

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

**The unemployment rate** was 4.4%, or 0.4 percentage points lower compared to the first quarter of 2022.<sup>1</sup>

**The employment rate of the population aged 15 - 64** increased by 1.6 percentage points in comparison with the same quarter of 2022 and stood at 70.4%.

**The activity rate of the population aged 15 - 64** was 73.7%, or 1.4 percentage points higher compared to the first quarter of 2022.

There were 43.6 thousand **discouraged persons aged 15 - 64**, representing 4.1% of the economically inactive population in the same age group.

### Unemployment

In the first quarter of 2023, there were 134.9 thousand unemployed persons, of whom 72.8 thousand (54.0%) men and 62.1 thousand (46.0%) women. In comparison with the first quarter of 2022, the number of unemployed persons dropped by 8.7 thousand (6.1%). Over the same period, **the unemployment rate** decreased by 0.4 percentage points and stood at 4.4%, 4.5% for men and 4.3% for women.

Among all unemployed persons, 12.4% had attained tertiary education, 57.7% had completed upper secondary education and 30.0% had at most lower secondary education. The unemployment rate by level of educational attainment was as follows: 1.6% for tertiary education, 4.5% for upper secondary education and 13.3% for lower education (lower secondary or less).

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



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



In the first quarter of 2023, there were 70.3 thousand **long-term unemployed people** (unemployed for one year or more), representing 52.1% of all unemployed. **The long-term unemployment rate** was 2.3%, higher for men (2.6%) as compared to women (1.9%).

Among all unemployed, 19.3 thousand persons (14.3%) were looking for their first job.

In the first quarter of 2023, **the youth unemployment rate (age group 15 - 29)** was 7.1% (8.1% for men and 5.8% for women). In comparison with the same quarter of 2022 the unemployment rate (age group 15 - 29) went down by 1.1 percentage points, which was entirely due to decrease for women (by 2.6 percentage points).

## Employment

In the first quarter of 2023, there were 2 928.0 thousand **employed persons** - 1 545.5 thousand men and 1 382.5 thousand women. Compared to the first quarter of 2022, the number of employed persons increased by 2.1%. The employment rate for the population aged 15 years and over was 53.1%, 59.1% for men and 47.8% for women.

In the first quarter of 2023, the majority of employed persons worked in the service sector - 1 905.3 thousand (65.1%), followed by those in the industry sector - 871.4 thousand (29.8%), and in agriculture, forestry and fishing - 151.3 thousand (5.2%).

Of all employed persons, 4.0% (116.1 thousand) were employers, 7.0% (205.1 thousand) were self-employed persons without employees, 88.5% (2 590.3 thousand) were employees and 0.6% (16.5 thousand) were unpaid family workers. Of all employees, 1 992.3 thousand persons (76.9%) worked in the private sector, while 598.0 thousand (23.1%) worked in the public sector. Of all employees, 67.6 thousand persons (2.6%) had a temporary job (with limited duration).

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

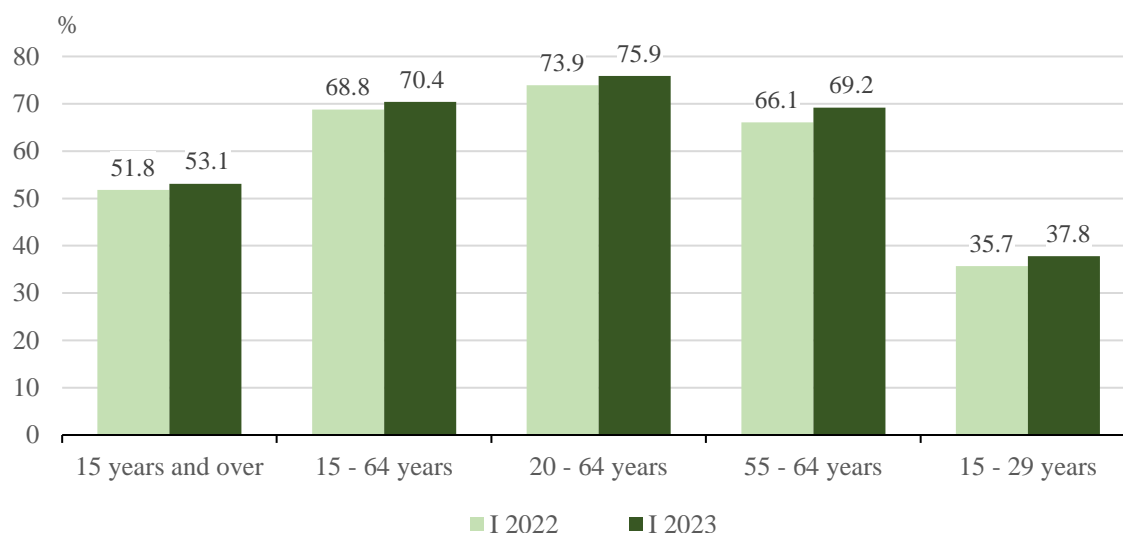
There were 2 819.9 thousand **employed persons aged 15 - 64**. The employment rate for the same age group was 70.4% (73.5% for men and 67.3% for women).

