MANAGEMENT
2026, Vol. 30, No. 2
www.management-poland.com
DOI: 10.58691/man/241803

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Managing demographic transition in Poland: policy alignment, adaptive capacity and demographic resilience

Abstract

Research background and purpose: Demographic transition creates management challenges that extend beyond declining fertility and population ageing to labour-resource availability, work–family reconciliation and increasing demand for age-related services. Public-policy responses therefore need to combine measures intended to influence future demographic trajectories with instruments enabling adaptation to structural demographic change. This study assesses whether selected public-policy instruments in Poland are formally aligned with the principal demographic-management pressures and how the resulting policy portfolio is distributed between mitigation- and adaptation-oriented responses.

Design/methodology/approach: The study applies a structured document-based policy analysis to eight nationwide policy instruments operational as of 30 June 2026. Five demographic-management dimensions were identified: low fertility and family-formation constraints (P1), work–family reconciliation (P2), labour-resource contraction (P3), active ageing and longer working lives (P4), and age-related service adaptation (P5). Instrument–problem relationships were coded on an ordinal 0–2 scale and aggregated using a Policy Alignment Score (PAS). Portfolio-level alignment concentrations were additionally calculated across the five dimensions.

Findings: The highest portfolio-level concentration of formal alignment was identified for labour-resource contraction (P3; $A_3 = 8$), followed by work–family reconciliation and age-related service adaptation (P2 = P5; $A_2 = A_5 = 6$). The lowest concentration was identified for low fertility and family-formation constraints (P1; $A_1 = 3$), with no analysed instrument showing direct P1 alignment. The labour-market policy framework achieved the highest instrument-level PAS (6), followed by Active Parent and Active Toddler (5 each). Overall, the portfolio demonstrates a stronger adaptation-oriented than directly fertility-oriented profile.

Value added and limitations: The study develops a transparent instrument-level PAS that distinguishes policy existence, policy alignment and policy effectiveness and enables demographic instruments to be assessed as a portfolio rather than individually. Empirically, PAS diagnoses the breadth, strength and distribution of formal policy alignment; conceptually, the resulting portfolio architecture is interpreted in relation to adaptive capacity and demographic resilience in public management. The analysis therefore treats adaptive capacity and demographic resilience as broader management concepts rather than direct outcomes of the PAS measurement. The purposively selected portfolio does not constitute an exhaustive assessment of all demographic-related policies in Poland.

Keywords: *demographic transition; policy alignment; adaptive capacity; demographic resilience; public management*

JEL Classification: J11, J18, H83

Received: 2026-08-18; **Revised:** 2026-09-19; **Accepted:** 2026-10-15

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1. Introduction

Demographic transition has become a structural management challenge for European economies and public institutions. Persistently low fertility, rising longevity and population ageing reshape population size and composition, with consequences for labour availability, social protection and public-service demand. European evidence indicates that low fertility is a persistent feature of the demographic landscape, while migration can only partially compensate for the effects of below-replacement fertility in many Member States (Bignami et al., 2024; Ueffing et al., 2025). Demographic policy therefore cannot be assessed solely through its capacity to increase births or stabilise population size.

International policy frameworks increasingly distinguish between mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation seeks to influence demographic trajectories, whereas adaptation focuses on adjusting labour markets, services, infrastructure and governance to demographic changes that are already occurring or difficult to reverse within relevant planning horizons (OECD, 2025e). This distinction is particularly important because demographic processes are characterised by substantial inertia: even if fertility improves, larger cohorts cannot contribute to labour supply for approximately two decades, while workforce ageing and labour shortages may require much earlier responses.

The management relevance of demographic transition extends beyond population policy narrowly understood. Ageing affects labour supply, recruitment, retention, skills, job design and the conditions under which older workers remain economically active. Evidence shows that extending working lives depends not only on retirement regulation but also on job quality, health, training, flexible work and employer practices (Eurofound, 2025). Demographic change therefore creates a management problem concerning the capacity of organisations and public institutions to adjust resources and service-delivery models to a changing population structure.

Poland provides a particularly relevant case. From an institutional perspective, Poland represents a Central and Eastern European welfare-state trajectory combining post-socialist legacies with elements of Continental European social protection and an important role for family-oriented policy (Aspalter et al., 2009; Cook & Inglot, 2021). This institutional setting coincides with particularly strong demographic pressures. Poland has experienced one of the most pronounced ageing trajectories in the European Union: the share of people aged 65 and over increased from 13% in 2005 to 21% in 2025, the largest increase among EU Member States over this period (Eurostat, 2026a). At the same time, fertility remains substantially below replacement level, against an EU total fertility rate of only 1.34 births per woman in 2024 (Eurostat, 2026b). Demographic change is also increasingly affecting labour-resource availability. The working-age population has been declining since 2010, and OECD projections indicate that the population aged 15–64 may decrease

from 24.8 million in 2024 to 19.8 million by 2050 (OECD, 2025b; OECD, 2025a). In the longer term, the OECD projects Poland's working-age population to contract by more than 35% over the next four decades, compared with an average decline of approximately 13% across OECD countries (OECD, 2025d). These trends coexist with a relatively tight labour market and imply increasing pressure on labour supply, pensions, healthcare and long-term care. Poland therefore combines long-term attempts to influence demographic trajectories with an immediate need to adapt labour-resource utilisation and public-service capacity.

However, the existence of multiple programmes does not demonstrate that the policy response is appropriately aligned with demographic pressures. A policy instrument may formally exist without directly addressing the mechanism underlying a problem; it may be aligned with that problem without being effective; or several instruments may address different dimensions of the same demographic transition. This distinction is important in a policy field spanning family support, childcare, labour-market activation, migration, active ageing and age-related services.

The research gap addressed in this study is therefore methodological and managerial. Existing research extensively examines fertility, ageing, migration and labour-market consequences, while international frameworks increasingly recognise the need to combine mitigation and adaptation. Less systematic attention has been devoted to assessing whether individual instruments within a national policy portfolio are structurally aligned with distinct demographic-management problems and whether the portfolio covers these problems across different mechanisms and time horizons. In particular, policy existence, policy alignment and policy effectiveness should be analytically distinguished.

The aim of this study is to assess the alignment of selected public-policy instruments in Poland with five demographic-management challenges: low fertility and family-formation constraints, work–family reconciliation, labour-resource contraction, active ageing and longer working lives, and age-related service adaptation. The study also examines the balance between demographic mitigation and adaptation and interprets the observed portfolio structure from the perspective of adaptive capacity and demographic resilience.

Accordingly, four research questions are addressed:

RQ1. Which demographic-management challenges are addressed by the selected public-policy instruments in Poland?
RQ2. To what extent are the analysed policy instruments aligned with the five identified problem dimensions?
RQ3. What complementarities, imbalances and policy gaps can be identified between mitigation- and adaptation-oriented responses across different time horizons?

RQ4. How can the observed structure of policy alignment be interpreted from the perspective of adaptive capacity and demographic resilience in public management?

The contribution is threefold. First, the study develops a transparent Policy Alignment Score (PAS) linking individual policy instruments to multiple demographic-management problems without conflating alignment with causal effectiveness. Second, it evaluates instruments as a policy portfolio, allowing complementarities, gaps and differences in intervention horizons to be identified. Third, it provides a management-oriented interpretation of policy alignment in relation to adaptive capacity and demographic resilience, shifting attention from attempts to reverse demographic change alone towards the capacity of public institutions and organisations to maintain essential functions under structural demographic change.

