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BELARUS

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
DEVELOPMENTS 2018



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KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

A proposal for the National Strategy for the Qualifications System has been finalised. The draft strategy has been in the process of discussion and approval by the Council of Ministers since September 2018. It will provide the main directions and actions on how the qualifications system will be modernised, including the adoption of the national qualification framework (NQF). The implementation and review of pilot projects to be supported by the ongoing EU project are considered instrumental to the shaping of the Belarusian qualifications framework and further reforms.

Belarus joined the Bologna Process in 2015 with a commitment to implementing a road map of reforms by 2018. However, the Bologna Follow-up Group reviewed the progress of the reforms in higher education and produced a highly critical report, which was discussed in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) ministerial conference in Paris in May 2018. The ministers acknowledged the country's commitment to implementing higher education reforms and agreed to support Belarus with a reform strategy for 2018–2020 to adhere to the Bologna principles.

In 2018, the Belarusian Statistical Committee (Belstat) released official labour force survey (LFS) data for the first time, for the year 2017. These data help to analyse labour market developments and ensure comparability of data in the international context.

On 25 January 2018, Presidential Decree No. 1 on Support for the Employment of the Population was adopted. It revised the controversial Decree on the Prevention of Social Dependence (2015), which had been adopted in order to identify and reduce informal employment. The revised law aims at creating optimum conditions for employment and self-employment.

EU–Belarus cooperation has been evolving since February 2016, when the European Union (EU) lifted most of its sanctions against the country. The EU financed a technical assistance project on employment, and vocational education and training (VET) was launched in spring 2017 and was registered with the government a year later, in April 2018. This now allows the full implementation of activities, and the project will provide a major contribution of expertise to the Belarusian qualifications system, quality assurance of VET, lifelong learning, and the labour market information system.

1. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

In 2017, Belarus's population was around 9.5 million. Since the 1990s the overall population of the country has declined by around 700 000 people. Furthermore, the share of youth in the general population has been declining and the age structure of the population is moving in the direction of ageing. A low fertility rate, corresponding to the level of those in EU countries, is one of the main demographic challenges for Belarus. As of 1 January 2018, the number of young people aged 14–31 was 20.2% of the total population of Belarus¹. These demographic trends are likely to translate into new demands on the lifelong learning system and employment policy.

The country is undergoing a process of urbanisation affecting all groups of the population, as the flows of internal migration are towards the cities, where industry and services are developing. In 2017, 77.6% of the population lived in urban areas. According to the official statistics, Belarus has positive annual international migration inflows. Statistics on labour migration are very limited, as most labour migration flows are to Russia. Integration agreements between Belarus and Russia imply the absence of a border and minimal barriers for Belarusians to be employed in Russia, and provide additional opportunities for the entry and exit of migrants.

Belarus is classified by the World Bank as a higher middle-income country. During most of the 2000s, a combination of favourable external factors and loose macroeconomic policies boosted economic growth, with annual growth rates averaging 9% for the period 2002–2008. However, this strong growth was associated with increasing macroeconomic vulnerabilities and growing external imbalances. After a decade of strong economic growth, Belarus faced macroeconomic turmoil, resulting in two crises, in 2009 and 2011.

After several years of slowing growth and increased macroeconomic volatility, the Belarusian economy entered recession in 2015, contracting by 3.9% in 2015 and 2.6% in 2016. In 2017, the economy started to recover and GDP grew by 2.4%. In January–February 2018, GDP growth accelerated to 5.6%, with the main contributions coming from manufacturing (2.7 percentage points) and domestic trade (0.9 percentage points). Industrial output expanded by 10.3% in the first two months of 2018, up from 6.1% in 2017. Modest economic growth in Russia and a gradual increase in commodity prices contributed to a revival of production and exports of machinery and oil products².

Trade, services, and the industrial sector are the main sources of the country's economic development. The priority sectors include machinery and metalworking, oil refining, the chemical and petrochemical industries, electrical power, consumer goods and food processing, and the timber and woodworking industry. In 2016 industrial production amounted to 36.1% of GDP, agriculture 7.9%, and services 56%.

