

## MAIN LABOUR FORCE SURVEY RESULTS, THIRD QUARTER OF 2023

**The unemployment rate** was 4.0%, by 0.4 percentage points higher compared to the third quarter of 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**The employment rate of the population aged 15 - 64** decreased by 0.6 percentage points in comparison with the same quarter of 2022 and stood at 71.5%.

**The activity rate of the population aged 15 - 64** was 74.6%, by 0.2 percentage points lower compared to the third quarter of 2022.

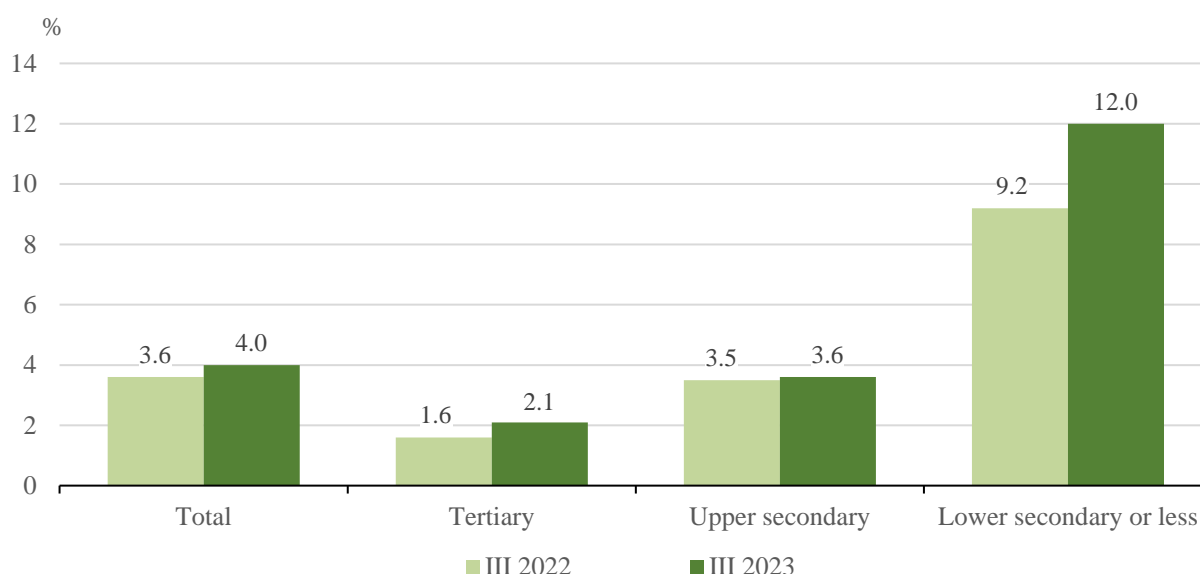
There were 36.0 thousand **discouraged persons aged 15 - 64**, representing 3.6% of the economically inactive population in the same age group.

### Unemployment

In the third quarter of 2023, there were 125.0 thousand unemployed persons, of whom 69.9 thousand (55.9%) men and 55.1 thousand (44.1%) women. In comparison with the third quarter of 2022, the number of unemployed persons increased by 14.0 thousand (12.6%). Over the same period, **the unemployment rate** went up by 0.4 percentage points and stood at 4.0%, 4.3% for men and 3.8% for women.

Among all unemployed persons, 17.1% had attained tertiary education, 49.6% had completed upper secondary education and 33.3% had at most lower secondary education. The unemployment rate by level of educational attainment was as follows: 2.1% for tertiary education, 3.6% for upper secondary education and 12.0% for lower education (lower secondary or less).

**Figure 1. Unemployment rates by level of education in the third quarter of 2022 and 2023**



<sup>1</sup> Comparisons are made with revised data for the third quarter of 2022 (see Methodological notes).



In the third quarter of 2023, there were 66.3 thousand **long-term unemployed people** (unemployed for one year or more), representing 53.1% of all unemployed. **The long-term unemployment rate** was 2.1%, 2.2% for men and 2.1% for women, respectively.

Among all unemployed, 17.7 thousand persons (14.1%) were looking for their first job.

In the third quarter of 2023, **the youth unemployment rate (age group 15 - 29)** was 8.3% (9.0% for men and 7.4% for women). In comparison with the same quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate (age group 15 - 29) went up by 0.3 percentage points, which was entirely due to the increase for women.

## Employment

In the third quarter of 2023, there were 2 964.7 thousand **employed persons** - 1 566.8 thousand men and 1 397.9 thousand women. Compared to the third quarter of 2022, the number of employed persons decreased by 1.2%, and a higher decrease was registered for men (by 1.9%). The employment rate for the population aged 15 years and over was 53.9%, 60.0% for men and 48.4% for women.