2. Literature review

2.1. Demographic transition as a management challenge

Demographic transition affects management through changes in the size, age structure and utilisation of human resources. Persistently low fertility reduces the size of younger cohorts entering the labour market, while increasing longevity raises the proportion of older people and changes the balance between economically active and dependent populations. In the European Union, fertility has remained below replacement level for several decades, making adaptation to a low-fertility and high-longevity environment increasingly important (Bignami et al., 2024).

For organisations, demographic change affects labour availability, recruitment, retention, skills development, succession planning and productivity. OECD projections indicate substantial declines in working-age populations across many member countries, particularly in parts of Central and Eastern Europe (OECD, 2025c). These pressures are therefore increasingly structural rather than cyclical.

Their consequences are nevertheless mediated by management practices. Extending working lives depends on employability, job quality, health, training and employer practices supporting the retention of older workers (Eurofound, 2025; OECD, 2025c). Demographic change also interacts with digitalisation, automation and changing skill requirements, which can both reduce labour intensity and create demand for new organisational capabilities (Dorville et al., 2025).

Demographic transition should therefore be interpreted as a resource-allocation and adaptive-capacity challenge. Public institutions and organisations must maintain essential functions with a workforce that may become smaller, older and differently

skilled while simultaneously responding to changing demand for pensions, healthcare, long-term care and other age-related services.

The institutional context in which these demographic pressures are managed is also relevant. Esping-Andersen's (1990, 1999) classical welfare-regime framework distinguishes liberal, conservative-corporatist and social-democratic regimes, but the institutional trajectories of Central and Eastern European countries do not fit neatly within this original classification. Subsequent research has therefore conceptualised these countries as post-socialist or post-communist welfare regimes, while also emphasising substantial variation within the region (Fenger, 2007; Aidukaite, 2009, 2010; Cook & Inglot, 2021). Poland illustrates this hybrid institutional trajectory. Its welfare system combines post-socialist legacies with Bismarckian social-insurance arrangements and a comparatively strong role of family-oriented social policy; accordingly, different studies have located Poland within a distinct post-socialist cluster or identified important affinities with the Continental European welfare model (Aspalter et al., 2009; Cook & Inglot, 2021). This institutional positioning is relevant to demographic management because the balance between family support, labour-market intervention and age-related provision is shaped by the broader welfare architecture. The Polish policy portfolio examined in this study should therefore be interpreted not as institutionally neutral, but against the background of a Central and Eastern European welfare trajectory in which state, labour-market and family-based mechanisms coexist.

2.2. From demographic mitigation to adaptation

Policy responses to demographic decline have traditionally emphasised mitigation, including fertility support, migration and measures intended to reduce population loss. However, when population decline and ageing are persistent, mitigation alone is insufficient. Recent OECD frameworks therefore distinguish mitigation from adaptation, which focuses on adjusting labour markets, services, infrastructure and governance to demographic conditions that cannot realistically be reversed within relevant planning horizons (OECD, 2025e).

This distinction reflects the different time horizons of demographic mechanisms. Policies improving conditions for family formation may influence births, but any contribution of larger cohorts to labour supply is necessarily delayed. Migration can affect labour resources more rapidly, although European evidence suggests that it is unlikely to fully compensate for persistent low fertility in most EU countries (Ueffing et al., 2025).

Adaptation instead seeks to maintain economic and institutional capacity under changing demographic conditions. Relevant responses include improving labour-

force utilisation, extending working lives, restructuring services and infrastructure, increasing productivity and applying digital technologies. OECD describes this broader logic as smart adaptation or smart shrinkage, in which maintaining well-being and institutional capacity becomes an objective even when population decline cannot be fully reversed (OECD, 2025e). Warner et al. (2025) similarly argue that demographic ageing requires adjustment in economic organisation, social policy and regional planning.

Mitigation and adaptation should therefore be treated as complementary elements of a demographic policy portfolio. Their appropriate balance depends on demographic trajectories, institutional capacity, labour-market conditions and intervention horizons. This raises a management question that goes beyond the rationale of individual programmes: whether the portfolio as a whole is aligned with the different pressures generated by demographic transition.

2.3. Policy alignment, policy coherence and adaptive capacity

Demographic transition is a cross-sectoral policy problem. Family policy, childcare, labour-market activation, migration, ageing, healthcare and public-service planning may address different components of the same transformation. The European Commission's Demography Toolbox consequently emphasises integrated responses and the mainstreaming of demographic considerations across policy areas (European Commission, 2023).

The policy-integration literature distinguishes between the presence of instruments and their ability to operate as a coherent response. Policy integration involves combining objectives and instruments across sectors, whereas policy coherence concerns whether these elements complement rather than undermine one another (Maggetti & Trein, 2022). Similarly, policy-mix research emphasises that portfolios should be considered in terms of consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness and interactions among instruments (Rogge & Reichardt, 2016).

For the purposes of this study, policy alignment is defined more narrowly as the correspondence between the formally documented objective or mechanism of an instrument and a specific demographic-management problem. Four analytical levels are therefore distinguished:

policy existence → policy alignment → policy coherence → policy effectiveness

Policy existence indicates that an instrument is formally present. Policy alignment concerns whether its documented design addresses a particular problem. Policy coherence concerns relationships among instruments, whereas policy effectiveness concerns observed outcomes. These concepts are not interchangeable: a programme may

be strongly aligned with a problem without evidence that it has produced the intended demographic or labour-market effect.

This distinction provides the theoretical basis for the Policy Alignment Score. PAS measures the breadth and directness of formally documented correspondence between individual policy instruments and predefined demographic-management problems. At the instrument level, it captures how broadly an instrument addresses the five problem dimensions and whether the documented relationship is absent, indirect or direct. At the portfolio level, the distribution of alignment scores reveals where formal policy attention is concentrated and allows under-represented dimensions, functional specialisation and potential complementarities to be identified. PAS therefore provides a diagnostic assessment of the formal architecture of the policy portfolio. Policy effectiveness and full policy coherence constitute subsequent analytical questions rather than components of the score itself.

The connection with adaptive capacity arises at the governance level. Managing cross-sectoral challenges requires institutions capable of coordinating policies, reconciling trade-offs, learning and adjusting interventions over time. Vince et al. (2024) describe this as integrative capacity: the ability to coordinate objectives, actors and instruments across policy sectors. Demographic adaptive capacity can therefore be understood as the ability of the policy system not merely to introduce programmes, but to assemble and adjust a portfolio of instruments addressing different demographic pressures and time horizons.

2.4. Conceptual framework

The analytical framework distinguishes between demographic pressures and policy-response capacity. The five demographic-management dimensions used in the empirical analysis were derived deductively from the main response domains identified in the literature reviewed above and subsequently operationalised as distinct coding categories. The European Commission's Demography Toolbox organises responses to demographic change around support for parents and younger generations, reconciliation of family aspirations with paid work, labour-market participation and skills, managed migration, healthy and active ageing, and adaptation to the needs of an ageing population (European Commission, 2023). Complementarily, the OECD's adaptation framework emphasises responses to population decline through labour-force mobilisation, longer working lives, productivity enhancement and adjustment of public services and infrastructure (OECD, 2025e). Evidence on European labour markets further identifies retention and employability of older workers as a distinct management challenge rather than merely a component of general labour-force activation (Eurofound, 2025; OECD, 2025c).