The existing economic model has prioritised the development of state-owned enterprises. They continue to play an important role in the economy, benefiting from a preferential regime in terms of financial and other resources and limited regulatory obligations. In the past few years, the government has increasingly supported private sector participation in the economy and has taken steps to develop

1 ETF, Mapping youth transitions to work in Eastern Partnership countries, Country Report, 2018 (forthcoming).

2 <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/belarus/overview#3>

a comprehensive support policy for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Despite these developments, SMEs in Belarus still contribute little to employment and value added, compared with the contribution made by SMEs in the EU. Most Belarusian SMEs operate on a very small scale in traditional industries with low productivity, which in turn explains their limited contribution to total value added.

While the gradual reform approach has helped Belarus to avoid the social costs of economic restructuring, the challenge for the country is to make the transition from economic growth that is focused on resources and low-cost labour and capital, towards a growth model based on a high rate of productivity and innovations.

The share of the population below the national poverty line fell from 41.9% in 2000 to 5.7% in 2016. Moreover, Belarus managed to reduce the poverty rate faster than all other countries in the Europe and Central Asia region³. In terms of income equality, Belarus has one of the lowest Gini coefficients in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Eastern Europe (Gini index 27.2%) and the country performs relatively well on social indicators, being ranked 53 out of 188 countries in the UN Human Development Index (2017)⁴.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

Expenditure on education has priority status on the government agenda. Approximately 5% of GDP is allocated annually for the financing of education, which is comparable with the corresponding indicator for developed countries. The high level of education expenditure pays off in terms of good education outcomes. The country has a high average duration of education (11.5 years) and a high number of expected years of study (15.7). Its literacy rate is one of the highest in the world. The multi-indicator cluster survey of the status of children and women that was organised by the Belstat in 2012 suggests that the literacy rate of young people aged 15–24 years is 100%, irrespective of place of residence, region, or social situation. The gross enrolment rates in both primary and secondary education are close to 100%⁵.

In general, the educational attainment of the adult population is high. In 2017, 53.7% of the active population aged 25+ had attained a high level of education (tertiary and secondary specialised), 44.8% a medium level (general secondary and vocational), and only 1.5% a low level (general basic and lower).

The education system in Belarus includes formal, continuing (*dopolnitelnoje*), and special education. Formal education is divided into pre-school, general secondary (basic and secondary), vocational, specialised secondary, higher, and postgraduate education. After completing general secondary education, about 55% of graduates continue their studies in higher education, about 25% go to specialised (professional) secondary schools, and about 17% proceed to technical vocational schools. This two-level (pre-university) VET system explains the high participation rates in VET. The share of

3 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/10/17/poverty-reduction-in-belarus>

4 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>

5 <http://uis.unesco.org/country/BY>

VET students in secondary education has decreased slightly, reaching 13.3% in 2016 (15.4% in 2012). The share of VET students in upper secondary education is high, at 42.4%.

Over the past five years, student enrolment numbers have been falling in both vocational and secondary specialised education, as well as in higher education. This can be explained by the decreasing number of young people in the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups. At the same time, enrolment numbers have been increasing in pre-primary and general secondary education⁶.

In 2018, Belarus will participate in the next round of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This will provide data and information on the quality of the education and training system in the coming years.

2.2 Education and training policy and institutional setting

The guiding strategy document for the education sector is the State Programme on Education and Youth Policy 2016–2020. It covers all education levels, including general, VET, and higher education. The programme envisages a collection of measures aimed at increasing the quality and accessibility of education according to the needs of the innovative economy, including the formation of a ‘cloud’ informational and educational environment containing quality resources and services that are based on modern information technologies.

The Education Code of the Republic of Belarus (2011) provides for legal regulation of all levels of education and for continuing education. It not only regulates the learning process but also determines the distribution system and provides for the social protection of students, including the protection of the rights of people with a disability. The code is currently undergoing revision. In addition, a number of government decrees and decisions that regulate and have an impact on education policies have been adopted in recent years.

