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In recent years economical conditions of Polish beekeeping changed significantly. This was mainly caused by joining the European Union in 2004. When Poland became a member of this community, beekeeping received support from the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU.

The aim of the study was to determine current economic situation of beekeeping in Poland. The study was conducted in 2011.

Materials and data in the study come from different sources: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Agricultural Market Agency, Veterinary Inspection, Polish Beekeeping Association and our own analysis and estimates.

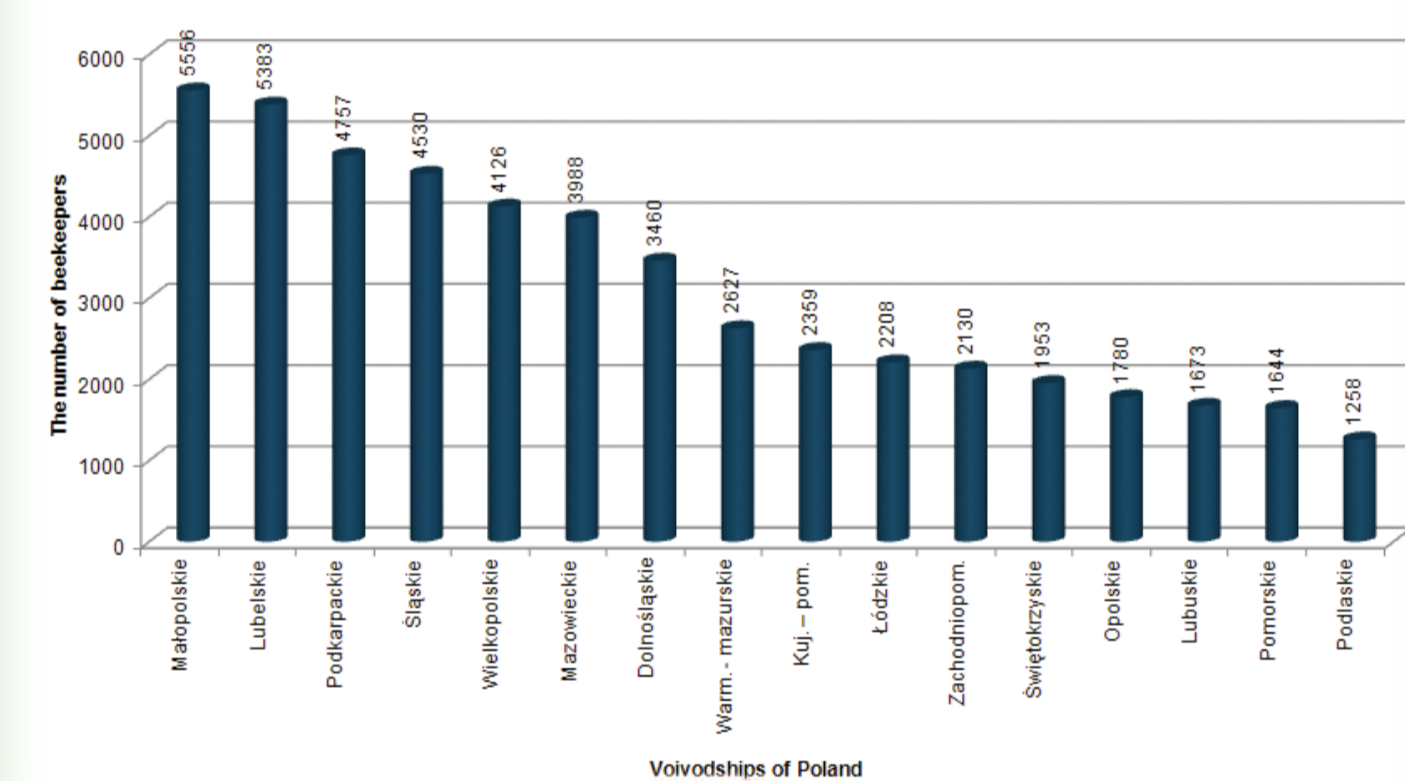
According to data obtained from the register of the Veterinary Inspection there were 49 432 beekeepers, owning 1 246 633 bee colonies in Poland. The highest numbers of colonies were kept in the following voivodeships: Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Małopolskie (49% of the total number of colonies in Poland). The smallest numbers were noted in the voivodeships: Podlaskie, Opolskie and Łódzkie (9% of the total number of colonies in Poland). The highest number of colonies kept in apiaries consisting of 5 or less colonies was registered in the Śląskie Voivodeship. Over 7 colonies per 1km² occurred in the Małopolskie Voivodeship and 6.7 colonies per 1km² in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. In the Podlaskie Voivodeship it was only 1.6 colonies per 1km²; the density values in the Łódzkie Voivodeship and the Mazowieckie Voivodeship was 2.35 and 2.52, respectively.