In the third quarter of 2023, in the service sector, worked 1 909.2 thousand persons (64.4% of all in employment), in the industry sector - 870.6 thousand (29.4%), and in the agriculture, forestry and fishing - 184.9 thousand (6.2%).

According to the status in employment, the distribution of employed persons was as follows: 4.1% (120.9 thousand) employers, 6.7% (197.2 thousand) self-employed persons without employees, 88.9% (2 635.2 thousand) employees and 0.4% (11.4 thousand) unpaid family workers. Of all employees, 2 040.0 thousand persons (77.4%) worked in the private sector, while 595.2 thousand (22.6%) worked in the public sector. Among all employees, 100.2 thousand persons (3.8%) had a temporary job (with limited duration).

In the third quarter of 2023, the employment in specific age groups was as follows:

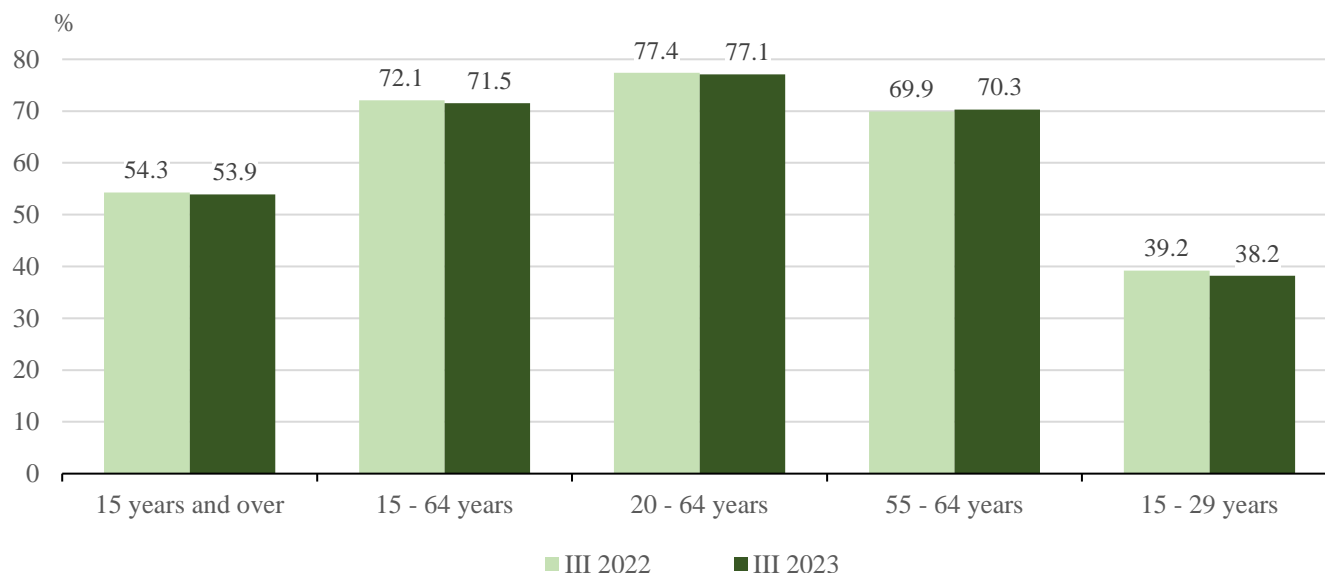
There were 2 851.9 thousand **employed persons aged 15 - 64** (1 499.9 thousand men and 1 352.0 thousand women). The employment rate for the same age group was 71.5% (74.4% for men and 68.5% for women).

**The employment rate for the age group 15 - 29** was 38.2% (41.7% for men and 34.5% for women).

**The employment rate for the age group 20 - 64** was 77.1%, 80.4% and 73.7% for men and women, respectively. In comparison with the third quarter of 2022, this rate registered a decrease of 0.3 percentage points.

There were 627.1 thousand **employed persons aged 55 - 64**, representing 70.3% of the population in the same age group (74.2% of men and 66.6% of women). In comparison with the third quarter of 2022, the employment rate for the age group 55 - 64 increased by 0.4 percentage points.

**Figure 2. Employment rates by age groups in the third quarter of 2022 and 2023**



### **Economic inactivity**

In the third quarter of 2023, there were 2 413.8 thousand **economically inactive persons (persons not in the labour force) aged 15 years and over**, of whom 976.6 thousand (40.5%) men and 1 437.2 thousand (59.5%) women.

**The economically inactive persons aged 15 - 64** were 1 014.3 thousand (447.5 thousand men and 566.8 thousand women), representing 25.4% of the population in the same age group (22.2% of men and 28.7% of women). Among all persons not in the labour force aged 15 - 64, 39.7% were inactive due to participation in education or training.