These overlapping policy domains were consolidated into five analytically distinct problem dimensions corresponding to the principal demographic pressures and response mechanisms examined in this study: P1 – low fertility and family-formation constraints; P2 – work–family reconciliation; P3 – labour-resource contraction; P4 – active ageing and longer working lives; and P5 – age-related service adaptation. P1 captures the demographic-trajectory or mitigation dimension; P2 captures the interface between family formation, care responsibilities and labour-market participation; P3 captures adaptation through mobilisation or supplementation of effective labour resources; P4 separates older-worker participation and employability from general labour activation; and P5 captures adaptation of care and support services to population ageing. The five dimensions therefore do not represent an exhaustive typology of all demographic-policy domains. Rather, they constitute a theory-informed analytical classification designed to distinguish the principal problem–response mechanisms relevant to the Polish policy portfolio while remaining sufficiently discrete for reproducible instrument-level coding. Individual instruments may address several dimensions simultaneously when separate documented mechanisms justify such multiple alignment.

Policy alignment is treated as a necessary but insufficient condition for effective demographic management. At portfolio level, its distribution allows the balance between mitigation and adaptation to be assessed. Mitigation-oriented instruments seek primarily to influence future demographic trajectories, whereas adaptation-oriented instruments seek to preserve labour-market, organisational and public-service capacity under demographic conditions already occurring or difficult to avoid.

In this framework, adaptive capacity refers to the ability to coordinate and adjust policy responses, while demographic resilience is interpreted as the capacity of organisations and public institutions to maintain essential economic, organisational and service functions while adjusting to long-term changes in population size, age structure and labour-resource availability. Demographic resilience is therefore used as an interpretative management concept rather than as an empirically validated index.

The resulting conceptual relationships and analytical levels are presented in Figure 1; the connecting arrows represent the interpretative structure of the framework rather than empirically tested causal relationships.

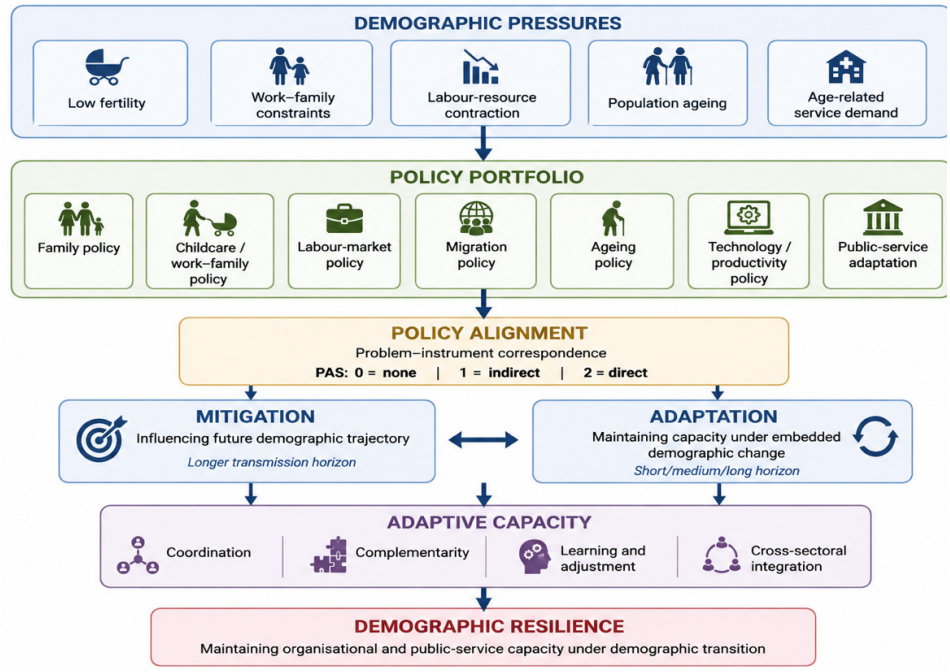


Figure 1. **Conceptual framework linking demographic pressure, policy alignment and demographic resilience**

Source: Authors' own conceptualisation based on European Commission (2023), Maggetti and Trein (2022), OECD (2025e), Vince et al. (2024)

Figure 1 summarises the analytical pathway adopted in the study. Demographic pressures are linked to a portfolio of policy responses whose formal correspondence with identified problems is assessed through PAS. The framework distinguishes mitigation-oriented responses from adaptation-oriented responses and positions policy alignment as an empirically observable feature of policy architecture that can be interpreted in relation to broader adaptive capacity. Demographic resilience represents a still broader management concept concerning the maintenance of essential organisational and public-service functions under long-term demographic change and is not directly measured by the framework.

3. Methods

3.1. Research design and case selection

This study applies a single-country structured policy analysis combining document analysis with an ordinal policy-alignment assessment. The Polish national policy portfolio constitutes the empirical setting, while individual policy instruments are the units of coding. The empirical object of measurement is the formally documented correspondence between policy objectives or intervention mechanisms and predefined demographic-management problems. This correspondence is assessed at two levels: instrument-level alignment, capturing the breadth and directness of each instrument's documented problem orientation, and portfolio-level alignment concentration, capturing the distribution of formal policy attention across P1–P5. The resulting assessment diagnoses the architecture of the selected policy portfolio rather than the demographic outcomes produced by individual instruments.

Poland was selected purposively because persistent low fertility and population ageing coexist with a declining working-age population and a relatively tight labour market. OECD assessments identify ageing and labour shortages as important long-term constraints on economic capacity, while Statistics Poland documents continuing population decline and adverse natural population change (OECD, 2025b; Statistics Poland, 2026a).

The analysis uses a policy-portfolio snapshot as of 30 June 2026. Programmes that had expired or been formally replaced before that date were not treated as components of the current portfolio. International evidence is used to contextualise and interpret the Polish case, but the study does not constitute a formal cross-country comparison.

3.2. Selection of policy instruments and documentary sources

Policy instruments were selected using criterion-based purposive sampling. An instrument was eligible when it: (1) was formally in force or operational on 30 June 2026; (2) operated nationwide or established a nationwide policy framework; (3) contained an officially documented objective or mechanism relevant to at least one demographic-management dimension; and (4) was supported by sufficient public documentation to permit reproducible coding.

Instrument identification preceded the application of these eligibility criteria and was conducted through a structured review of publicly accessible Polish government and legal sources. The search covered the central government portal (gov.pl), the Internet System of Legal Acts (ISAP) and the official websites and programme repositories of ministries and public institutions responsible for family policy, labour and employment, migration, ageing and social services. Searches combined policy-domain terms corresponding to

the five analytical dimensions with terms identifying policy instruments, including programme, strategy, act, support, childcare, family, labour market, employment, migration, active ageing, senior and care. Current programme pages were supplemented, where necessary, by searches of legal acts and official implementation documents in order to establish whether an instrument was formally operational at the policy-snapshot date of 30 June 2026. Candidate instruments identified through this process were then screened against the four eligibility criteria specified above.

