



MAIN LABOUR FORCE SURVEY RESULTS, FIRST QUARTER OF 2024

The unemployment rate was 5.0%, by 0.6 percentage points higher compared to the first quarter of 2023.

The employment rate of the population aged 15 - 64 decreased by 0.2 percentage points in comparison with the same quarter of 2023 and stood at 70.2%.

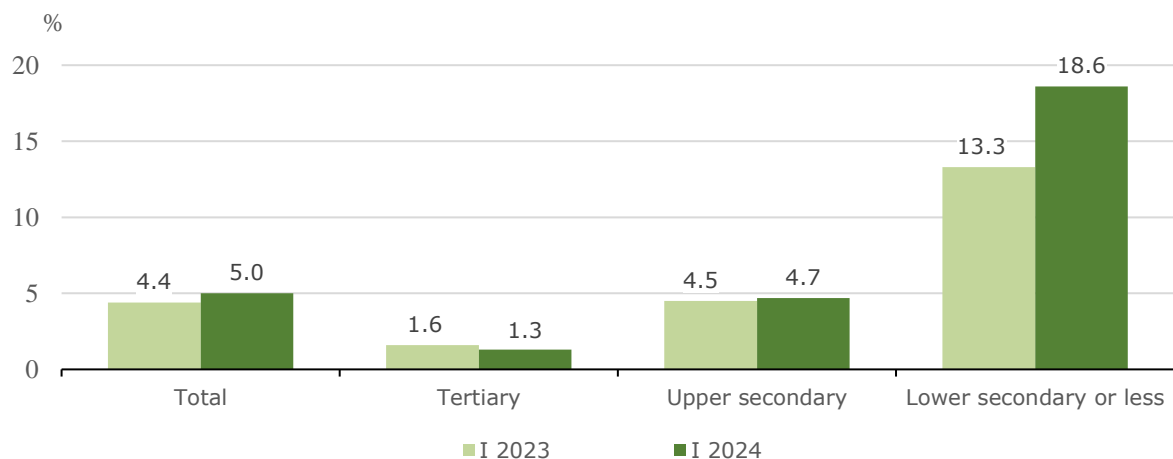
The activity rate of the population aged 15 - 64 was 74.0%, by 0.3 percentage points higher compared to the first quarter of 2023.

Unemployment

In the first quarter of 2024, there were 152.5 thousand **unemployed persons**, of whom 81.2 thousand (53.2%) men and 71.3 thousand (46.8%) women. In comparison with the first quarter of 2023, the number of unemployed persons increased by 17.6 thousand (13.0%). For the same period, **the unemployment rate** went up by 0.6 percentage points and reached 5.0%, being the same for men and women.

Among all unemployed persons, 9.1% had attained tertiary education, 53.2% had completed upper secondary education and 37.7% had at most lower secondary education. The unemployment rate by level of educational attainment was as follows: 1.3% for tertiary education, 4.7% for upper secondary education and 18.6% for lower education (lower secondary or less).

Figure 1. Unemployment rates by level of education in the first quarter of 2023 and 2024



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In the first quarter of 2024, there were 78.5 thousand **long-term unemployed people** (unemployed for one year or more), representing 51.5% of all unemployed. **The long-term unemployment rate was 2.6%.**

Among all unemployed, 21.5 thousand persons, or 14.1%, were looking for their first job.

In the first quarter of 2024, **the youth unemployment rate** (age group 15 - 29) was 9.3% (9.7% for men and 8.7% for women). Compared to the same quarter of 2023, this rate increased by 2.2 percentage points, by 1.6 percentage points for men and by 2.9 percentage points for women.

Employment

In the first quarter of 2024, there were 2 907.3 thousand **employed persons**, of whom 1 547.1 thousand men and 1 360.2 thousand women. Compared to the first quarter of 2023, the number of employed persons decreased by 0.7%, which was entirely due to decrease for women. **The employment rate** for the population aged 15 years and over was 52.8%, 59.1% for men and 47.0% for women.

In the first quarter of 2024, in the service sector worked 1 912.6 thousand persons (65.8% of all in employment), in the industry sector - 850.5 thousand (29.3%), and in the agriculture, forestry and fishing - 144.2 thousand (5.0%).

