

MAIN LABOUR FORCE SURVEY RESULTS, FOURTH QUARTER OF 2021

Since the beginning of 2021 the Labour Force Survey in all EU Member States, incl. in Bulgaria, is carried out in compliance with the Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples and subsequent Commission implementing regulations in the field of labour force statistics. These regulations implied changes in the methodology of the Labour Force Survey, primarily related to **the definitions of employment and unemployment**, and in consequence, the 2021 data are not fully comparable to that for previous quarters¹.

Main labour market indicators in the fourth quarter of 2021:

- **The activity rate for population aged 15 - 64** was 71.8%.
- **The employment rate for population aged 15 - 64** was 68.5%.
- **The unemployment rate** was 4.5%.
- There were 56.3 thousand **discouraged persons aged 15 - 64**, representing 4.6% of the economically inactive population in the same age group.

Employment

In the fourth quarter of 2021 there were 3 080.5 thousand **employed persons**, 1 647.5 thousand men and 1 432.9 thousand women. **The employment rate** was 52.6% (58.8% for men and 46.9% for women).

In the fourth quarter of 2021, 1 957.2 thousand persons (63.5% of all employed persons) worked in the service sector, 932.9 thousand persons (30.3%) worked in the industry sector and 190.3 thousand persons (6.2%) worked in agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Employers were 3.9% (120.4 thousand) of all employed persons, **self-employed without employees** were 6.9% (212.6 thousand), **employees** were 88.6% (2 730.7 thousand) and **unpaid family workers** were 0.5% (16.7 thousand). There were 2 076.4 thousand employees (76.0% of all employees) working in the private sector and 654.3 thousand (24.0%) working in the public sector.

For specific age groups the employment during the fourth quarter of 2021 was as follows:

There were 2 990.4 thousand **employed persons aged 15 - 64 years**. The employment rate for the same age group was 68.5% (72.2% for men and 64.7% for women).

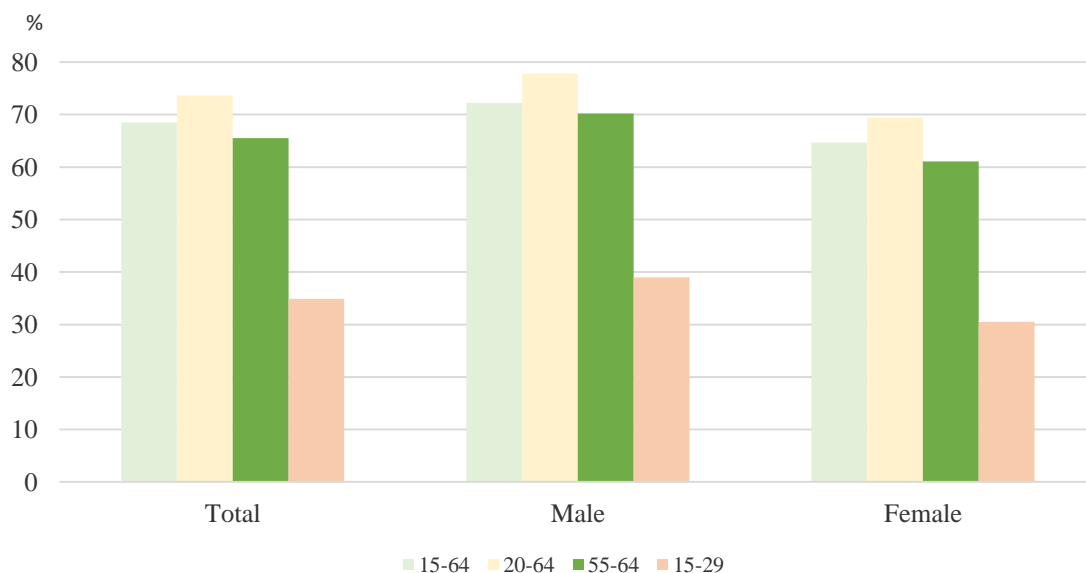
The employment rate for the age group 15 - 29 years was 34.9% (39.0% for men and 30.5% for women).

The employment rate for the age group 20 - 64 years was 73.6%, 77.8% for men and 69.4% for women.

There were 599.5 thousand **employed persons aged 55 - 64 years**, representing 65.5% of population in the same age group (70.2% of men and 61.1% of women).