The screening stage excluded programmes that had expired or been formally replaced before the snapshot date, regional or local initiatives, isolated funding calls, and measures without an identifiable demographic-management mechanism or sufficient documentary evidence for coding. The resulting portfolio was therefore constructed through two sequential stages: identification of potentially relevant national instruments followed by criterion-based screening for analytical eligibility. The objective was not to construct an exhaustive inventory of Polish demographic policy, but to obtain a transparent and functionally diverse portfolio representing the principal response mechanisms relevant to P1–P5.

Eight instruments satisfied the criteria: Family 800+; Active Parent; Active Toddler 2022–2029; the labour-market policy framework established by the Act of 20 March 2025 on the Labour Market and Employment Services; Migration Strategy 2025–2030; Active Seniors – ASY 2026–2030; Senior Support Corps 2026; and Care 75+ 2026.

Following instrument selection, coding relied primarily on legal acts, government strategies, official programme documents and implementation materials issued by the responsible institutions. Documentary sources were used to establish the formally stated objectives, target groups and intervention mechanisms of each instrument at the snapshot date. Scientific literature was used to support theoretical interpretation and contextualisation but did not substitute for official documentary evidence when assigning alignment scores. Table 1 summarises the selected instruments and their principal documentary basis, while Appendix Table A1 provides the evidence supporting individual instrument–dimension coding decisions.

Table 1. **Selected policy instruments and documentary basis**

Policy instrument	Policy domain	Principal documentary basis	Inclusion rationale
Family 800+	Family policy	Official programme documentation for the 2026/2027 benefit period	Nationwide financial support for families with children
Active Parent programme	Family / labour policy	Act on supporting parents in professional activity and child-rearing; official programme documentation	Combines childcare-related support with parental employment mechanisms

Active Toddler 2022–2029	Childcare / labour policy	National programme for development of childcare institutions; consolidated programme version applicable in June 2026	Expands institutional childcare and supports work–family reconciliation
Labour-market policy framework	Labour-market policy	Act of 20 March 2025 on the Labour Market and Employment Services	National framework for activation, employment services, skills development and selected older-worker measures
Migration Strategy 2025–2030	Migration / labour policy	Regaining Control. Ensuring Security. A Comprehensive and Responsible Migration Strategy of Poland for 2025–2030	Nationwide framework including access to the labour market and management of labour migration
Active Seniors – ASY 2026–2030	Ageing policy	Multiannual government programme for older persons	Supports active ageing, participation and development of support services
Senior Support Corps 2026	Social services / ageing	Government programme for 2026	Supports neighbourhood care and remote-care services enabling older persons to function independently
Care 75+ 2026	Long-term/social care	Government programme for 2026	Increases access to home-based care and specialised care for persons aged 75+

Source: Authors' compilation based on the documentary sources identified in Appendix Table A1; policy portfolio as of 30 June 2026.

The portfolio intentionally combines instruments operating through different policy domains and time horizons. Inclusion indicates only that an instrument satisfied the predefined analytical criteria; it does not imply policy effectiveness, equivalent demographic importance or equal resource intensity.

3.3. Demographic-management problem dimensions

Following the theory-informed derivation presented in Section 2.4, the five demographic-management dimensions were operationalised as coding categories for the instrument-level assessment.

- P1 – Low fertility and family-formation constraints covers instruments addressing conditions affecting family formation, childbearing or barriers associated with parenthood. Financial support was not classified as directly fertility-aligned unless official documentation explicitly identified such a mechanism.

- P2 – Work–family reconciliation concerns measures facilitating the combination of employment and care responsibilities, including childcare provision and return to employment following care-related interruptions.
- P3 – Labour-resource contraction captures instruments that activate, supplement, retain or otherwise increase effective labour resources, including labour-market activation and labour migration.
- P4 – Active ageing and longer working lives concerns measures supporting active ageing, older-worker employability, retention, economic participation or continued activity at older ages.
- P5 – Age-related service adaptation covers services responding directly to care, safety, independent-living or other support needs generated by population ageing.

The dimensions are analytically distinct but not mutually exclusive. Multiple coding was permitted only when separate documented mechanisms justified alignment with more than one dimension. This rule was intended to reduce double counting and distinguish, for example, older-worker participation under P4 from care-service adaptation under P5.

Table 2. **Operational definition of demographic-management problem dimensions**

Dimension	Problem	Direct alignment requires evidence that the instrument…	Orientation
P1	Low fertility and family-formation constraints	Directly addresses fertility, family formation or barriers to parenthood	Mitigation
P2	Work–family reconciliation	Facilitates combining employment with childcare/care responsibilities or return to employment	Mitigation + adaptation
P3	Labour-resource contraction	Activates, supplements, retains or increases effective labour resources	Adaptation
P4	Active ageing and longer working lives	Supports active ageing, older-worker employment, employability, retention or continued participation	Adaptation
P5	Age-related service adaptation	Develops or delivers services responding to care, safety or independent-living needs of older people	Adaptation

Source: Authors' conceptualisation and operationalisation based on European Commission (2023), Eurofound (2025), OECD (2025c, 2025e).

3.4. Policy alignment score and coding procedure

Each instrument i was coded against each problem dimension j using a three-level ordinal scale:

- 0 – no identifiable alignment: no sufficiently documented objective or mechanism links the instrument to the respective problem;
- 1 – indirect or partial alignment: a documented mechanism may contribute to the problem, but the relationship is secondary or indirect;
- 2 – direct alignment: an official objective, target group or explicitly described mechanism directly addresses the problem.

Coding relied on the documentary evidence identified in Section 3.2. A relationship was not scored solely because it appeared theoretically plausible. When evidence did not clearly justify the higher category, the lower value was retained according to a conservative coding rule.

For each policy instrument, the Policy Alignment Score was calculated as:

$$PAS_i = \sum_{j=1}^{5} s_{ij} \tag{1}$$

where:

$$s_{ij} \in \{0,1,2\}$$

PAS therefore ranges from 0 to 10 and measures the breadth and directness of an instrument's formally documented alignment across the five demographic-management dimensions. Higher values indicate that an instrument addresses a broader set of dimensions and/or does so through more directly documented objectives or mechanisms. PAS is consequently interpreted as a structural policy-design measure; differences in effectiveness, expenditure, implementation performance and political importance remain analytically separate characteristics of the instruments. A further distinction concerns instrument intensity. In this study, intensity refers to the scale with which an instrument is deployed, which may be reflected in characteristics such as expenditure, beneficiary coverage, entitlement generosity, implementation capacity or duration. These characteristics are conceptually distinct from alignment: an instrument may be strongly aligned with a demographic-management problem but limited in scale, while a large-scale instrument may address only a narrow set of problem dimensions. PAS therefore assesses the structural correspondence between problems and policy mechanisms independently of the resources committed to those mechanisms.

Alignment was additionally aggregated across instruments for each problem dimension:

$$A_j = \sum_{j=1}^{n} s_{ij} \tag{2}$$

where:

Aj – represents the portfolio alignment concentration for problem dimension j,

n – denotes the number of instruments included in the analysed portfolio.

A_j indicates the relative concentration of formal alignment within the analysed portfolio and allows the five demographic-management dimensions to be compared in terms of how strongly they are represented by the selected instruments. Because the portfolio was purposively selected, these concentrations are interpreted comparatively within the analysed sample rather than as estimates of total national policy coverage.

Every non-zero score was required to be traceable to documentary evidence. The complete evidence matrix is reported in Appendix Table A1.