Density of bee colonies in Polish voivodeships
 (number of colonies per 1km²).

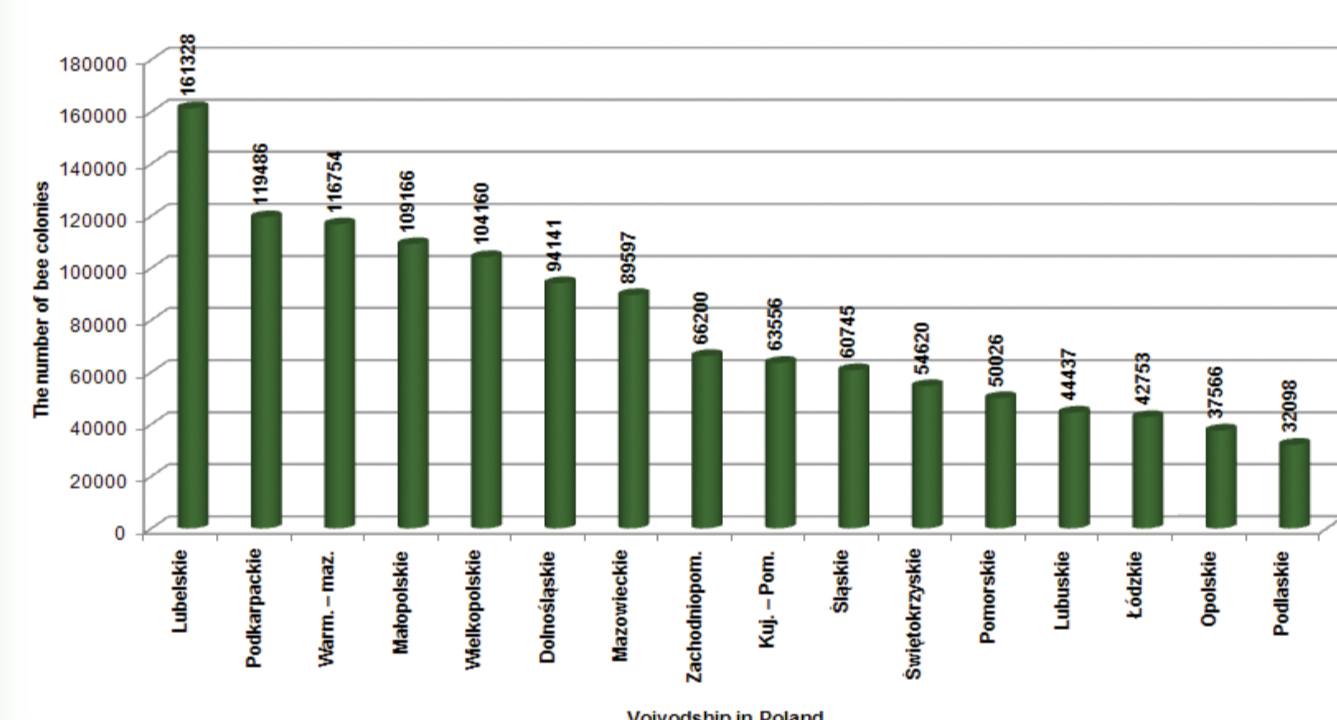
Voivodeship	Number of colonies	Area in km ²	Density
Małopolskie	109166	15 183	7,19
Podkarpackie	119486	17 846	6,70
Lubelskie	161328	25 122	6,42
Śląskie	60745	12 333	4,93
Warmińsko - mazurskie	116754	24 173	4,83
Dolnośląskie	94141	19947	4,72
Świętokrzyskie	54620	11 711	4,66
Opolskie	37566	9 412	3,99
Kujawsko - Pomorskie	63556	17 972	3,54
Wielkopolskie	104160	29 826	3,49
Lubuskie	44437	13 988	3,18
Zachodniopomorskie	66200	22 892	2,89
Pomorskie	50026	18 310	2,73
Mazowieckie	89597	35 558	2,52
Łódzkie	42753	18 219	2,35
Podlaskie	32098	20 187	1,59
Ogółem	1 246 633	312 679	3,99

