



European Training Foundation

# BELARUS

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT  
DEVELOPMENTS 2019



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# KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (SEPTEMBER 2018-AUGUST 2019)

Belarus has recently launched a number of ambitious programmes to increase the competitiveness of the national economy on the domestic and international markets. Particular attention is given to innovative high-tech sectors, such as information technology, bio- and nanotechnology, robotics and energy-saving technologies. At the same time, further modernisation of traditional industries is required.

In October 2018 the Council of Ministers adopted the Strategy for the Development of the National Qualifications System, which provides the main directions and actions for the modernisation of this system. In April 2019 the Council of Ministers adopted a decree to establish a high-level National Council on Qualifications Development. This is chaired by the First Deputy Prime Minister and includes representatives of both the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MoLSP), as well as social partners.

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 vocational education and training (VET), which is being implemented over the period 2018–2021. The Belarusian authorities have expressed a need for and interest in discussion of a follow-up project with the EU, which would move the focus from policy development at national level to implementation at regional level in terms of modernising provision and improving teaching and learning.

In 2019 the World Bank approved additional funding of USD 102 million for the Education Modernization Project to improve access to a quality learning environment in selected general secondary schools and to strengthen student assessment and education management information systems. In 2020 the World Bank intends to launch a new higher education reform project of USD 109 million to support Belarus's commitments under the Bologna Process and to modernise its higher education system.

# 1. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

In 2018 Belarus's population was around 9.5 million. Since the 1990s the overall population of the country has declined by around 700 000 people. 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 country's total population<sup>1</sup>. 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 by 2.6% in 2016. In 2017 the economy started to recover and gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 2.4%. In 2018 GDP growth accelerated to 3%, with the main contributions coming from manufacturing and domestic trade. Modest economic growth in Russia and a gradual increase in commodity prices contributed to a revival of production and exports of machinery and oil products<sup>2</sup>. The pace of growth slowed down to just 1.1% in Q1 2019, and then to 1.4% in Jan–April 2019. Economic growth is expected to remain below 2%<sup>3</sup> owing to a combination of domestic structural rigidities and deteriorating terms of trade, under escalating bilateral economic tensions with Russia, where the economy's growth has been lower than expected.

The trade, services and industrial sectors 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 2018 industrial production amounted to 31.5% of GDP, agriculture 6.4% and services 47.7%.

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<sup>1</sup> ETF, *Youth Transition to Work in Belarus*, 2018: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications>

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

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, Belarus Economic Update June 5, 2019.

The existing economic model has prioritised the development of state-owned enterprises. These 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 recent years, the government has increased its efforts to promote private sector development, strengthen the position of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and sustain growth, employment and resilience. Noteworthy achievements since the previous 2016 Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) assessment include the recent adoption of an SME development strategy for the period to 2030 and the elaboration of provisions for the establishment of an SME agency. In addition, the adoption of Presidential Decree No. 7 On the Development of Entrepreneurship substantially simplified regulations for doing business as it included provisions for minimising state interference in business operations, presuming good faith of enterprises and banning the introduction of new taxes until 2020. However, SMEs' contribution to value added and employment in the business sector remain limited and state-owned enterprises continue to play a disproportionate role in the economy<sup>4</sup>.

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 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 has fallen impressively, from 41.9% in 2000 to 5.6% in 2018, and further in the second quarter of 2019 to 5.1% as a result of the growth of real household income. Moreover, Belarus has managed to reduce the poverty rate faster than all other countries in the Europe and Central Asia region<sup>5</sup>. In terms of income equality, Belarus has one of the lowest Gini coefficients in the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe (Gini index 25.4% in 2017) and the country performs relatively well on social indicators, being ranked 53rd out of 188 countries in the UN Human Development Index (2018)<sup>6</sup>.

## 2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 2.1 Trends and challenges

Expenditure on education has priority status on the government's 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 educational outcomes. The country has a high average duration of education (12.3 years) and a high number of expected years of study (15.5)<sup>7</sup>. Its literacy rate is one of the highest in the world. The multi-indicator cluster survey on the status of children and women that was organised by 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%<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> OECD, SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner Countries 2020, forthcoming.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/10/17/poverty-reduction-in-belarus>

<sup>6</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>

<sup>7</sup> ETF, KIESE 2018.