¹ The main changes are described in the Methodological notes.

Figure 1. Employment rates by age groups and sex in the fourth quarter of 2021



Unemployment

In the fourth quarter of 2021 there were 146.7 thousand **unemployed persons**, of whom 84.2 thousand (57.4%) men and 62.5 thousand (42.6%) women. The unemployment rate was 4.5%, 4.9% for men and 4.2% for women.

Among all unemployed persons 11.5% had attained tertiary education, 56.5% had completed upper secondary education and 32.0% had at most lower secondary education. The unemployment rate by level of educational attainment was as follows: 1.6% for tertiary education, 4.7% for upper secondary education and 12.5% for lower education (lower secondary or less).

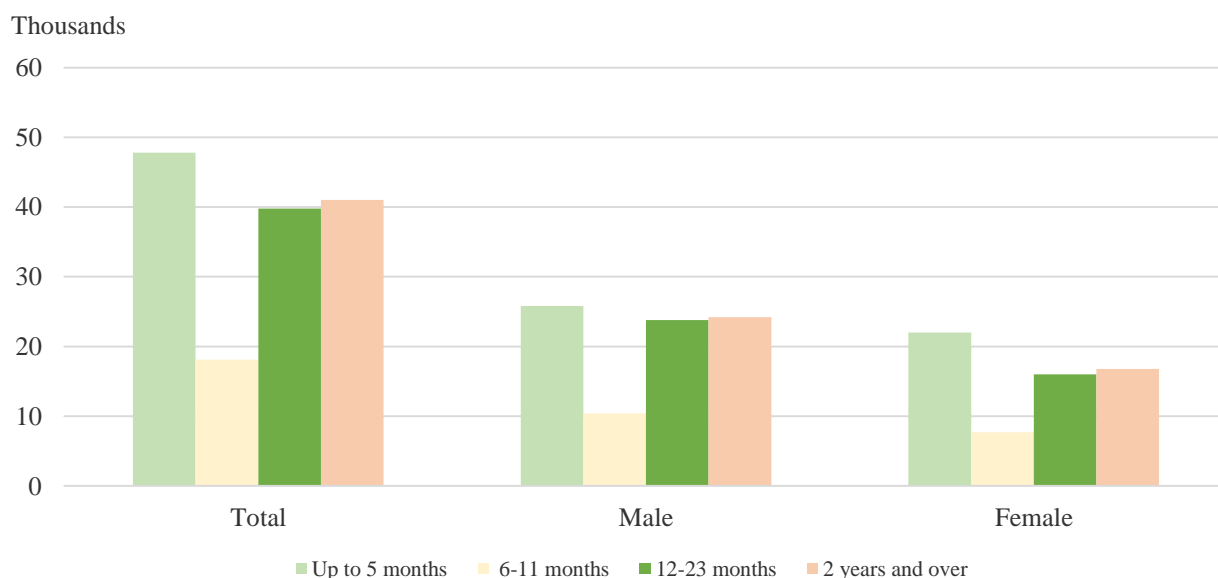
In the fourth quarter of 2021 the number of persons unemployed for less than a year was 66.0 thousand (45.0% of all unemployed persons), while that of **long-term unemployed persons** was 80.8 thousand (55.0%).

The **long-term unemployment rate** was 2.5%, 2.8% and 2.2% for men and women respectively.

Out of all unemployed persons 123.8 thousand (84.4%) had previous job that they left due to dismissal, redundancy or forced closure of the business, completion of seasonal or other temporary work or other reasons, while 22.9 thousand (15.6%) were looking for first job.

The youth unemployment rate (age group 15 - 29) was 9.7%, 9.1% for men and 10.6% for women.

Figure 2. Duration of unemployment by sex in the fourth quarter of 2021



Economic inactivity

In the fourth quarter of 2021 there were 2 633.4 thousand **economically inactive persons (persons outside the labour force)**, of whom 1 071.7 thousand (40.7%) men and 1 561.7 thousand (59.3%) women. **Economically inactive persons in the age group 15 - 64 years** were 1 233.2 thousand, representing 28.2% of the population in the same age group. Among them over one-third (455.0 thousand persons) are inactive due to participation in education or training.



Methodological notes

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is continuous sample survey providing quarterly and annual data on the economic activity of the population aged 15 and over. The survey covers non-institutional households.

