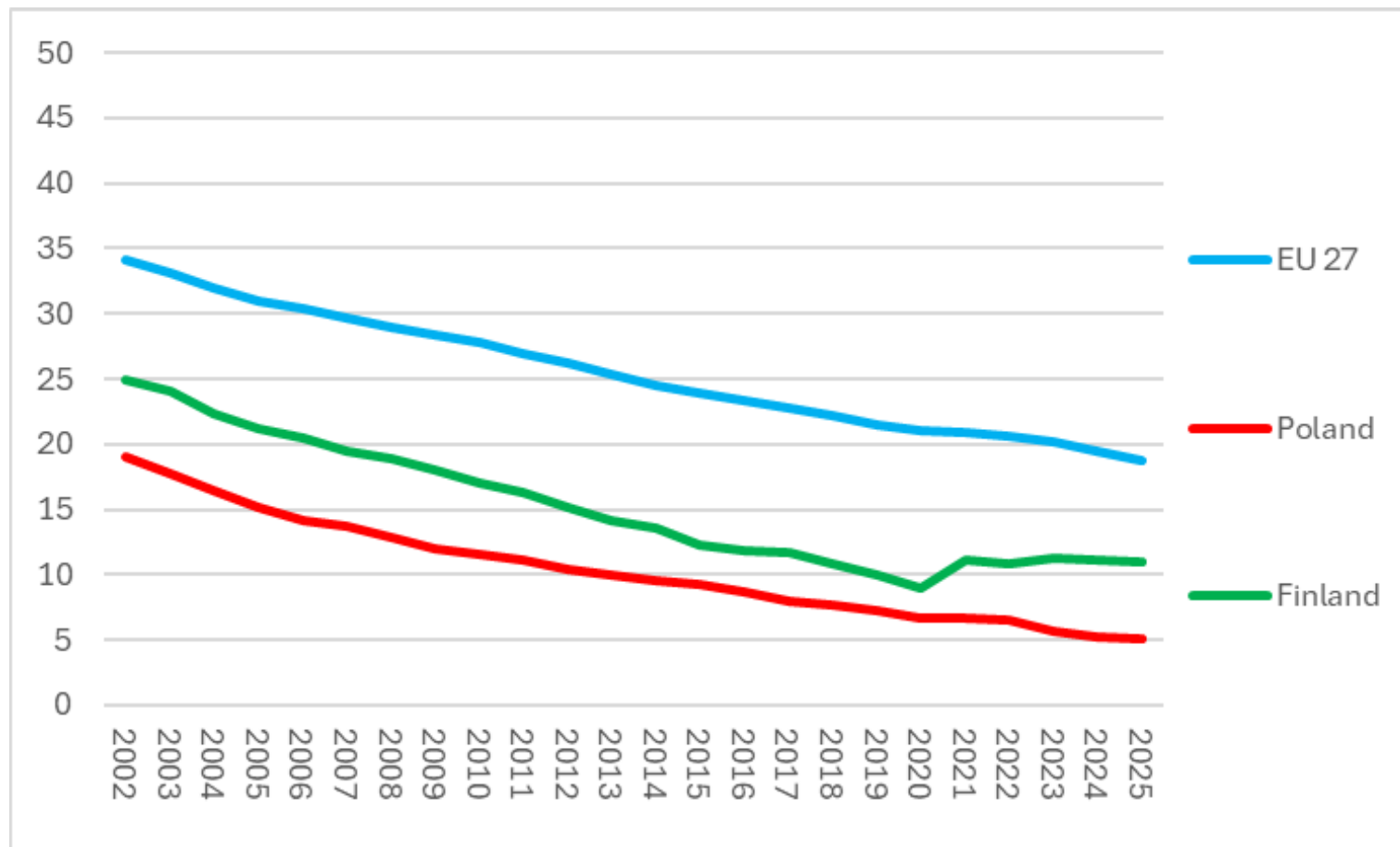
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