3.5. Reliability, transparency and analytical limitations

To strengthen coding reliability, both authors assessed all 40 instrument–dimension relationships using the predefined coding protocol. Inter-coder agreement was evaluated before consensus using linearly weighted Cohen's kappa, appropriate for the ordinal 0–1–2 scale, and exact percentage agreement.

Inter-coder reliability yielded $\kappa w = 0.365$, with exact agreement in 19 of 40 decisions (47.5%). The result indicated meaningful differences in the interpretation of indirect and direct alignment and therefore justified systematic consensus review. All 21 discrepant decisions were re-examined against the original documentary evidence, the definitions of P1–P5 and the conservative coding rule. Final scores were assigned by consensus, prioritising explicitly documented objectives and mechanisms over theoretically plausible but undocumented relationships. The resulting consensus matrix was used in all subsequent calculations.

Transparency was supported through an evidence-based audit trail recording the instrument, problem dimension, score, documentary source and coding justification. The complete 40-decision matrix is provided in Appendix Table A1.

The analytical scope of PAS is deliberately focused on formal policy architecture. Its principal strength is the ability to compare, through a common and auditable coding framework, how different instruments address multiple demographic-management pressures and how these relationships are distributed across the portfolio. This scope also defines the boundaries of interpretation: the purposively selected portfolio is not an exhaustive census of all Polish policies; equal scoring across P1–P5 does not represent differences in fiscal scale or substantive importance; and the results describe the policy architecture as of 30 June 2026. Implementation, resource intensity, policy coherence and causal effectiveness constitute complementary dimensions that would require additional data and analytical designs. Adaptive capacity and demographic resilience are therefore used in the Discussion to interpret the managerial significance of the observed portfolio architecture rather than as direct outputs of PAS.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic-management pressures underlying the assessment

The policy-alignment assessment was conducted against a demographic context characterised by simultaneous population decline, low fertility, ageing and increasing pressure on labour resources and age-related services. These processes are treated as the empirical background for the policy analysis rather than as a separate demographic forecasting exercise.

Preliminary Statistics Poland data indicate that Poland's population had fallen to approximately 37.2 million by the end of the first half of 2026, a year-on-year decrease of about 159 thousand people. During January–June 2026, approximately 115 thousand live births and 210.5 thousand deaths were registered, while international net migration remained positive (Statistics Poland, 2026b). Positive migration therefore did not offset the negative natural component of population change.

These developments coexist with a relatively tight labour market and long-term ageing pressures. OECD assessments identify population ageing as a major constraint on Poland's future labour supply and fiscal capacity (OECD, 2025b). In the first quarter of 2026, the Labour Force Survey unemployment rate was 3.3% (Statistics Poland, 2026b).

The five PAS dimensions therefore represent different components of the same structural transition: conditions surrounding family formation, work–family reconciliation, labour-resource contraction, active ageing and longer working lives, and adaptation of services to the needs of older populations.

4.2. Policy–problem alignment and policy alignment scores

Application of the coding procedure revealed substantial variation in the breadth and orientation of policy alignment across the eight analysed instruments. Table 3 presents the final consensus matrix, while Appendix Table A1 provides the documentary evidence supporting each coding decision.

The highest instrument-level score was obtained by the labour-market policy framework (PAS=6), reflecting direct alignment with work–family reconciliation (P2), labour-resource contraction (P3), and active ageing and longer working lives (P4). Active Parent and Active Toddler 2022–2029 each achieved PAS = 5, combining direct alignment with P2 and P3 and indirect alignment with fertility and family-formation constraints (P1).

Active Seniors – ASY 2026–2030 achieved PAS = 4, with direct alignment in P4 and P5. The Migration Strategy 2025–2030, Senior Support Corps 2026, and Care 75+ 2026 each achieved PAS=2, but with strongly specialised profiles. Migration aligned directly with labour-resource contraction, whereas the two senior-service programmes aligned

directly with age-related service adaptation. Family 800+ obtained PAS = 1, reflecting indirect alignment with P1 only.

These scores describe differences in the breadth and directness of formal problem–instrument alignment: higher PAS values indicate broader and/or more direct documented correspondence with the five demographic-management dimensions. They should therefore be read as characteristics of policy architecture rather than as evaluations of programme quality.

Table 3. **Policy–problem alignment matrix and Policy Alignment Scores**

Policy instrument	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	PAS
Family 800+	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Active Parent	1	2	2	0	0	**5**
Active Toddler 2022–2029	1	2	2	0	0	**5**
Labour-market policy framework	0	2	2	2	0	**6**
Migration Strategy 2025–2030	0	0	2	0	0	**2**
Active Seniors – ASY 2026–2030	0	0	0	2	2	**4**
Senior Support Corps 2026	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Care 75+ 2026	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Portfolio alignment concentration (A_j)	**3**	**6**	**8**	**4**	**6**	**27**

Legend: P1 = low fertility and family-formation constraints; P2 = work–family reconciliation; P3 = labour-resource contraction; P4 = active ageing and longer working lives; P5 = age-related service adaptation. Scores: 0 = no identifiable alignment; 1 = indirect or partial alignment; 2 = direct alignment. PAS = sum of P1–P5 for each instrument; A_j = sum of instrument scores within each problem dimension.

Source: Authors' coding and calculations based on the documentary evidence reported in Appendix Table A1; coding procedure described in Section 3.4.

As a robustness check, the alignment structure was additionally examined using a binary direct-alignment specification in which only scores of 2 were treated as substantive alignment. Under this stricter criterion, P3 remained the most strongly represented dimension, with four directly aligned instruments, followed by P2 and P5 with three instruments each, P4 with two, and P1 with none. The resulting ordering is consistent with the ordinal PAS results (A_3=8, A_2=A_5=6, A_4=4, A_1=3). This indicates that the principal portfolio-level finding-stronger alignment with labour-resource and adaptation-oriented pressures than with direct fertility intervention-is not driven by the distinction between indirect and direct coding alone.

The distribution shows that the selected portfolio is more strongly oriented towards maintaining labour resources and adapting services than towards direct fertility intervention. None of the analysed instruments received P1=2; all three non-zero P1 relationships were indirect. At the same time, the matrix reveals functional specialisation: labour-market and childcare instruments span several dimensions, whereas migration and senior-service instruments are more narrowly targeted.

The alignment structure is visualised in Figure 2.

Policy instument	Demographic-management problems (P1-P5)					PAS (sum)
	P1 Low fertility and family-formation constraints	**P2** Work-family reconciliation	**P3** Labour-resource contraction	**P4** Population ageing and longer working lives	**P5** Age-related service adaptation	
Family 800+	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Active Parent	1	2	2	0	0	**5**
Active Toddler 2022-2029	1	2	2	0	0	**5**
Labour-market policy framework	0	2	2	2	0	**6**
Migration Strategy 2025-2030	0	0	2	0	0	**2**
Active Seniors - ASY 2026-2030	0	0	0	2	2	**4**
Active Seniors - ASY 2026-2030	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Care 75+ 2026	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Portfolio alignment concentration (Aj) (sum across instruments)	**3**	**6**	**8**	**4**	**6**	**27**

Score (alignment strength)
0 - No identifiable alignment
1 - Indirect or partial alignment
2 - Direct alignment

Dimensions (P1 - P5)
P1 - Low fertility and family-formation constraints
P2 - Work-family reconciliation
P3 - Labour-resource contraction
P4 - Population ageing and longer working lives
P5 - Age-related service adaptation

Figure 2. **Policy alignment heatmap (PAS Matrix)**

Source: Authors' visualisation of the data reported in Table 3

Figure 2 confirms the concentration of direct alignment in P2–P5 and the comparatively weak alignment with P1. It also illustrates the clustering of family and childcare instruments around P1–P3, the broader profile of the labour-market framework across P2–P4, and the concentration of ageing-related programmes in P4–P5. The pattern suggests that demographic management is distributed across specialised policy subsystems rather than organised through a single integrated instrument.