Most of beekeepers were middle-aged or older. According to data obtained from voivodeship and regional associations of beekeepers in 2011 25.5% was 66 or more years old. The second and the largest group consisted of beekeepers between 50 and 65 years old- 37.6% of the total number of Polish beekeepers. 26.6% was from 35 to 50 years old and there was only 10.1% of the youngest ones – below 35 years old.

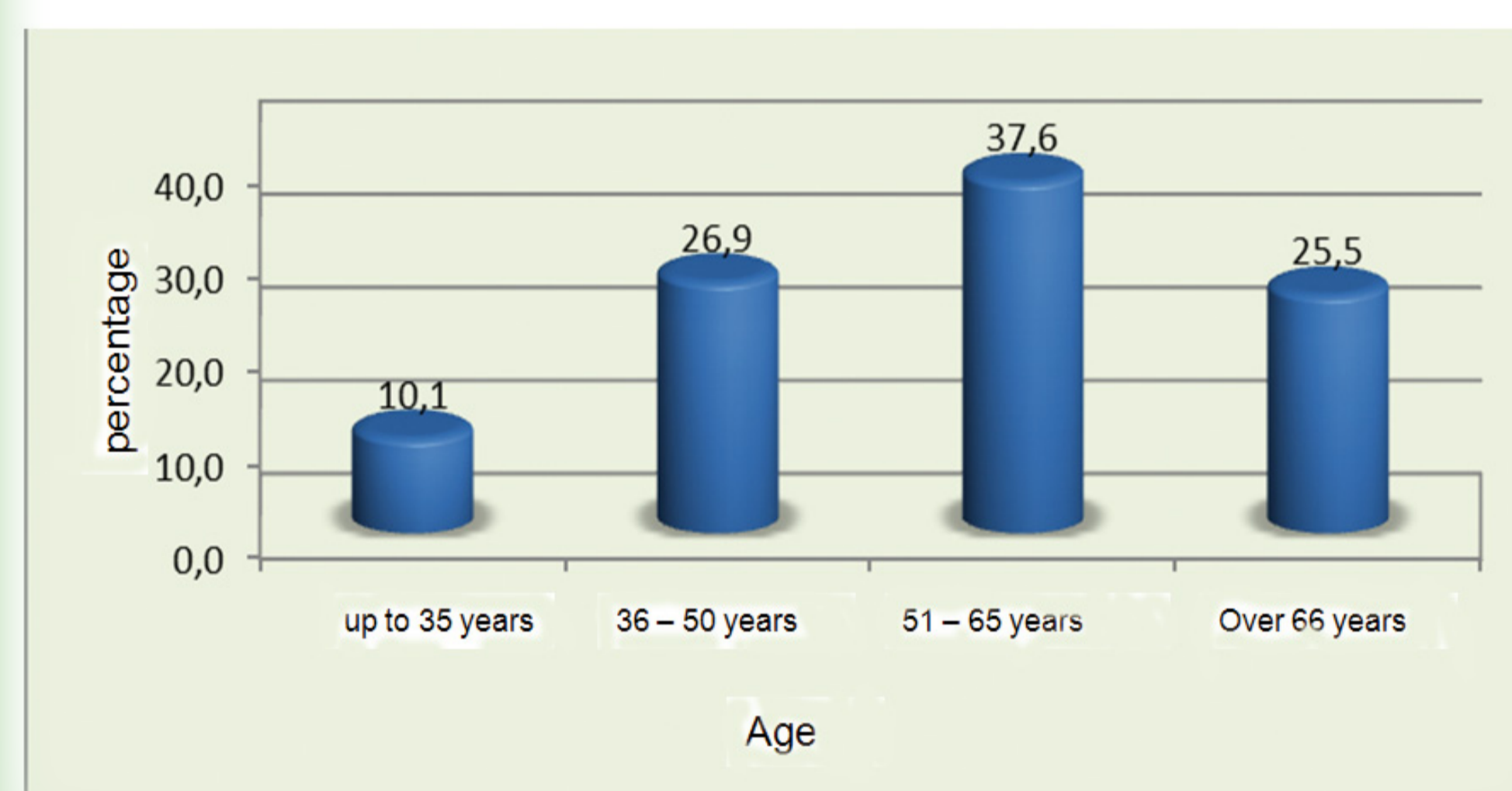