In 2015, Belarus joined the Bologna Process and endorsed a road map for reforms in higher education. The Bologna-driven reforms require legislative changes in higher education, including amendments to the Education Code, introduction of the NQF, abolishing compulsory employment placement, and setting up independent quality assurance for higher education. However, the implementation of the reforms has been slow. A progress report⁷ released by the Bologna Follow-Up Group in spring 2018 was highly critical and concluded that Belarus had not been able to fulfil any of its commitments in the road map. The progress of Belarus in the Bologna reforms was on the agenda of the ministerial conference of the EHEA in Paris in May 2018 where the review results of the Follow-up Group were discussed. The ministers acknowledged Belarus’s commitment and efforts to reform its higher education system and agreed to partner with Belarus and support it in implementing a higher education reform strategy⁸ for 2018–2020 that would align it with the Bologna principles.

As regards NQF implementation in Belarus, the government has stressed the importance of a gradual change and reform of the qualifications system while preserving strong national traditions and learning actively from international practice. This work has now resulted in a proposal for the National Strategy

6 ETF, Mapping youth transitions to work in Eastern Partnership countries, Country Report, 2018 (forthcoming).

7 Support to the Belarus Roadmap – Final Report (2018);
http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/72/3/MEN_conf-EHEA_AG2_03_950723.pdf

8 EHEA Paris 2018, Communiqué, Appendix II: Belarus strategy;
http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/77/5/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixII_952775.pdf

for the Qualifications System. The draft strategy has been in the process of discussion and approval by the Council of Ministers since September 2018. It will provide the main directions and actions on how the qualifications system will be modernised, including the adoption of the NQF. The ongoing EU-financed project on Employment and VET (2017–2020) will contribute to NQF implementation as well as to developing and piloting new qualifications in Belarus.

The scope and structure of VET are defined annually by the ‘state order’ (government-financed enrolment plan) for the training of workers and specialists, taking into account the current labour market situation, the regional demography, and the capacity of educational establishments. Since participation in courses in the initial VET system is based on a contractual agreement, graduates are channelled into employment after leaving school. This practice has a long tradition, but is currently suffering from poor job retention, amongst other challenges. On the one hand, professional guidance is ineffective and matching between the requirements of employers and graduates’ learning outcomes is inadequate. On the other hand, jobs are characterised by a low level of competitiveness, owing to low wages and inadequate social protection packages.

In recent years, Belarus has succeeded in improving its VET system, despite only limited international assistance and cooperation. VET decision makers have applied a blend of continuity and change, preserving the system’s characteristics while modernising by equipping training providers with new technologies and machinery, retraining teachers, and updating national curricula and standards. VET institutions have sought to learn actively from developments in the EU and to establish partnerships with other countries. Participation in international skills competitions (including World Skills) has contributed to an improvement in the image and attractiveness of VET.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is the national body responsible for education at all levels. It has a Directorate for Professional Education which steers policy implementation in higher education, VET, and lifelong learning. The Information and Analytical Centre (GIATS) is a body under the MoE responsible for education statistics, information systems in the education sector, and the digitalisation of the education system.

VET is state-regulated, and is managed by the MoE, other ministries, and state authorities or organisations at the national, regional, and local levels. The MoE governs the VET system through six regional departments of education and the Education Committee of Minsk City. The Republican Institute of Vocational Education (RIPO) is responsible for the development of national standards and training materials, research and analysis on VET, VET teacher in-service training, and other support and methodological work related to VET. It has strong institutional and human resource capacity to support VET policy development and implementation.

Higher education institutions and universities report directly to the MoE. The Republican Institute for Higher Education (RIVSH), founded by the Belarus State University (BGU), provides scientific and methodological support for the entire higher education system as well as carrying out in-service training courses for the staff of universities and higher education institutions in Belarus.

Social partner participation in overall policy development and implementation is still very limited although, since 2017, a number of new sectoral skills councils have been initiated with the involvement of sectoral line ministries and employers. They bring together representatives of the sector and VET institutions to discuss and coordinate, for instance, the development of standards and work-based learning arrangements.