4.3. Mitigation–adaptation balance and policy gaps

The analysed portfolio contains both mitigation- and adaptation-oriented responses, but their distribution is asymmetric. Family support and childcare constitute the principal

mitigation-related component, whereas labour-market, migration and ageing-related instruments are predominantly oriented towards adaptation to demographic conditions already underway.

The mitigation component is comparatively narrow. Family 800+, Active Parent and Active Toddler address economic or institutional conditions surrounding parenthood, but none demonstrates direct P1 alignment. Their strongest formal relationships instead concern work–family reconciliation and current labour-market participation. The portfolio therefore addresses low fertility primarily through improvements in the conditions surrounding parenthood rather than through explicitly fertility-targeted mechanisms.

Adaptation is more diversified. Labour-market activation, migration and older-worker measures address labour-resource availability, while ASY, Senior Support Corps and Care 75+ address active ageing and age-related service needs. These instruments also operate over different time horizons. Family-formation measures have long demographic transmission periods, whereas activation, migration and older-worker employment can affect effective labour supply more quickly, and age-related services respond to pressures already present in the population structure.

Three potential imbalances are visible. First, direct alignment with P1 is weaker than alignment with labour-resource contraction and service adaptation. Second, P4 is less strongly represented than P3 and P5, indicating a lower concentration of formal alignment with active ageing and longer working lives than with general labour activation or age-related service provision. Third, no comparable nationwide technology- or productivity-oriented instrument satisfying the adopted inclusion criteria was identified in the policy snapshot. This should be interpreted as a potential gap within the analysed portfolio, not as evidence that technological adaptation is absent from Polish public policy.

Finally, the clustering of instruments across family, labour-market, migration and ageing domains indicates potential complementarity, but the PAS matrix cannot establish whether such complementarity translates into institutional coordination or policy coherence. Overall, the portfolio therefore exhibits a stronger adaptive than directly mitigation-oriented profile, providing the basis for the Discussion.

5. Discussion

5.1. Interpreting the policy-alignment structure

The findings indicate a higher concentration of formal alignment with adaptation-oriented demographic pressures than with mechanisms directly targeting the fertility trajectory within the analysed Polish policy portfolio. Family-oriented instruments contribute primarily through childcare, work–family reconciliation and labour-market

participation, whereas labour-market, migration and ageing-related policies address pressures that are already embedded in the demographic structure.

This pattern is consistent with the broader shift from narrowly pronatalist intervention towards more structural approaches to demographic policy. Vignoli and Guetto (2025) distinguish policies explicitly intended to influence fertility from measures that improve the socioeconomic conditions within which family decisions are made. Active Parent and Active Toddler fit predominantly within the latter approach: their strongest alignment concerns reconciliation and labour-market participation, while their relationship with fertility is indirect. The comparatively weak direct alignment with P1 should therefore not automatically be interpreted as policy failure. The European Commission (2023) similarly frames demographic response as a combination of support for families, labour-market adaptation, migration and responses to ageing rather than as a fertility policy alone.

The comparatively high concentration of formal alignment with labour-resource adaptation is also consistent with the prominence of labour-supply responses in international approaches to persistent demographic ageing. When population structures adjust only gradually, labour-force activation, retention and migration become important mechanisms for maintaining economic capacity (OECD, 2025e). However, the comparatively lower alignment with P4 – active ageing and longer working lives indicates that general labour activation is more strongly represented than mechanisms specifically addressing participation at older ages. This distinction is relevant because continued employment of older workers depends on employability, job quality, health, training and workplace retention practices rather than on statutory incentives alone (Eurofound, 2025; Qvist, 2024).

Viewed against the wider European and OECD context, the Polish alignment structure reflects pressures that are not unique to Poland, although their scale and institutional configuration differ across countries. Population ageing is shifting policy attention towards labour-force mobilisation, longer working lives and adaptation of care and public services across OECD economies (OECD, 2025c, 2025e). Poland nevertheless faces a comparatively pronounced version of this challenge: its working-age population has been declining more strongly than the OECD average, while labour-force participation remains below that of neighbouring Czechia and Germany and participation among older workers remains below the EU average (OECD, 2025b). The relatively high P3 alignment and lower P4 alignment identified in this study can therefore be interpreted against a broader European adaptation agenda while also reflecting specific Polish labour-resource constraints. This contextual comparison does not establish whether Poland's policy portfolio is more or less aligned than those of other countries, because equivalent PAS coding has not been conducted internationally. Rather, it situates the observed Polish portfolio within demographic-management pressures and response directions documented across Europe and the OECD.

The portfolio should therefore be interpreted as a set of potentially complementary but specialised policy subsystems. Formal coverage of multiple demographic pressures does not demonstrate institutional integration or effectiveness. Its managerial value depends on whether instruments operating across family, labour-market, migration and ageing domains can be coordinated as demographic conditions evolve.

5.2. Interpreting policy alignment through adaptive capacity and demographic resilience

The observed policy-alignment structure can be interpreted as one relevant feature of the broader adaptive capacity of a public-management system, although adaptive capacity itself extends beyond the formal architecture measured by PAS. Demographic transition differs from short-term shocks because many of its consequences are foreseeable, cumulative and difficult to reverse within ordinary planning horizons. Effective management therefore requires not only appropriate instruments but also the institutional capacity to coordinate, learn and modify the policy portfolio over time.

This distinction corresponds to the concept of integrative capacity developed by Vince et al. (2024), which emphasises coordination of objectives, actors and instruments across sectoral boundaries. The diversity observed in the Polish portfolio is consistent with the need for adaptation across multiple demographic pressures, since these pressures cannot be addressed through a single policy mechanism. However, the PAS results do not establish whether this diversity is accompanied by effective coordination. Specialisation therefore creates a coordination requirement: family, employment, migration, ageing and service policies may form a diversified portfolio while remaining institutionally fragmented.

The balance between mitigation and adaptation is also dynamic. Family-formation measures operate through long transmission periods, whereas labour shortages, workforce ageing and care demand require responses within current managerial and budgetary cycles. Public management must therefore be capable of reconfiguring the portfolio as the relative importance of demographic pressures changes. This interpretation is consistent with OECD approaches emphasising anticipation, evidence-based planning and adaptation to demographic decline (OECD, 2025e). This adaptation-oriented interpretation is also consistent with the broader OECD response to population ageing, which increasingly emphasises mobilisation of under-utilised labour resources-including older workers and women-alongside productivity and institutional adaptation (OECD, 2025c).

In this study, demographic resilience denotes the capacity of organisations and public institutions to maintain essential economic, organisational and service functions while adjusting to long-term changes in population size, age structure and labour-resource

availability. This understanding is consistent with research on policy robustness, which associates the preservation of functionality with flexibility, diversity and appropriate policy-design processes (Capano & Woo, 2018).