According to the status in employment, the distribution of employed persons was as follows: 4.6% (133.0 thousand) employers, 6.6% (191.4 thousand) self-employed persons without employees, 88.4% (2 569.6 thousand) employees and 0.5% (13.4 thousand) unpaid family workers. Of all employees, 1 973.1 thousand persons (76.8%) worked in the private sector, while 596.5 thousand (23.2%) worked in the public sector. Among all employees, 68.9 thousand persons (2.7%) had a temporary job (with limited duration).

In the first quarter of 2024, the employment in specific age groups was as follows:

There were 2 799.8 thousand **employed persons aged 15 - 64** (1 485.0 thousand men and 1 314.9 thousand women). The employment rate for the same age group was 70.2% (73.7% for men and 66.7% for women).

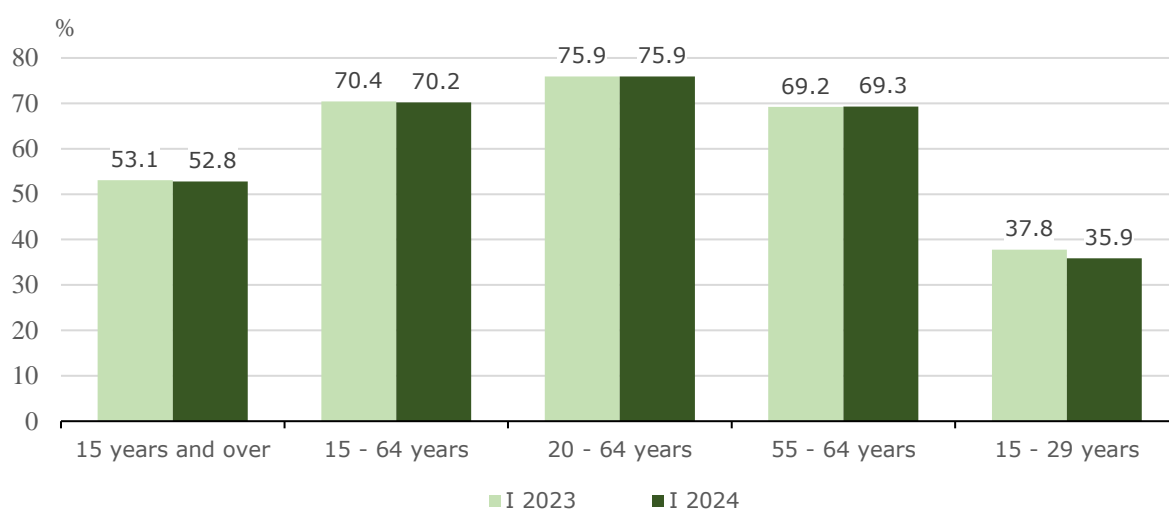
The employment rate for the age group 15 - 29 was 35.9% (39.1% for men and 32.6% for women).

The employment rate for the age group 20 - 64 was 75.9%, 79.7% and 72.0% for men and women, respectively. In comparison with the first quarter of 2023, the employment rate for the age group 20 - 64 was unchanged.

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There were 623.1 thousand **employed persons aged 55 - 64**, representing 69.3% of the population in the same age group (74.1% of men and 64.8% of women). In comparison with the first quarter of 2023, the employment rate for the age group 55 - 64 registered an increase of 0.1 percentage points.

Figure 2. Employment rates by age groups in the first quarter of 2023 and 2024



Economic inactivity

In the first quarter of 2024, there were 2 450.2 thousand **economically inactive persons** (persons not in the labour force) aged 15 years and over, of whom 987.4 thousand (40.3%) men and 1 462.8 thousand (59.7%) women.

The economically inactive persons aged 15 - 64 were 1 037.8 thousand (450.4 thousand men and 587.4 thousand women), representing 26.0% of the population in the same age group (22.3% of men and 29.8% of women). Among all persons not in the labour force aged 15 - 64, 42.1% were inactive due to participation in education or training. There were 30.8 thousand **discouraged persons aged 15 - 64**, representing 3.0% of the economically inactive population in the same age group.