<sup>8</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/country/BY>

In general, the educational attainment of the adult population is high. In 2018, 54.3% of the active population aged 25+ had attained a high level of education (tertiary and secondary specialised), 44.2% 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 VET students in upper secondary education is high, at 41.7%. The share of tertiary education attainment has continued to increase, from 55.8% in 2017 to 58.3% in 2018.

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 education<sup>9</sup>.

In 2018 Belarus participated for the first time in the new round of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the results of which will be announced in December 2019. This will provide data and information on the quality of the education and training system.

## 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. This includes the formation of a ‘cloud’ informational and educational environment containing quality resources and services that are based on modern information technologies. The government will draft and adopt the new education strategy for the period 2021–2025 in 2020.

The Education Code of the Republic of Belarus (2011) provides for the 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. The revised code will, for example, unify different types of public VET providers and reclassify them all as colleges. This is expected to pave the way for optimising and restructuring the VET provider networks and to improve their image among the population and learners.

In 2015 Belarus joined the Bologna Process and endorsed a roadmap for reforms in higher education. The Bologna-driven reforms require legislative changes in higher education, including amending the Education Code, introducing the national qualifications framework (NQF), abolishing compulsory employment placement and setting up independent quality assurance for higher education. However,

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<sup>9</sup> ETF, *Youth Transition to Work in Belarus*, 2018: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications>

implementation of the reforms has been slow. A progress report<sup>10</sup> 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 roadmap. The progress of Belarus in the Bologna reforms was on the agenda of the ministerial conference of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in Paris in May 2018, where the review results of the Bologna 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 strategy<sup>11</sup> 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. As a result, in October 2018 the Council of Ministers adopted the Strategy for the Development of the National Qualifications System, which provides the main directions and actions on the modernisation of this system. In April 2019 the Council of Ministers adopted a decree<sup>12</sup> to establish a high-level National Council on Qualifications Development, which is chaired by the First Deputy Prime Minister and includes representatives of both the MoE and the MoLSP, as well as social partners. The ongoing EU-financed Employment and VET project (2017–2021) contributes to NQF implementation and to the development and piloting of 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, among 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 ongoing ETF Torino Process and the teachers' professional development survey conducted by the ETF have identified a number of issues that require attention in the future. The stakeholder consultations at the regional level revealed that although the regions have many common issues and concerns, they also have some specificities linked to their economic structures and labour markets.

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<sup>10</sup> *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](http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/72/3/MEN_conf-EHEA_AG2_03_950723.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> *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](http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/77/5/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixII_952775.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://government.gov.by/upload/docs/file88897aa5baec4e16.PDF>



They confirmed that in spite of decentralised VET governance, the approach to the development and implementation of regional VET policies is very much top-down, and stakeholders such as employers and others are not directly involved. Shrinking enrolment in VET owing to the declining youth cohort puts pressure on the optimisation of VET provider networks to become more efficient and to be able to serve not only young people but increasingly also adults.

Moreover, Belarus could slowly move away from the old Soviet-style differentiation between practical and theoretical teaching, where theory teachers have a higher status and pay while VET providers struggle to employ highly skilled professionals from industry to work in VET institutions. The recent teachers' professional development survey conducted by the ETF revealed that around 37% of VET teachers have no practical work experience in the field they are teaching. The survey showed that the teachers have an insufficient level of professional competence to meet the challenges and opportunities of new industrial and educational technologies.

The MoE is the national body responsible for education at all levels. It has a Directorate for Professional Education that steers policy implementation in higher education, VET and lifelong learning. The Information and Analytical Centre (GIATS) is a body under the MoE that is 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 relating 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, founded by Belarus State University, provides scientific and methodological support for the entire higher education system and carries out in-service training courses for the staff of universities and higher education institutions in Belarus. The government intends to establish a new independent agency for higher education quality assurance to fulfil the Bologna requirements.