The concepts can therefore be positioned as nested analytical levels rather than as directly observed stages of a causal sequence:

formal policy alignment → portfolio-level coordination and complementarity → adaptive capacity → demographic resilience

Only the first of these levels is directly assessed by PAS. The remaining levels provide progressively broader contexts for interpreting the managerial significance of the observed policy architecture and require additional empirical evidence for direct assessment.

5.3. Implications for public management and organisations

The findings generate several implications for public management. First, demographic transition should be incorporated into strategic workforce planning as a long-term structural constraint rather than treated primarily as a short-term recruitment problem. Labour-resource contraction requires not only activation policies but also organisational responses involving workforce forecasting, skills development, retention and redesign of work.

Second, age management deserves greater attention. The comparatively lower concentration of alignment in P4 suggests that active ageing and longer-working-life mechanisms occupy a less prominent position than general labour-resource activation. In this context, the literature indicates that continued participation at older ages depends on conditions including lifelong learning, appropriate job design, flexible working arrangements and health-supportive workplaces (Eurofound, 2025; Qvist, 2024).

Third, childcare policy has a direct management dimension. Active Parent and Active Toddler illustrate how childcare interventions can simultaneously support family objectives and effective labour-resource utilisation. Childcare availability is consequently relevant not only to social policy but also to workforce participation and the retention of employees with care responsibilities.

Fourth, the specialised P3 profile of migration policy positions migration as one component of the broader labour-resource response. Migration can affect labour availability over a shorter horizon than fertility-related mechanisms, but the portfolio perspective indicates that it addresses only part of the demographic-management problem. Its role should therefore be interpreted alongside domestic activation, skills development, retention and other mechanisms affecting effective labour supply.

Fifth, population ageing requires adaptation of service-delivery systems. Programmes aligned with P5 demonstrate formal policy attention to care accessibility, independent living and community-based support within the analysed portfolio. For public managers, the challenge extends beyond expanding service volume to redesigning delivery models, workforce requirements and territorial accessibility. Digital and remote-service solutions may support this process, but their contribution should be assessed in relation to accessibility and organisational capacity rather than technology adoption itself.

The portfolio also requires explicit management of intervention horizons. Measures supporting family formation operate predominantly over long demographic horizons, whereas labour-market activation and migration can influence labour-resource availability more rapidly, and ageing-related services respond to pressures already present. Portfolio management should therefore distinguish between short-term capacity preservation and long-term demographic adjustment rather than evaluating instruments against a single common time horizon. This temporal perspective may help prevent short-term labour or service pressures from crowding out policies whose effects materialise only over longer periods.

Finally, demographic governance requires a shift from programme management towards portfolio management. Individual instruments may be well aligned with specific pressures while the overall response remains fragmented across institutions and time horizons. Periodic portfolio review should therefore identify under-addressed pressures, assess interactions among instruments and support resource reallocation as demographic conditions change. From this perspective, a resilience-oriented approach would place less emphasis on continually adding programmes and greater emphasis on maintaining the capacity to adapt their combination over time.

From a public-management perspective, the findings can therefore be translated into three complementary levels of action: strategic management should determine the desired balance between mitigation and adaptation; portfolio management should identify gaps, overlaps and complementarities among instruments; and organisational management should translate demographic pressures into workforce, service-delivery and capacity decisions.

For practical portfolio management, PAS should therefore be treated as a first-stage diagnostic rather than a complete prioritisation tool. Once structural alignment gaps or concentrations have been identified, a second analytical stage can examine instrument intensity through indicators such as public expenditure, eligible and actual beneficiary coverage, benefit generosity, administrative reach or implementation capacity. Combining these two layers would distinguish between a policy domain that is weakly represented in formal architecture and one that is formally well represented but insufficiently resourced or implemented.

6. Conclusions

This study examined the formal alignment of selected Polish public-policy instruments with five demographic-management dimensions and assessed the resulting balance between mitigation and adaptation. The analysis applied the Policy Alignment Score to eight nationwide instruments and treated them as a policy portfolio rather than as isolated programmes.

Regarding RQ1, the selected portfolio addresses all five demographic-management dimensions, but through different policy subsystems and mechanisms. Family and childcare instruments primarily address conditions surrounding parenthood, work–family reconciliation and parental labour-market participation; labour-market and migration instruments focus on labour-resource availability; and ageing-related programmes address active ageing and adaptation of care and support services. Demographic management therefore emerges as a cross-sectoral policy field rather than a discrete domain confined to family policy.

Regarding RQ2, the strongest portfolio-level alignment was identified for labour-resource contraction (P3; A_3=8), followed by work–family reconciliation and age-related service adaptation (P2 and P5; A_2=A_5=6). Active ageing and longer working lives reached A_4=4, while low fertility and family-formation constraints showed the weakest alignment (A_1=3). At instrument level, the labour-market policy framework achieved the highest PAS (6), followed by Active Parent and Active Toddler (5 each). None of the analysed instruments showed direct P1 alignment.

Regarding RQ3, the portfolio combines mitigation and adaptation, but its structure is more strongly weighted towards adaptation. Family-oriented instruments constitute the main mitigation-related component, whereas labour-market activation, migration, active-ageing measures and age-related services respond to demographic conditions already underway. The analysis also revealed functional specialisation and potential imbalances, particularly weak direct fertility alignment and more limited representation of active-ageing and longer-working-life mechanisms relative to general labour-resource activation. The absence of a comparable nationwide technology- or productivity-oriented instrument meeting the adopted inclusion criteria should be interpreted as a potential gap within the analysed portfolio, not as an assessment of Polish innovation policy as a whole.

Regarding RQ4, the observed policy-alignment structure provides a basis for interpreting one aspect of demographic adaptive capacity, but it does not constitute a direct measure of adaptive capacity or demographic resilience. Demographic resilience consequently refers here to the capacity of organisations and public institutions to maintain essential economic, organisational and service functions while adapting to long-term changes in population size, age structure and labour-resource availability.

The study contributes methodologically by introducing a transparent instrument-level PAS that separates policy existence, policy alignment and policy effectiveness and enables the structure of a multi-instrument portfolio to be examined. From a management perspective, the findings support a shift from isolated programme management towards portfolio management, in which policy complementarities, gaps and changing intervention horizons are periodically reassessed.

The findings should be interpreted within the defined analytical scope: PAS assesses the formal architecture of a purposively selected policy portfolio at a specific point in time, while implementation, resource intensity and policy outcomes require complementary evidence. Adaptive capacity and demographic resilience remain higher-level interpretative concepts whose direct empirical assessment lies beyond the present design. Future research should extend the framework longitudinally and through cross-country applications using harmonised instrument-selection and coding rules. Such comparative research would make it possible to assess whether the portfolio architecture identified for Poland reflects a country-specific configuration or a broader Central and Eastern European or European pattern. A further extension should combine PAS with a separate instrument-intensity layer based, where comparable data are available, on indicators such as expenditure, beneficiary coverage, entitlement generosity, duration and implementation capacity. This would enable future studies to distinguish structural alignment from the scale of policy intervention and subsequently relate both dimensions to demographic or labour-market outcomes. Such a multidimensional design would also provide a stronger empirical basis for examining whether policy alignment, resource intensity and coordination are associated with broader adaptive capacity and demographic resilience.