The World Bank project in the education sector (launched in 2016) aims to strengthen the education management information system (EMIS) and will also support Belarus's participation in the next PISA round. Also, the World Bank announced in 2017 that it is preparing a new project to realise Belarus's commitments under the Bologna Process and to modernise its higher education system⁹.

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

The Belstat has been conducting the labour force survey (LFS) on a quarterly basis since 2012, but the distribution of data was highly restricted and data was available only to selected government officials. This limitation adversely affected both the understanding and the comparability of data in the international context. However, in 2018, the Belstat released official LFS data for the first time, providing the data for 2017.

Unlike most other post-Soviet countries and transition economies, Belarus has maintained a high employment rate, and the structure of the labour market has remained virtually unchanged because of the high number of large state-owned enterprises, inefficient and unproductive industries, and slow development of the SME sector. The economic activity rate was 71.3% in 2017, close to the EU average of 73.3%. It was slightly higher for men (75.9%) than for women (67.1%). The employment rate is also high, and it increased slightly from 66.7% in 2016 to 67.2% in 2017. Good labour market outcomes are also reflected in the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET). In 2017, the NEET rate was 7.3%, at the level of the highest-performing EU member states, and much lower than in other countries of the region.

For many years the official unemployment rate in Belarus has been very low, mostly around 1% of the working population. This is because it takes into account only unemployed individuals who are registered with the Public Employment Service (PES). At the end of 2017, the official unemployment rate decreased to 0.5%¹⁰. In 2017, the Belstat published for the first time an unemployment rate calculated according to LFS data. The unemployment rate was 5.8% in 2016 and 5.6% in 2017. The youth unemployment rate was higher, at 10.7% in 2016 and 9.3% in 2017. The long-term unemployment rate is low, at 1.4% in 2017, and the proportion of long-term unemployed out of the total unemployed was only 4.7% in that year.

The employment authorities report an increase in the available job vacancies in 2018 in comparison to 2017, indicating an increasing demand on the labour market. The share of 'blue-collar' jobs among the vacancies increased from 52.6% to 59.5% in comparison to 2017¹¹. However, most of the vacancies reported to employment services are not attractive to many job seekers as they are mainly low-paid jobs requiring low-level qualifications¹².

A transformation is currently taking place in the sectoral structure of the employed population. The number of workers employed in the services sector grew from 56.7% in 2012 to 60.3% in 2017. In the

9 http://projects.worldbank.org/search?lang=en&searchTerm=&countrycode_exact=BY

10 http://www.mintrud.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/zanjatost-naselenija_2942/

11 <http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/sostojanie>

12 Vankevich, A., LMIS and skills anticipation in Belarus, ETF, 2016.

same period employment in agriculture decreased slightly (9.6% in 2017), as it did in industry (30.1% in 2017). The public sector remains an important employer, absorbing around 40% of the workforce. Although employment has been steadily increasing in the private sector and decreasing in the public or state sector, the share of employment in the private sector is among the lowest in the region. According to the Belstat, in 2016 the private sector employed 57.3% of the workforce. However, data on private sector employment also include limited and joint stock companies, in which government ownership can reach 99%. Therefore, it can be concluded that employment in the public sector predominates in the Belarusian labour market, and the real share of private sector employment requires further research.

Incidence of self-employment is very low at 4.4%, indicating a high degree of formal employment in Belarus. There are no available estimates of informal employment, although there may be some categories of workers that can be related to informal employment, such as individual entrepreneurs and artisans.

Skills mismatch is becoming a growing concern in Belarus, with businesses reporting an inadequately educated workforce as an obstacle to their economic performance. More than half of Belarusian SMEs recognise an unskilled workforce as an impediment to their business, and a recent survey by the IPM Research Centre identified human resource factors, such as lack of motivation and skills, as the biggest barrier to business growth, after financial factors¹³.