## Methodological notes

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a 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. The households participating in the survey were randomly selected and were interviewed through a face-to-face interview.

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

**The 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 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.

**The 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 jobs available.

**Activity rate** - the ratio between the economically active population and the total population (in the respective group).

**Employment rate** - the ratio between the employed population and the total population (in the respective group).

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

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

For weighting of the results of the Labour Force Survey for the third quarter of 2023, preliminary data of the population as of 30 June 2023 were used. The population living in institutional households was excluded. In order to ensure comparability, the LFS estimates for the third quarter of 2022 have been recalculated with population data, based on the 2021 Census.

Like all sample surveys, data from the Labour Force Survey have sampling errors (stochastic errors). The relative standard errors for the main LFS indicators for the third quarter of 2023 are as follows:

- total number of employed persons - 1.4%;
- total number of unemployed persons - 6.1%;
- unemployment rate - 5.9%.

Some of the totals are not equal to the sum of their components due to the rounding of the numbers.

More detailed data from the Labour Force Survey for the third quarter of 2023 can be found on the NSI website - [www.nsi.bg/en](http://www.nsi.bg/en), section 'Labour Market', Labour Force Survey.



Annex

Table 1

Main labour market indicators, third quarter of 2022 and 2023

	Third quarter 2022	Third quarter 2023	Change (third quarter 2023 minus third quarter 2022)
<b>Total</b>			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	74.8	74.6	-0.2
Employed persons - total - in thousands	3000.2	2964.7	-35.5
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	2896.3	2851.9	-44.4
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	117.3	116.7	-0.6
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	331.2	325.0	-6.2
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	2883.2	2839.6	-43.6
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	632.3	627.1	-5.2
Employment rate - %	54.3	53.9	-0.4
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	72.1	71.5	-0.6
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	21.0	20.2	-0.8
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	39.2	38.2	-1.0
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	77.4	77.1	-0.3
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	69.9	70.3	0.4
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	111.0	125.0	14.0
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	108.8	121.9	13.1
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	28.8	29.3	0.5
Unemployment rate - %	3.6	4.0	0.4
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	3.6	4.1	0.5
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	8.0	8.3	0.3
Long-term unemployment rate - %	2.0	2.1	0.1
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	48.3	37.3	-11.0
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	45.9	36.0	-9.9



Table 1

Main labour market indicators, third quarter of 2022 and 2023

(Continued)

	Third quarter 2022	Third quarter 2023	Change (third quarter 2023 minus third quarter 2022)
<b>Male</b>			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	78.7	77.8	-0.9
Employed persons - total - in thousands	1597.5	1566.8	-30.7
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	1535.6	1499.9	-35.7
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	74.1	68.0	-6.1
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	190.6	182.3	-8.3
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	1526.7	1495.0	-31.7
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	326.8	318.6	-8.2
Employment rate - %	60.8	60.0	-0.8
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	75.7	74.4	-1.3
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	25.8	22.9	-2.9
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	44.0	41.7	-2.3
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	81.3	80.4	-0.9
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	75.3	74.2	-1.1
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	63.9	69.9	6.0
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	62.1	68.0	5.9
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	19.2	18.0	-1.2
Unemployment rate - %	3.8	4.3	0.5
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	3.9	4.3	0.4
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	9.1	9.0	-0.1
Long-term unemployment rate - %	2.2	2.2	0.0
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	23.1	21.2	-1.9
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	21.3	20.6	-0.7



Table 1

**Main labour market indicators, third quarter of 2022 and 2023**

(Continued and end)

	Third quarter 2022	Third quarter 2023	Change (third quarter 2023 minus third quarter 2022)
<b>Female</b>			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	70.7	71.3	0.6
Employed persons - total - in thousands	1402.7	1397.9	-4.8
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	1360.7	1352.0	-8.7
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	43.2	48.8	5.6
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	140.6	142.8	2.2
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	1356.5	1344.5	-12.0
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	305.5	308.5	3.0
Employment rate - %	48.3	48.4	0.1
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	68.4	68.5	0.1
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	15.9	17.3	1.4
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	34.1	34.5	0.4
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	73.4	73.7	0.3
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	65.0	66.6	1.6
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	47.1	55.1	8.0
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	46.6	54.0	7.4
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	9.6	11.4	1.8
Unemployment rate - %	3.2	3.8	0.6
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	3.3	3.8	0.5
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	6.4	7.4	1.0
Long-term unemployment rate - %	1.8	2.1	0.3
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	25.2	16.1	-9.1
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	24.6	15.4	-9.2