Authors' contribution

D.P.M.: article conception, theoretical content of the article, research methods applied, conducting the research, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, draft manuscript preparation. **D.R.:** theoretical content of the article, conducting the research, analysis and interpretation of results.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) to assist with translation, language editing, improvement of sentence structure and grammatical correctness, and enhancement of the clarity, readability and consistency

of the manuscript. The tool was also used for editorial and linguistic refinement of selected methodological descriptions and tables. All sources, data, calculations, coding decisions, methodological assumptions, results and scientific interpretations were independently reviewed, verified and approved by the authors. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Appendix

Table A1. **Evidence matrix supporting the coding of policy–problem alignment**

Policy instrument	Dimension	Score	Documentary evidence	Coding justification
Family 800+	P1	1	S1 – official programme description	The programme partially covers expenditure related to raising and caring for a child. This reduces the economic burden associated with child-rearing, but the official objective does not explicitly identify fertility, family formation or increased births as an operational target.
	P2	0		No documented mechanism directly linking the benefit to combining employment with childcare responsibilities or return to employment was identified.
	P3	0		The programme documentation does not define labour-force activation, labour-supply expansion or employment retention as an objective or operating mechanism.
	P4	0		No mechanism related to active ageing, employment of older workers or extension of working lives was identified.
	P5	0		The programme does not concern adaptation of services to ageing-related care or independent-living needs.
Active Parent programme	P1	1	S2 – official programme description	The programme supports parents in raising young children and reduces childcare-related costs and constraints. The mechanism may reduce barriers associated with parenthood, but fertility or family enlargement is not formulated as a direct programme objective.
	P2	2		The programme explicitly supports parents in combining family and professional life and provides alternative childcare-related benefits according to the parents' employment and care arrangements.
	P3	2		Official documentation explicitly describes the programme as supporting parental labour-market activation and return to professional activity following childcare.
	P4	0		No objective or mechanism specifically concerns active ageing or longer working lives.
	P5	0		The programme concerns childcare rather than adaptation of services to the needs of older populations.

Active Toddler 2022–2029	P1	1	S3 – official programme objectives	Increased territorial and financial availability of childcare reduces an institutional constraint associated with raising young children. However, increased fertility or family formation is not stated as a direct operational objective.
	P2	2		The programme objectives explicitly identify improved childcare availability as a mechanism enabling the combination of professional and family life.
	P3	2		Official documentation explicitly states that newly created childcare places enable professional activation of parents who were previously unable to work because of childcare responsibilities.
	P4	0		No mechanism addressing older-worker participation or active ageing was identified.
	P5	0		The programme develops childcare services for children under three rather than services responding to population ageing.
Labour-market policy framework	P1	0	S4	The statutory framework does not identify fertility or family formation as an objective.
	P2	2	S4 – Arts. 145, 146 and 263	The Act directly supports the return to employment of parents and carers after care-related interruptions, permits reimbursement of childcare/dependent-care costs conditional on labour-market participation, and contains employer-side provisions applying after parental and childcare leave.
	P3	2	S4 – labour-market assistance provisions, including access for economically inactive persons and activation instruments	The framework directly mobilises unemployed, job-seeking and economically inactive persons through employment services, activation instruments, training and measures intended to restore labour-market participation.
	P4	2	S4 – Arts. 69 and 141	Persons over 50 receive priority in access to forms of assistance, while the Act permits wage subsidies for hiring unemployed persons aged 50+ and jobseekers who have reached statutory retirement-age thresholds. These are direct older-worker employment mechanisms.
	P5	0	S4	Although the Act contains employment measures relevant to care-sector organisations, it does not itself establish adaptation of age-related services as a demographic-management objective.

Migration Strategy of Poland 2025–2030	P1	0	S5 – section on labour-market access	No objective or mechanism addressing fertility or family formation was identified.
	P2	0	S5	The strategy does not establish a mechanism for reconciliation of employment and family-care responsibilities.
	P3	2	S5 – section "Conditions of access to the labour market"	The strategy explicitly links demographic change to shrinking labour resources and provides for controlled labour immigration to supplement shortages, particularly in deficit occupations.
	P4	0	S5	Longer labour-market participation is discussed as an alternative or complementary response that should be pursued through other employment and social-policy instruments; it is not an operating mechanism of the migration instrument itself.
	P5	0	S5	No mechanism adapting care or public services specifically to ageing-related demand was identified.
Active Seniors – ASY 2026–2030	P1	0	S6 – programme objectives and priorities	The programme does not address fertility or family formation.
	P2	0		No direct work–family reconciliation mechanism was identified.
	P3	0		Although the programme promotes activity and participation among older people, its documented objectives concern primarily social, educational, civic and community participation rather than labour-supply mobilisation.
	P4	2	S6 – Section III and Priorities II–IV	Development of conditions for active ageing is explicitly stated as a programme objective, accompanied by measures supporting participation, education, volunteering, physical activity and social engagement of older people.
	P5	2	S6 – Priority V	The programme directly provides for development and maintenance of day-support facilities and other support mechanisms for older people, representing adaptation to age-related service demand.
Senior Support Corps 2026	P1	0	S7 – official programme	No fertility or family-formation mechanism was identified.
	P2	0		The programme may indirectly relieve family carers, but its official mechanism is not formulated around employment–care reconciliation. Under the conservative coding rule, no P2 alignment was assigned.
	P3	0		No labour-resource activation or labour-supply mechanism was identified.
	P4	0		The programme supports independent functioning of older persons, but does not explicitly target employment, longer working lives or the active-ageing mechanisms defined under P4. These services are coded under P5 to avoid double counting.
	P5	2	S7 – Modules I and II	The programme directly supports neighbourhood care services and remote-care technologies intended to improve safety and enable independent functioning of people aged 60+ in their place of residence.

Care 75+ 2026	P1	0	S8 – official programme	No fertility or family-formation mechanism was identified.
	P2	0		The programme does not directly define labour-market reconciliation for family carers as an objective.
	P3	0		No labour-supply mobilisation or employment-activation mechanism was identified.
	P4	0		The programme targets care needs of older people rather than their employment, longer working lives or active-ageing participation; coding it additionally under P4 would duplicate the P5 mechanism.
	P5	2		The stated objective is to increase access to care services, including specialised care services, for persons aged 75+, making the alignment with age-related service adaptation direct.

Note: P1 = low fertility and family-formation constraints; P2 = work–family reconciliation; P3 = labour-resource contraction; P4 = active ageing and longer working lives; P5 = age-related service adaptation. Coding scale: 0 = no identifiable alignment; 1 = indirect or partial alignment; 2 = direct alignment. Coding reflects documented policy design and does not measure implementation, effectiveness or causal impact. The policy portfolio and documentary evidence refer to the analytical snapshot of 30 June 2026.

Source: Authors' compilation based on official government programme documents, legal acts and national strategies. Source codes are defined below.

S1 – Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (n.d.-a);
S2 – Ustawa z dnia 15 maja 2024 r. o wspieraniu rodziców w aktywności zawodowej oraz w wychowaniu dziecka – „Aktywny rodzic"(2024);
S3 – Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (n.d.-b);
S4 – Ustawa z dnia 20 marca 2025 r. o rynku pracy i służbach zatrudnienia(2025);
S5 – Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów (2024);
S6 – Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów (2025);
S7 – Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (2025b);
S8 – Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (2025b).