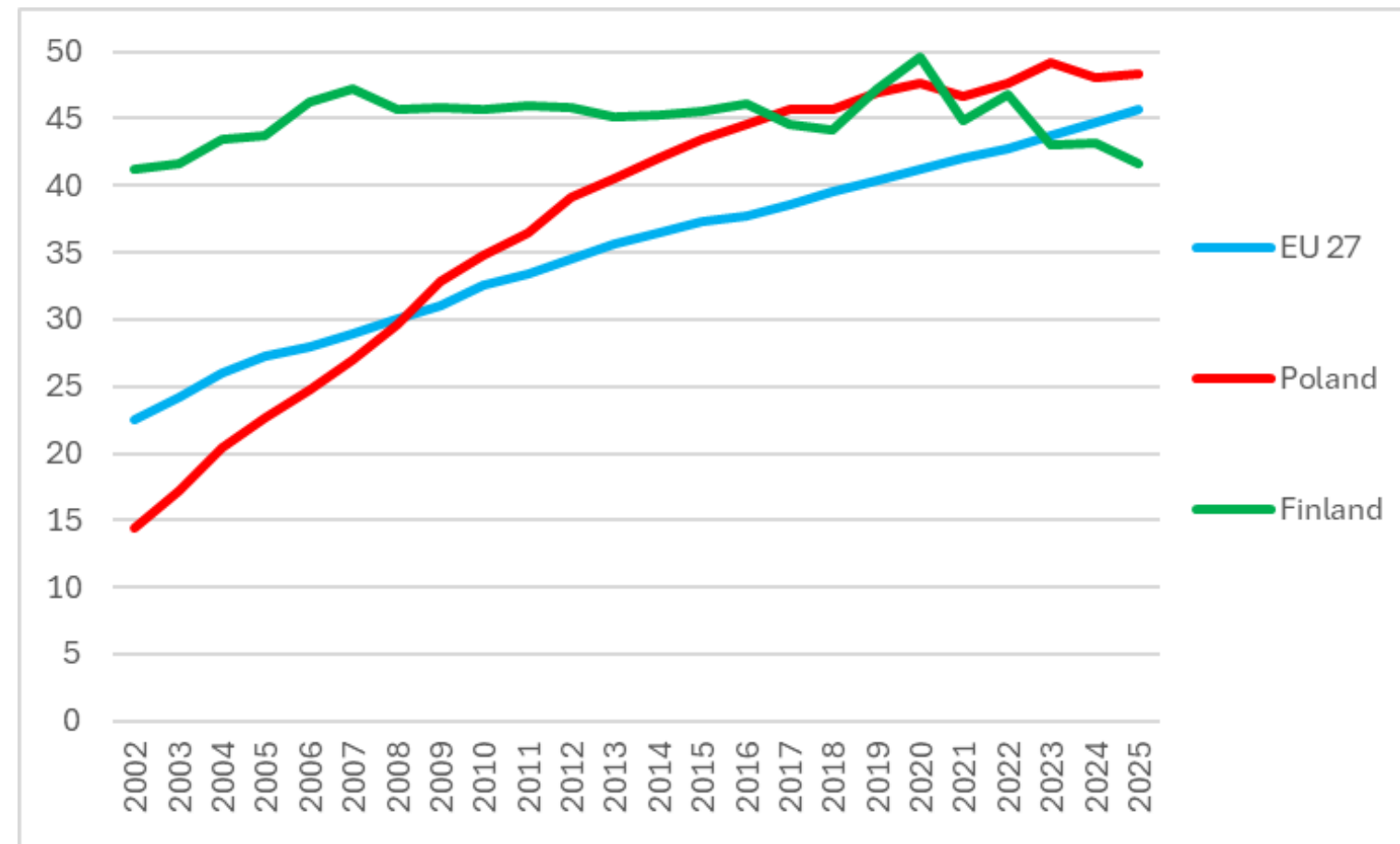