Until recently, social partners' structured participation in overall policy development and implementation has been limited, but the government decisions on modernising the national qualifications system have triggered the more active engagement of social partners since 2017: a number of new sectoral skills councils have been initiated with the involvement of sectoral line ministries and of employer and social partner organisations. 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 main employer organisations and trade unions are formal members of the National Council on Qualifications Development.

In 2019 the World Bank approved additional funding of USD 102 million for the Education Modernization Project<sup>13</sup> to improve access to a quality learning environment in selected general secondary schools and to strengthen student assessment and education management information systems. The project will run until 2025. In 2020 the World Bank intends to launch a new higher

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<sup>13</sup> <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P166719>

education reform project of USD 109 million to support Belarus's commitments under the Bologna Process and to modernise its higher education system<sup>14</sup>.

## 3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

### 3.1 Trends and challenges

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

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 the slow development of the SME sector. The activity rate was 70.9% in 2018. It was slightly higher for men (76.1%) than for women (66.2%). The employment rate is also high, increasing slightly from 67.2% in 2017 to 67.5% in 2018. Good labour market outcomes are also reflected in the proportion of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs). In 2018 the NEET rate decreased further, from 7.3% in 2017 to 6.3% in 2018, which is comparable to 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). In 2018 the official unemployment rate decreased to 0.3%<sup>15</sup>. In 2017 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, and fell to 4.8% in 2018. The youth unemployment rate was higher, at 9.3% in 2017, increasing slightly to 10.7% in 2018. The long-term unemployment rate is low, at 1.2% in 2018, and the number of those in long-term unemployment as a share of the total unemployed was only around 4% in that year.

The employment authorities have reported an increase in the available job vacancies in 2019 in comparison to 2018, indicating an increasing demand on the labour market. The proportion of vacancies for blue-collar jobs increased from 59.5% in 2018 to 64.6% in 2019<sup>16</sup>. However, most of the vacancies reported to the employment services are not attractive to jobseekers as they are mainly low-paid jobs requiring low-level qualifications<sup>17</sup>.

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 57.3% in 2013 to 60.9% in 2018. Over the same period employment in agriculture decreased slightly (from 9.6% in 2017 to 9.3% in 2018), as did employment in industry (from 29.9% in 2017 to 29.8% in 2018). The public sector remains an

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<sup>14</sup> <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P167992>

<sup>15</sup> [http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/zanjatost-naselenija\\_3135/](http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/zanjatost-naselenija_3135/)

<sup>16</sup> <http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/sostojanie>

<sup>17</sup> Vankevich, A., *LMIS and Skills Anticipation in Belarus*, ETF, 2016.

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 Belstat<sup>18</sup>, in 2018 the private sector employed 56.1% of the workforce. However, data on private sector employment also includes 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. Interestingly, the preliminary analysis of the upcoming ETF Torino Process assessment has identified that SMEs have created most of the new jobs in Belarus<sup>19</sup>.

The incidence of self-employment is very low, at 4.2%, suggesting a high proportion 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 Center identified human resource factors, such as lack of motivation and skills, as the biggest barrier to business growth, after financial factors<sup>20</sup>.

In 2018–2019 the EU Employment and VET project conducted a school-to-work transition survey<sup>21</sup>, which showed that higher education was the best way to find employment and avoid unemployment for the young people surveyed. Young men complete their transition at the age of 24 and women a year later. The shortest transition was for young people with higher education, a phenomenon that can also be explained by the government policy on compulsory job assignments for higher education graduates. Job satisfaction is highest among higher education graduates and lowest among those who had uncompleted higher education. At all levels of education the correlation between actual jobs and the educational levels of young people showed slight over-qualification, and respondents reported that they had not been able to fully use the knowledge and skills gained in education.

### 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.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/trud/godovye-dannye/raspredelenie-chislennosti-zanyatogo-naseleniya-po-formam-sobstvennosti1/>

<sup>19</sup> ETF, *Policies for Human Capital Development: Belarus – An ETF Torino Process Assessment*, forthcoming.

