

Regional information Sachsen-Anhalt (Saxony-Anhalt) / Germany

Sachsen-Anhalt is one of the five New Federal States in Eastern-Germany (largest cities: Halle (233.000) and Magdeburg (231.000, 2010). Since the German reunification the state is strongly affected by the consequences of outmigration, over aging and deindustrialisation. Young people, especially young women, are disproportionately overrepresented among the out-migrants. Especially the rural and old industrialised parts of Sachsen-Anhalt are affected by a pronounced, long-lasting depopulation and imbalanced sex ratio with only between 78 and 85 females per 100 males in the age-group 20-29.

In the former GDR the region was an important location of the chemical and heavy industries. Massive job losses caused by the transformation from planned to market economy could not be counterbalanced by new jobs created in other economic sectors. As a consequence, the unemployment rate is well above the German average but has been decreasing almost steadily over the last decade from 20.2 % (2000) to 10.4 % (2011). Among women the same trend has been visible. The unemployment rate of women decreased from 22.8 % to 10.1 % showing a convergence towards the average value for Sachsen-Anhalt. Youth unemployment is an important social and economic issue in Sachsen-Anhalt. Among the 15-24 year old the unemployment rate has been notably higher than the average with 14 % in 2011. At the same time first effects of a shortage of skilled labour are becoming apparent. The difficult economic situation, wage differences especially between eastern and western German regions as well as unattractive conditions on the female labour market are supposed to be important factors when explaining out-migration of young women from Sachsen-Anhalt. The peripheral rural areas are increasingly affected by a downward spiral of deindustrialisation, job losses, out-migration and falling demand for goods and services. At a progressing rate, this vicious circle also negatively influences small and middle-sized towns in Sachsen-Anhalt.

Due to the economic structure the labour market in Sachsen-Anhalt is traditionally characterized by industry and agriculture. On the one hand the demographic change with the closure of schools and kindergartens narrows job offers e.g. in social and educational sector. On the other hand a shortage in some fields of the labour market, like the health care sector becomes apparent due to the process of over aging. Even women in Sachsen-Anhalt show high labour force participation, many of them are working in part-time jobs. This is often due to a lack of choices. Basically employment among women is highly accepted and rooted in the former GDR society. Apart from this (and contrary to socialist times) the professional orientation of young women reveals a tendency to typical female jobs.

Sources

Eurostat