# Adult educational attainment level

**Adult (aged 25-64) by educational attainment level, Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 0-2), Eurostat, LFS, 2025**



**Adult (aged 30-34) by educational attainment level, tertiary education (ISCED levels 5-8), Eurostat, LFS, 2025**



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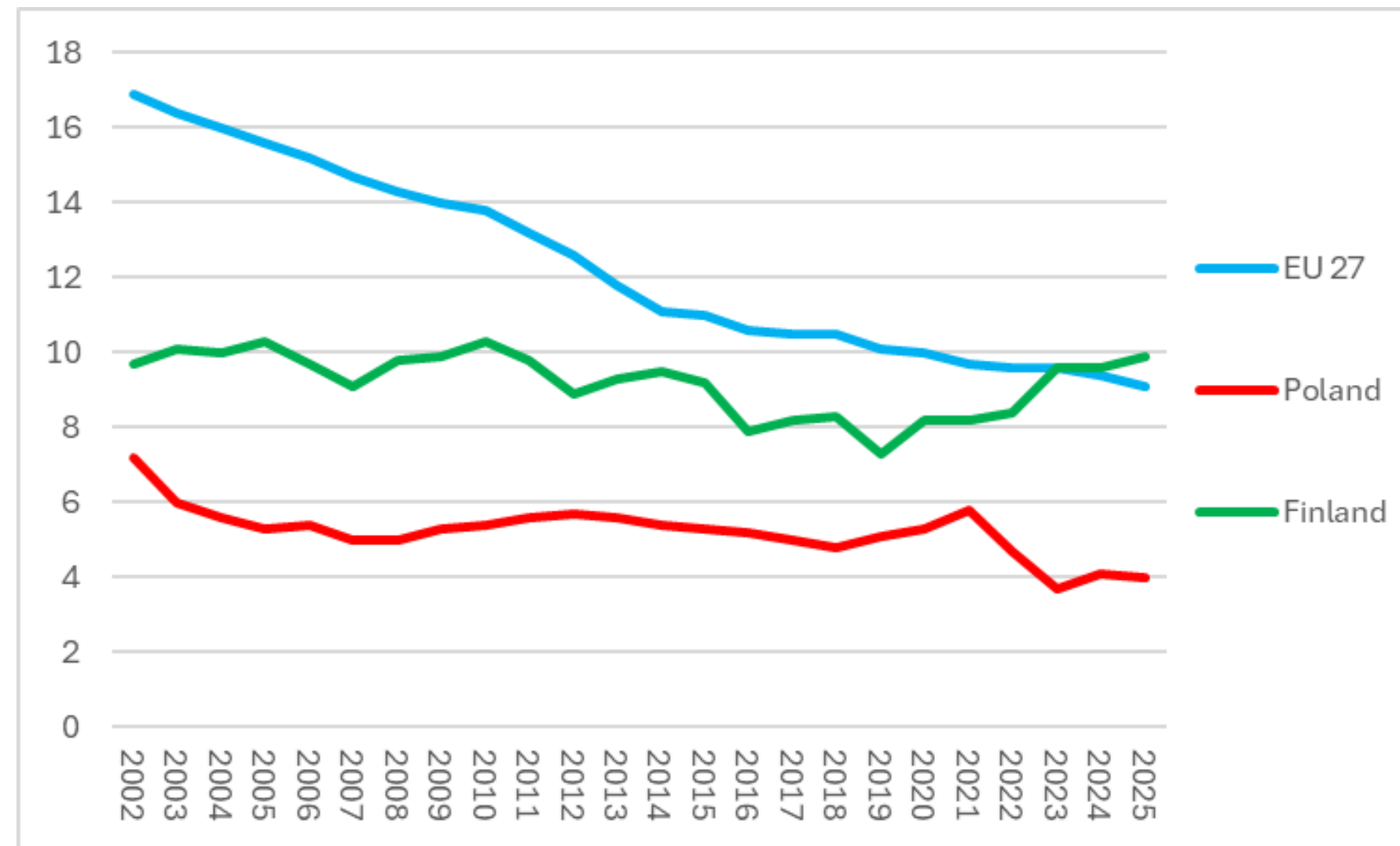
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# Early leavers from education and training

Early leavers from education and training (population from 18 to 24 years), Eurostat, LFS, 2025



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Thank you for your attention

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