Certain changes in the methodology of the Labour Force Survey took place in the first quarter of 2021 in line with the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples, and consequent implementing regulations of the European Commission in the field of Labour Force statistics. These changes concern mainly employment and unemployment definitions, in particular:

- Persons on leave for looking after a child of one to two years of age who are receiving fixed compensation for the duration of the leave are considered employed (they used to be considered economically inactive persons up to the end of 2020);
- Persons on an unpaid parental leave for looking after a child of two to eight years of age are considered employed only if the one time duration of using that leave is at most three months, i. e. they do not use all the leave they are entitled to (six months for each parent). These persons used to be considered employed up to 2020;
- Persons who are absent from work due to different reason than holidays, illness, accident or maternity and parental leave are considered employed only if the duration of their absence is up to 3 months (even they are being partially compensated);
- Persons who produce agricultural products for self-consumption are excluded from the employed persons' category even if they satisfy their household's main consumption needs by that production. Employed are considered only persons growing agricultural produce, the main part of which is intended for sale or barter;
- Persons on a seasonal job are defined as employed out of the active work season if they regularly continue to do tasks and activities connected with their work or business, not including execution of legal or administrative tasks;
- Persons receiving social benefits who are obliged to do free community services are not considered employed. They used to be considered employed up to 2020 if they performed such activity during the reference week.

Reference period - the characteristics of each interviewee refer to his/her status during a defined calendar week.

Economically active population (labour force) comprises all employed and unemployed persons.

Employed are persons aged 15 to 89 who, during the reference period:

- did some work for at least one hour for salary or other form of payment;
- did not work but had a job or an enterprise, a business from which they were temporarily absent due to holiday, illness, maternity leave, etc.

Unemployed are persons aged 15 to 74 who:

- did not work at all during the reference period; and



- were actively looking for work during the preceding four weeks, including the reference one, or have found a new job that is expected to start within 3 months following the reference period; and
- were available to start working within two weeks following the reference period.

Long-term unemployed are persons who have been unemployed for one year or longer.

Economically inactive population (persons not in the labour force) includes persons aged 15 and over who were neither employed, nor unemployed during the reference period, incl. all persons aged 90 and over.

Discouraged persons are persons not in the labour force, aged 15 to 74, who want to work but do not actively look for a job as they believe there are no suitable job available.

Activity rate - ratio between the economically active population and the total population of the same age group.

Employment rate - ratio between the employed population and the total population.

Unemployment rate - ratio between the unemployed persons and the economically active population.

Long-term unemployment rate - ratio between the long-term unemployed persons and the economically active population.

For weighting of the results of the survey for Q4 2021, preliminarily data on population as of 30 September 2021 (excluding population living in institutional households) were used.

Like all sample surveys, data from the Labour Force Survey have sample errors (stochastic errors). The relative standard errors for the main LFS indicators for the fourth quarter of 2021 are as follows:

- total number of employed persons - 1.5%;
- total number of unemployed persons - 5.8%;
- unemployment rate - 5.6%.

Some of the totals (including rows and columns) are not equal to the sum of its components due to the rounding of the numbers.

More detailed data from the Labour Force Survey for the fourth quarter of 2021 can be found on the NSI website - www.nsi.bg, section 'Labour Market', Labour Force Survey.

Annex

Table 1

Main labour market indicators in the fourth quarter of 2021

	Total	Male	Female
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	71.8	75.9	67.5
Employed persons - total - in thousands	3080.5	1647.5	1432.9
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	2990.4	1594.4	1396.0
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	99.5	60.5	39.0
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	337.3	193.4	143.8
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	2983.9	1591.5	1392.4
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	599.5	309.9	289.6
Employment rate - %	52.6	58.8	46.9
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	68.5	72.2	64.7
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	16.0	19.0	12.9
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	34.9	39.0	30.5
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	73.6	77.8	69.4
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	65.5	70.2	61.1
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	146.7	84.2	62.5
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	144.5	82.8	61.7
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	18.7	11.2	7.5
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	36.4	19.3	17.0
Unemployment rate - %	4.5	4.9	4.2
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	4.6	4.9	4.2
Unemployment rate (15 - 24) - %	15.9	15.7	16.1
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	9.7	9.1	10.6
Long-term unemployment rate - %	2.5	2.8	2.2
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	58.5	30.6	27.9
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	56.3	28.9	27.5