3.2 Employment policy and institutional setting

The State Programme on Social and Economic Development for 2016–2020 defines the priorities, directions, and goals for the social and economic development of Belarus with the aim of increasing the country's competitiveness and improving the quality of life for Belarusian citizens. As one of these goals, the programme establishes an annual employment target of at least 50 000 people in newly created jobs. A long-term goal is to change the sectoral structure of the economy by reducing the proportion of high-energy and material-consuming production, replacing inefficient production with processes based on high levels of technology, innovations and new materials, and improving the effectiveness of labour resources and workforce competitiveness in the labour market.

The government continues implementing the State Programme on Social Protection and Employment Promotion for 2016–2020, which aims to develop a system of social protection of the population by enhancing the efficiency of employment policy, improving the conditions of labour protection, and ensuring the social integration of people with a disability and older citizens. The programme includes funding and measures on active and passive labour market policies, occupational safety and health, and specific measures targeting vulnerable groups, particularly people with disabilities, and their social inclusion.

In 2016, the Law on Employment of the Population was amended in order to reduce social dependency. The most important amendments included provisions establishing more responsibilities for unemployed individuals, including the obligation to search for a job, and reduced the maximum period an individual can be registered as unemployed from 36 to 18 months.

On 25 January 2018 Presidential Decree No. 1 was adopted. It revised the controversial Decree on the Prevention of Social Dependence (2015), which had been adopted to identify and reduce informal

13 <http://eng.research.by/analytics/businessbook/15/>

employment. The 2015 decree had created public anxiety and provoked protests across the country, and in 2017 it was suspended for one year. The new title of the revised law is 'Decree on Support for the Employment of the Population'. It aims to create optimum conditions for employment and establishes measures to stimulate employment and self-employment. Local authorities will play the most important role in implementing the decree. This law also emphasises an individual approach, which means providing help to every unemployed person according to individual needs through training or retraining, temporary work, or other mechanisms. From 1 January 2019, individuals who are able to work but are not economically active will have to pay for state-subsidised services at their full cost. The government will establish a specific list of such services.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MoLSP) is a central governmental body implementing public policy on labour relations, labour protection, employment, social security, and demographic security. It has a coordinating role on these matters with respect to other national government bodies, local councils, executive and administrative bodies, and public and international organisations. The Scientific Institute of Labour and Social Protection supports the MoLSP in evidence collection and analysis.

The organisational structure of the MoLSP includes structural units of the executive committees for the country's seven regions and Minsk city, which exercise public authority in the fields of labour, employment and social security. The regional Departments of Labour, Employment, and Social Protection currently employ approximately 800 staff, who perform the PES function. The PES registers unemployed persons and provides job search services for them. However, the number of beneficiaries of these services is rather low. Reluctance to register with the PES can be explained by the low level of unemployment benefits (currently EUR 10– 20 per month).

Since 2014 the PES has provided free access to the Nationwide Database of Job Openings (<http://gsz.gov.by/>). The database includes information on different occupations and on the opportunities available for obtaining the relevant education. Users of the portal can subscribe to the regular circulation of job seekers' curricula vitae (CVs) to potential employers, and to email notifications to job seekers when a new vacancy is posted to the database. To improve the relevance of information in the database, amendments were made to the Law on Employment of the Population requiring employers to inform the PES about new vacancies within five days (previously 14 days), and to notify the PES when the vacancy is filled. The regional PES works actively with employers to inform them about changes in labour legislation and employment policies, and to ensure that timely and accurate information is provided about the availability of vacancies.

Intermediation services are also provided by private employment agencies, which mainly focus on the recruitment of middle-level personnel and specialists for the occupations that are most in demand on the labour market. As of 1 January 2017, all agencies that provide employment services to individuals must register with the MoLSP. Once registered, they are added to the Register of Employment Agencies. By 1 January 2018, there were 105 employment agencies on the register¹⁴.

Legislation determines the procedure for reserving jobs for people who are in particular need of social protection and are not able to compete on the labour market on an equal footing. These people constitute about 20% of the total number of those who are registered unemployed. The PES establishes quotas for employers (regardless of the form of enterprise ownership) with a view to

14 http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/reestr_po_tr

securing employment for people in vulnerable groups. Every year the PES conducts negotiations with employers on the possibility of finding student work placements within the framework of the 'Youth Practice' programme, which offers young people an opportunity to obtain their first work experience. The PES also assists unemployed individuals to start entrepreneurial activity through consulting services, training, and financial support in the form of a subsidy, organises paid public work providing job opportunities for those who do not have any other source of income, and maintains the motivation to work among job seekers.