The number of beekeepers in Poland



The number of bee colonies in Poland



The age of Polish beekeepers

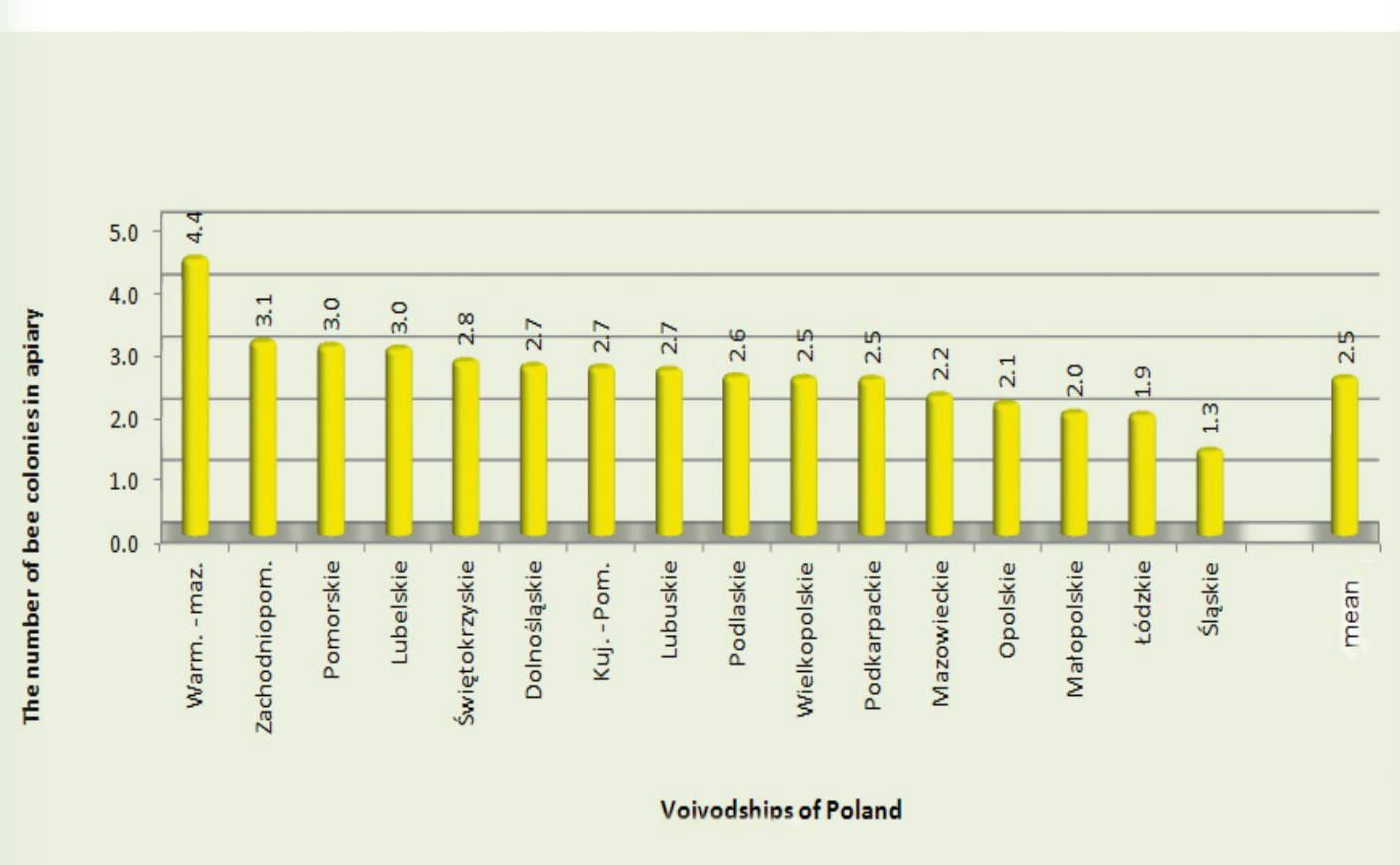


The average apiary size was 25.2 colonies. The largest apiaries were noted in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship. The average apiary in this region consisted of over 44 colonies. The smallest apiaries dominated in the Śląskie Voivodeship.