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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).

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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 first quarter of 2024, data on the population as of 31 December 2023 were used. The population living in institutional households was excluded.

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 first quarter of 2024 are as follows:

- total number of employed persons - 1.4%;
- total number of unemployed persons - 6.2%;
- unemployment rate - 6.0%.

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 first quarter of 2024 can be found on the NSI website - www.nsi.bg/en, section [Labour Market](#), [Labour Force Survey](#) and in the [Information System INFOSTAT](#).

**MAIN LABOUR FORCE SURVEY RESULTS,
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Annex

Table 1

Main labour market indicators, first quarter of 2023 and 2024

Indicators	First quarter 2023	First quarter 2024	Change (First quarter 2024 minus first quarter 2023)
Total			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	73.7	74.0	0.3
Employed persons - total - in thousands	2928.0	2907.3	-20.7
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	2819.9	2799.8	-20.1
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	113.3	102.4	-10.9
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	320.7	308.5	-12.2
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	2811.2	2791.4	-19.8
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	620.3	623.1	2.8
Employment rate - %	53.1	52.8	-0.3
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	70.4	70.2	-0.2
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	19.9	17.4	-2.5
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	37.8	35.9	-1.9
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	75.9	75.9	0.0
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	69.2	69.3	0.1
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	134.9	152.5	17.6
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	131.9	150.7	18.8
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	24.5	31.6	7.1
Unemployment rate - %	4.4	5.0	0.6
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	4.5	5.1	0.6
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	7.1	9.3	2.2
Long-term unemployment rate - %	2.3	2.6	0.3
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	44.9	32.3	-12.6
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	43.6	30.8	-12.8

**MAIN LABOUR FORCE SURVEY RESULTS,
FIRST QUARTER OF 2024**

Table 1

Main labour market indicators, first quarter of 2023 and 2024

(Continued)

Indicators	First quarter 2023	First quarter 2024	Change (First quarter 2024 minus first quarter 2023)
Male			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	77.0	77.7	0.7
Employed persons - total - in thousands	1545.5	1547.1	1.6
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	1486.3	1485.0	-1.3
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	63.9	60.9	-3.0
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	176.5	172.4	-4.1
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	1481.7	1479.3	-2.4
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	320.3	321.3	1.0
Employment rate - %	59.1	59.1	0.0
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	73.5	73.7	0.2
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	21.8	20.1	-1.7
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	40.6	39.1	-1.5
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	79.4	79.7	0.3
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	74.3	74.1	-0.2
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	72.8	81.2	8.4
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	70.5	80.2	9.7
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	15.6	18.6	3.0
Unemployment rate - %	4.5	5.0	0.5
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	4.5	5.1	0.6
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	8.1	9.7	1.6
Long-term unemployment rate - %	2.6	2.6	0.0
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	25.5	18.7	-6.8
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	24.6	17.8	-6.8

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FIRST QUARTER OF 2024**

Table 1

Main labour market indicators, first quarter of 2023 and 2024

(Continued and end)

Indicators	First quarter 2023	First quarter 2024	Change (First quarter 2024 minus first quarter 2023)
Female			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	70.4	70.2	-0.2
Employed persons - total - in thousands	1382.5	1360.2	-22.3
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	1333.6	1314.9	-18.7
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	49.4	41.5	-7.9
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	144.2	136.1	-8.1
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	1329.5	1312.1	-17.4
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	300.0	301.8	1.8
Employment rate - %	47.8	47.0	-0.8
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	67.3	66.7	-0.6
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	17.8	14.5	-3.3
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	34.9	32.6	-2.3
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	72.4	72.0	-0.4
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	64.4	64.8	0.4
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	62.1	71.3	9.2
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	61.4	70.4	9.0
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	8.8	13.0	4.2
Unemployment rate - %	4.3	5.0	0.7
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	4.4	5.1	0.7
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	5.8	8.7	2.9
Long-term unemployment rate - %	1.9	2.5	0.6
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	19.4	13.6	-5.8
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	19.0	12.9	-6.1