Belarus has maintained a number of features from the Soviet period in managing its labour force. One is the placement of graduates for a two-year assignment in public sector or state-owned enterprises. This is compulsory for students who have studied free of charge on government-financed training places in higher education and specialised secondary education. Such a scheme is no longer likely to work when, and if, the economy is privatised and the share of public employment decreases. Nevertheless, at the moment the system provides guaranteed first jobs for a large number of young people, thus reducing youth unemployment. The system was criticised by the Bologna Follow-up Group's review, which suggests abolishing this obligation, removing the burden of its implementation from the higher education institutions, and replacing the work obligation with modern career guidance services for graduates, as is common in many universities in EU countries.

Formal structures for social partnership and dialogue are in place and a number of social partner organisations exist. However, the dominant role of the government in the economy and labour market has reduced the need for the involvement of social partners. Recent years have seen a growing awareness of the importance of regular social partner involvement in education and employment policy discussions.

At the request of the Council of Ministers of Belarus, work has been carried out to establish additional reliable mechanisms for identifying skills needed in the labour market. The Work Plan for Short-Term Planning of Staff Training and Enhancing Medium- and Long-Term Forecasts of Staff Needs (2015) sets out the timeline for the introduction of an information and analytical forecasting system. It envisages the creation of a three-level information and analytical system with a coherent multifactor model including three modules: the economy, the labour market, and vocational education. At the end of 2015 the Belarusian government established a national working group on skills anticipation and forecasting involving the key ministries (MoLSP, MoE and Ministry of Economy), expert organisations, and businesses. In spring 2017, the government decided to transfer the labour market information and skills anticipation function from the Ministry of Economy to the MoLSP.

The EU is one of the major donors in the field of education and employment policy. Its main contribution is a large-scale project on employment and VET, which will be implemented over the period 2018–2021. The main objective of the project is to enhance the employment prospects of young people and adults by

- ensuring greater synergy between the VET system supply and the needs of the modern labour market;
- improving the quality and attractiveness of VET;
- improving the labour market information system (LMIS).

The project will conduct a number of surveys under the LMIS component, such as a school-to-work transition survey, sectoral and regional skills demand surveys of employers, and VET satisfaction

surveys, which will generate new evidence and information on the labour market and VET. The total value of the EU funding for the project amounts to EUR 11.5 million.

In December 2017, the EU and the UNDP launched an important new project that will support the development of SMEs across Belarus over the next three years. The project will assist vulnerable groups in the population by providing them with business knowledge, start-up support, and access to affordable finance. Grants will be provided to at least 200 SMEs, social enterprises, and NGOs to launch new innovative businesses or supply socially important services to local communities.

STATISTICAL ANNEX - BELARUS¹⁵

Annex includes annual data from 2012, 2016 and 2017 or the last available year

	Indicator	2012	2016	2017	
1	Total Population (000)	9465.2	9498.4	9504.7	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	19.0	16.0	15.4	
3	Youth Dependency ratio (%)	21.5	23.9	24.5	
4	Old Dependency ratio (%)	19.8	21.1	21.6	
5	Global Competitive Index	Rank	N.A.	N.A.	
		Score	N.A.	N.A.	
6	GDP growth rate (%)	1.7	-2.5	2.4	
7	GDP per capita (PPP) (current international \$)	17801.9	18089.1	18847.9	
8	GDP by sector (%)	Agriculture added value	9.1 (2011)	7.9	M.D.
		Industry added value	40.9 (2011)	36.1	M.D.
		Services added value	50.0 (2011)	56.0	M.D.
9	Poverty headcount ratio at \$3.2 a day (2011 PPP) (%) ⁽²⁾	0.1	0.0	M.D.	
10	Gini index (%) ⁽²⁾	26.5	27.0	M.D.	
11	Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25–64 or 15+) (%) ⁽¹⁾	Low	M.D.	1.3	1.5
		Medium	M.D.	45.1	44.8
		High	M.D.	53.6	53.7
12	Gross enrolment rates in secondary education (%)	106.5	104.4	M.D.	
13	Share of VET students in secondary education (%)	15.4	13.3	M.D.	
14	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (%)	116.1	116.0	M.D.	
15	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (%)	44.3	42.4	M.D.	
16	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
		Mathematics	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
		Science	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