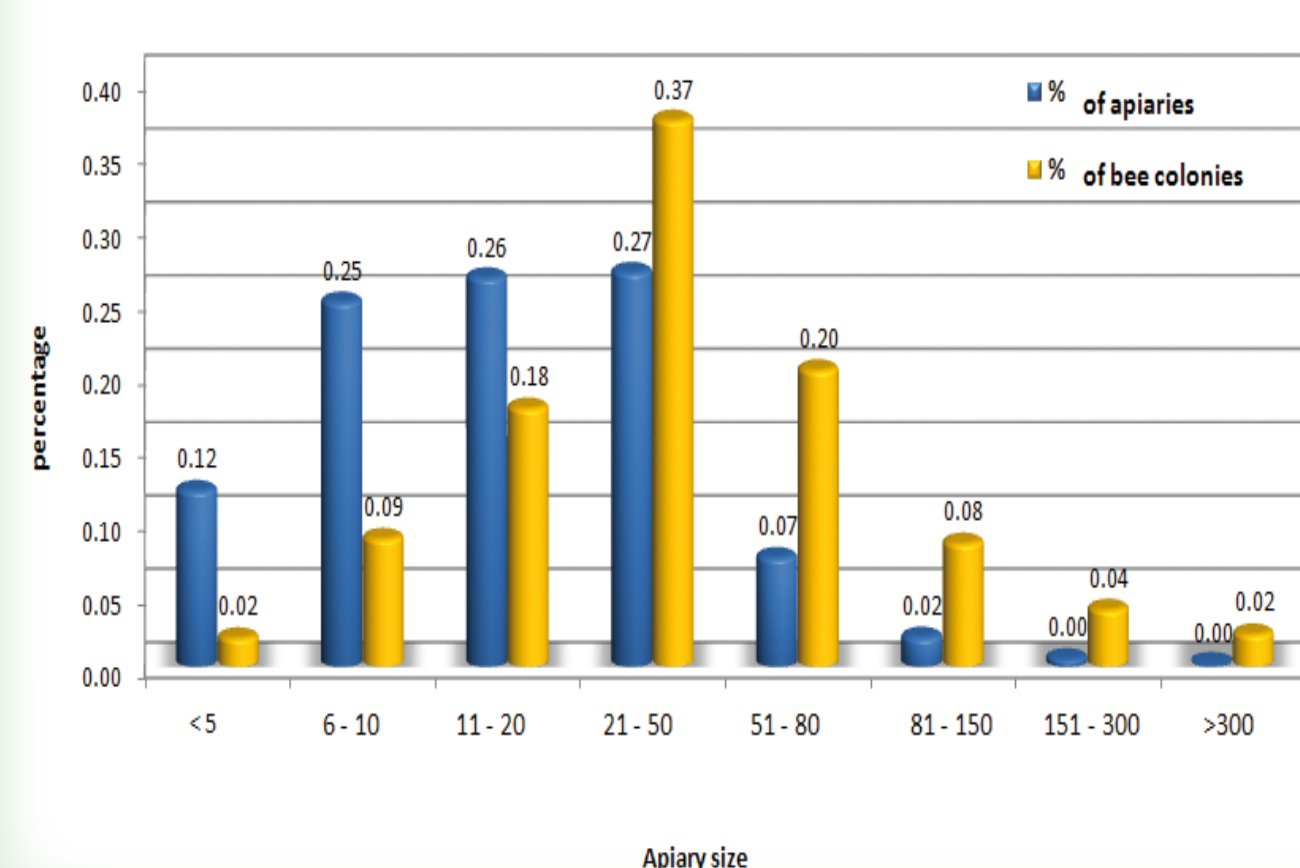
The percentage of small and medium apiaries in Poland (up to 80 colonies) was very high - 97.46%. Apiaries of this size do not need to be registered as a special branch of agricultural production. The percentage of the rest of apiaries (over 80 colonies) was only 2.54%. The number of colonies kept in those apiaries made only 14.43% of the total number of bee colonies in Poland.