<sup>20</sup> <http://eng.research.by/analytics/businessbook/15/>

<sup>21</sup> NOVAK, *Analytical Report on School-to-Work Transition Survey*, 2019, forthcoming.

The government continues to implement 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 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 reducing the maximum period an individual can be registered as unemployed from 36 to 18 months. The Law on Support for the Employment of the Population (2018) further aims to create optimum conditions for employment and establishes measures to stimulate employment and self-employment. 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.

The 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 and also plays a key role in coordinating the development of occupational standards.

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<sup>22</sup>. 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 jobseekers' curricula vitae (CVs) to potential employers, and to notify jobseekers by email 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 5 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

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<sup>22</sup> <http://gsz.gov.by/>

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 register and by November 2019 the number had increased to 172<sup>23</sup>.

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 as unemployed. The PES establishes quotas for employers (regardless of the form of enterprise ownership) with a view to 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 gain 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 jobseekers' motivation to work.

Belarus has retained 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 in the Bologna Follow-Up Group's review, which suggested 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. In recent years there has been a growing awareness of the importance of regular social partner involvement in education and employment policy discussions, particularly in modernising the national qualifications system.

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 total value of the EU funding for the project is EUR 11.5 million. 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, and improving the labour market information system. The Belarusian authorities expressed an interest in and a need for additional support from the EU to sustain the outcomes of the project and ensure their integration and application at oblast level. The EU has started negotiations on a possible follow-up project with the government that would build on the ongoing technical assistance project and could support Belarus in systemic reforms in the area of VET governance, teaching and learning.

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23 [http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/reestr\\_po\\_tr](http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/reestr_po_tr)



# STATISTICAL ANNEX - BELARUS

Annex includes annual data from 2013, 2017 and 2018 or the last available year.

	Indicator	2013	2017	2018	
1	Total Population (,000)	9,463.8	9,504.7	9,491.8	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24, %)	18.2	15.4	14.9	
3	GDP growth rate (%)	1.0	2.5	3.0	
4	GDP by sector (%)	Agriculture added value	6.8	7.6	6.4
		Industry added value	35.9	31.6	31.5
		Services added value	45.4	47.6	47.7
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP) <sup>(1)</sup>	5.0	4.8	4.9	
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure) <sup>(1)</sup>	17.9	17.7	17.9	
7	Adult literacy (%)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
8	Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25-64 or 15+) (%) <sup>(2)</sup>	Low <sup>(3)</sup>	M.D.	1.5	1.5
		Medium <sup>(4)</sup>	M.D.	44.9	44.2
		High <sup>(5)</sup>	M.D.	53.6	54.3
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%) <sup>(6)</sup>	Total	M.D.	1.6	1.8
		Male	M.D.	1.5	2.2
		Female	M.D.	1.7	1.4
10	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	108.0	117.0	M.D.	
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	41.8	41.9	41.7	
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30-34) (%)	M.D.	55.8	58.3	
13	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.
14	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	Total	M.D.	71.3	70.9	

	Indicator		2013	2017	2018
	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	Male	M.D.	75.9	76.1
		Female	M.D.	67.1	66.2
16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	Total	M.D.	28.7	29.1
		Male	M.D.	24.1	23.9
		Female	M.D.	32.9	33.8
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	Total	M.D.	67.2	67.5
		Male	M.D.	70.4	71.6
		Female	M.D.	64.4	63.9
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+%) <sup>(7)</sup>	Low <sup>(3)</sup>	M.D.	14.6	15.2
		Medium <sup>(4)</sup>	M.D.	64.4	64.5
		High <sup>(5)</sup>	M.D.	76.9	77.2
19	Employment by sector (%) <sup>(9) (8)</sup>	Agriculture	9.4	9.6	9.3 <sup>(10)</sup>
		Industry	33.3	29.9	29.8 <sup>(10)</sup>
		Services	57.3	60.5	60.9 <sup>(10)</sup>
20	Incidence of self-employment (%) <sup>(7)</sup>		M.D.	4.4	4.2
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) <sup>(7)</sup>		M.D.	3.4	3.3
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	Total	M.D.	5.6	4.8
		Male	M.D.	7.2	5.9
		Female	M.D.	4.0	3.6
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	Low <sup>(3)</sup>	M.D.	13.2	10.5
		Medium <sup>(4)</sup>	M.D.	7.5	6.4
		High <sup>(5)</sup>	M.D.	3.8	3.3
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(7)</sup>		M.D.	1.4	1.2
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	Total	M.D.	9.3	10.7
		Male	M.D.	11.2	12.7
		Female	M.D.	7.2	8.4
26	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%) <sup>(11)</sup>	Total	9.7 (2009)	7.3	6.3
		Male	8.8 (2009)	7.7	7.0
		Female	10.6 (2009)	6.8	5.6