¹⁵ Data update on 03/09/2018

	Indicator		2012	2016	2017
17	Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25–64) by sex (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
18	Early leavers from education and training (age group 18–24) by sex (%) ⁽²⁾	Total	M.D.	1.3	1.3
		Male	M.D.	1.6	1.4
		Female	M.D.	1.0	1.1
19	Activity rates by sex (aged 15+) (%) ⁽³⁾	Total	M.D.	70.8	71.3
		Male	M.D.	75.2	75.9
		Female	M.D.	66.9	67.1
20	Employment rates by sex (aged 15+) (%) ⁽³⁾	Total	M.D.	66.7	67.2
		Male	M.D.	69.6	70.4
		Female	M.D.	64.1	64.4
21	Unemployment rates by sex (aged 15+) (%) ⁽³⁾	Total	M.D.	5.8	5.6
		Male	M.D.	7.5	7.2
		Female	M.D.	4.2	4.0
22	Unemployment rates by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) ⁽³⁾	Low	M.D.	13.4	13.2
		Medium	M.D.	8.2	7.5
		High	M.D.	3.7	3.8
23	Youth unemployment rates by sex (aged 15–24) (%)	Total	M.D.	10.7	9.3
		Male	M.D.	12.7	11.2
		Female	M.D.	8.5	7.2
24	Proportion of long-term unemployed out of the total unemployed (aged 15+) (%) ^{(5) (8)}		4.7	5.2	4.7
25	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) ⁽³⁾		M.D.	1.2	1.4
26	Incidence of self-employment (%)		M.D.	4.1	4.4
27	Share of the employed in a public sector (%) ^{(4) (5)}		42.6	40.2	40.1
28	Employment by sector (%) ⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾	Agriculture	9.9	9.6	9.6 ⁽⁶⁾
		Industry	33.5	30.3	30.1 ⁽⁶⁾
		Services	56.7	60.0	60.3 ⁽⁶⁾
29	Employment in the informal sector		M.D.	M.D.	M.D.

	Indicator	2012	2016	2017	
30	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs), by sex (%) ⁽²⁾	Total	M.D	8.2	7.3
		Male	M.D	8.6	7.7
		Female	M.D	7.6	6.8
31	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP) ⁽⁷⁾	5.0	5.0	M.D	
32	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure) ⁽⁷⁾	17.5	17.2	M.D	
33	Skill gaps (%)	17.9 (2013)	N.A.	N.A.	
34	The share of SMEs in GDP (%) ⁽⁹⁾	14.6	14.2	14.9 ⁽⁶⁾	
35	The share of SMEs in employment (%) ^{(9) (10)}	18.4	19.3	19.6	

Sources:

3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 - The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

1, 2, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35 - National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus

33 - OECD Statistical database

12, 13, 14, 15 - UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

Legend:

N.A. = Not Applicable

M.D. = Missing Data

Note:

(1) Active population aged 25–74; Low - primary and basic general education; Medium - general secondary and vocational-technical education; High - secondary special and higher education.

(2) The calculation takes into account those not in education at the time of the survey, including those trained independently (not under the supervision of the teacher).

(3) Age group 15–74

(4) Data based on administrative data (annual average labour resources estimates).

(5) Age group 16–59 (males) and 16–54 (females)

(6) Preliminary data

(7) Public expenditure (incl. capital construction costs) from the consolidated budget.

(8) Data are based on the employment office records and refer to the situation at the end of the year.

(9) Data refer to micro and small entities that have less than 100 employees.

(10) The average employment is taken into account.