According to data provided by beekeepers associations the average winter losses in colonies (noted in spring 2011) in Poland was 13.5%. The biggest losses, about or over 20%, occurred in 5 voivodeships (Lubuskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Opolskie, Świętokrzyskie and Zachodniopomorskie). The smallest losses were noted in the Podlaskie and the Śląskie Voivodeships. During the bee season beekeepers from 5 voivodeships reported cases of heavy intoxications of bee colonies located in rape plantations. In some other voivodeships intoxication cases were also reported in orchards and rape plantations. In the Lubuskie Voivodeship high weakening of colonies was observed in localizations where commercial corn plantations were present.

The average apiary size in Poland



The structure of Polish apiaries and percentage of colonies in apiaries of different size



Losses in bee colonies during wintering bees and bee season

Voivodeship	Estimated losses of colonies during wintering (%)		Losses of colonies during bee season
	from-to	mean	Number of colonies (flow source)
Dolnośląskie	5 – 20	7,6	no reports
Kujawsko - Pomorskie	12 – 30	21,4	450 (rape)
Lubelskie	10	10,0	100 (rape)
Lubuskie	20 – 25	22,5	4000 (corn)
Łódzkie	8 – 10	9,1	29 (rape)
Małopolskie	10 – 30	15,8	no reports
Mazowieckie	5 – 22	11,7	no reports
Opolskie	20	20,0	intoxications (rape, sunflower)
Podkarpackie	7 – 15	14,6	intoxications (rape)
Podlaskie	2 – 12,5	3,3	no reports
Pomorskie	10	10,0	no reports
Śląskie	5	5,0	58 (rape)
Świętokrzyskie	20	20,0	no reports
Warmińsko - mazurskie	6 – 25	11,1	471 (rape)
Wielkopolskie	0,15 – 12	9,0	intoxications (rape)
Zachodniopomorskie	15 – 27,5	19,5	no reports
The average		13,5	-