Last update: 27/08/2019



**Sources:**

**Indicators** 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 - The National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus

**Indicators** 10, 11 – UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

**Indicators** 3, 4 – The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

**Notes:**

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

(2) Active population aged 15-74

(3) Low - primary and basic general education

(4) Medium - general secondary and vocational-technical education

(5) High - secondary special and higher education

(6) 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).

(7) Age group 15-74

(8) Age group 16-59 (males) and 16-54 (females)

(9) Based on administrative data (annual average labour resources estimates).

(10) Provisional data

(11) 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); only those not in education considered (2009)

**Legend:**

N.A. = Not Applicable

M.D. = Missing Data

## 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, countries may report legal or registered residents.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24) (%)	This is the ratio of the youth population (aged 15-24) to the working-age population, usually aged 15-64 (74)/15+.
3	GDP growth rate (%)	Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2010 U.S. dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.
4	GDP by sector (%)	The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services. Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1-5 and includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4.
5	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 (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage 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 (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
7	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy', the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.
8	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. This is usually measured with respect to the highest educational programme successfully completed which is typically certified by a recognized qualification. Recognized intermediate qualifications are classified at a lower level than the programme itself.

	Description	Definition
9	Early leavers from education and training (age group 18-24) (%)	Early leaving from education and training is defined as 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 survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0-2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes with duration less than 2 years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 for data from 2014 onwards.
10	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	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.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education (in this case upper secondary education), expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30-34) (%)	Tertiary attainment is calculated as the percentage of the population aged 30–34 who have successfully completed tertiary studies (e.g. university, higher technical institution). Educational attainment refers to ISCED 1997 level 5–6 up to 2013 and ISCED 2011 level 5–8 from 2014 onwards.
13	Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25-64) (%)	Lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25–64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated.
14	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	Low achievers are the 15-year-olds who are failing level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.
15	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The activity rate is calculated by dividing the active population by the population of the same age group. The active population (also called 'labour force') is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed persons. The inactive population consists of all persons who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The inactivity/out of the labour force rate is calculated by dividing the inactive population by the population of the same age group. The inactive population consists of all persons who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group. Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated. Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0-2), Medium (ISCED level 3-4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8)

	Description	Definition
19	Employment by sector (%)	This indicator provides information on the relative importance of different economic activities with regard to employment. Data is presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. Agriculture/Industry/Services) which is based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with ISIC.
20	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the self-employed (i.e. Employers + Own-account workers + Contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed.
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the Own-account workers and Contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed persons comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed persons comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months)). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0-2), Medium (ISCED level 3-4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8)
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The long-term unemployment rate is the share of unemployed persons since 12 months or more in the total active population, expressed as a percentage. The duration of unemployment is defined as the duration of a search for a job or as the period of time since the last job was held (if this period is shorter than the duration of the search for a job).
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	The youth unemployment ratio is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed persons aged 15–24 by the total population of the same age group.
26	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The indicator provides information on young people aged 15–24 who meet the following two conditions: first, they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the ILO definition); and second, they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Data is expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training.

## TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

EHEA	European Higher Education Area
GDP	Gross domestic product
LFS	Labour force survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
NEET	Not in employment, education, or training
NQF	National qualifications framework
PES	Public Employment Service
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SBA	Small Business Act for Europe
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
USD	United States dollars
VET	Vocational education and training

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