ANNEX: INDICATORS' DEFINITIONS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population (000)	The total population is estimated as the number of persons having their usual residence in a country on 1 January of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, legal or registered residents can be considered.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	The ratio of the youth population (aged 15–24) to the working-age population (usually aged 15–64 or 15–74).
3	Youth Dependency ratio (%)	The ratio of younger dependants (people younger than 15) to the working-age population (those in the 15–64 age group).
4	Old Dependency ratio (%)	The ratio of older dependants (people older than 64) to the working-age population (those in the 15–64 age group).
5	Global Competitiveness Index	The Global Competitiveness Index assesses the competitiveness landscape providing inside into the drivers of countries' productivity and prosperity. It expressed as scores on a 1 to 7 scale, with 7 being the most desirable outcome.
6	GDP growth rate (%)	The annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency.
7	GDP per capita (PPP)(current international \$)	The market value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given period of time (GDP), divided by the total population, and converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity (PPP) rates.
8	GDP by sector (%)	The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services.
9	Poverty headcount ratio at \$3.2 a day (2011 PPP) (%)	The percentage of the population living on less than \$3.20 a day at 2011 international prices.
10	Gini index (%)	Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.
11	Educational attainment of adult population (25–64 or aged 15+) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group.
12	Gross enrolment rates in secondary education (%)	Number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.
13	Share of VET students in secondary (%)	The proportion of VET students in secondary education out of the total number of pupils and students in secondary education (general + VET)
14	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (%)	Number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.
15	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (%)	The proportion of VET students in upper secondary education out of the total number of pupils and students in upper secondary education (general education + VET)

16	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	The share of 15-years-olds falling to reach level 2 in reading, mathematics and science.
17	Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25–64) by sex (%)	The share of persons aged 25–64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the (LFS) survey.
18	Early leavers from education and training (age group 18–24) by sex (%)	The percentage of the population aged 18–24 with at most lower secondary education who were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the (LFS) survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 level 0–3C short for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 level 0–2 for data from 2014 onwards.
19	Activity rates by sex (aged 15+) (%)	Activity rates represent the labour force as a percentage of the population of working age.
20	Employment rates by sex (aged 15+) (%)	Employment rate represents persons in employment as a percentage of the population of working age.
21	Unemployment rates by sex (aged 15+) (%)	Unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force.
22	Unemployment rates by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are consider: Low (ISCED level 0–2), Medium (ISCED level 3–4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8)
23	Youth unemployment rates by sex (aged 15–24) (%)	Youth unemployment rate represents young unemployed persons aged (15–24) as a percentage of the labour force (15–24).
24	Proportion of long-term unemployed out of the total unemployed (aged 15+) (%)	Number of unemployed persons aged 15+ who are long-term unemployed (12 months or more) as a percentage of unemployed persons aged 15+.
25	Long-term unemployment rate (age 15+) (%)	Number of unemployed persons aged 15+ who are long-term unemployed (12 months or more) as a percentage of the labour force aged 15+.
26	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The share of self-employed as a proportion of total employment. Self-employment includes employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives and contributing family workers.
27	Share of the employed in a public sector (%)	The share of employed in a public sector as a proportion of total employment.
28	Employment by sector (%)	The share of employed in Agriculture, Industry and Services.
29	Employment in the informal sector	Share of persons employed in the informal sector in total non-agricultural employment.
30	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The percentage of the population of a given age group and sex who is not employed and not involved in further education or training.
31	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GDP. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations. Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.

32	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a of total public expenditure. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations. Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
33	Skill gaps (%)	The percentage of firms identifying an inadequately educated workforce as a major constraint.
34	The share of SMEs in GDP (%)	The share of GDP contributed by small and medium businesses.
35	The share of SMEs in employment (%)	The share of persons employed in small and medium businesses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT
OUR ACTIVITIES PLEASE CONTACT:
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT
EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION
VIALE SETTIMIO SEVERO 65
I - 10133 TORINO
E: INFO@ETF.EUROPA.EU
T: +39 011 6302222
F: +39 011 6302200
WWW.ETF.EUROPA.EU