**The employment rate for the age group 15 - 29** was 37.8% (40.6% for men and 34.9% for women).

**The employment rate for the age group 20 - 64** was 75.9%, 79.4% and 72.4% for men and women, respectively. In comparison with the first quarter of 2022, this rate registered an increase of 2.0 percentage points (1.8 percentage points for men and 2.3 percentage points for women).

There were 620.3 thousand **employed persons aged 55 - 64**, representing 69.2% of the population in the same age group (74.3% of men and 64.4% of women). In comparison with the first quarter of 2022, the employment rate for the age group 55 - 64 increased by 3.1 percentage points.

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



### **Economic inactivity**

In the first quarter of 2023, there were 2 446.8 thousand **economically inactive persons (persons not in the labour force) aged 15 years and over**, of whom 996.7 thousand (40.7%) men and 1 450.0 thousand (59.3%) women. **The economically inactive persons aged 15 - 64** were 1 051.4 thousand (464.2 thousand men and 587.2 thousand women), representing 26.3% of the population in the same age group (23.0% of men and 29.6% of women). Among all persons not in the labour force aged 15 - 64, 39.1% were inactive due to participation in education or training.



## Methodological notes

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a continuous sample survey providing quarterly and annual data on the economic activity of the population aged 15 and over. The survey covers non-institutional households. The households participating in the survey were randomly selected and were interviewed through a face-to-face interview.

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

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

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

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

**Unemployed** are persons aged 15 to 74 who:

- did not work at all during the reference period; and
- were actively looking for work during the preceding four weeks, including the reference one, or have found a new job that is expected to start within 3 months following the reference period; and
- were available to start working within two weeks following the reference period.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For weighting of the results of the Labour Force Survey for the first quarter of 2023, data on the population as of 31 December 2022 were used. The population living in institutional households was excluded. In order to ensure comparability, the LFS estimates for the first quarter of 2022 have been recalculated, based on population data as of 31 December 2021, revised according to the 2021 Census and differ from those published in 2022.

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

- total number of employed persons - 1.4%;
- total number of unemployed persons - 6.2%;
- unemployment rate - 5.9%.

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

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



Annex

Table 1

Main labour market indicators, first quarter of 2022 and 2023

	First quarter 2022	First quarter 2023	Change (first quarter 2023 minus first quarter 2022)
<b>Total</b>			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	72.3	73.7	1.4
Employed persons - total - in thousands	2868.0	2928.0	60.0
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	2772.1	2819.9	47.8
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	92.3	113.3	21.0
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	301.3	320.7	19.4
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	2766.6	2811.2	44.6
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	602.3	620.3	18.0
Employment rate - %	51.8	53.1	1.3
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	68.8	70.4	1.6
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	16.8	19.9	3.1
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	35.7	37.8	2.1
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	73.9	75.9	2.0
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	66.1	69.2	3.1
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	143.6	134.9	-8.7
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	140.9	131.9	-9.0
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	26.9	24.5	-2.4
Unemployment rate - %	4.8	4.4	-0.4
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	4.8	4.5	-0.3
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	8.2	7.1	-1.1
Long-term unemployment rate - %	2.4	2.3	-0.1
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	52.5	44.9	-7.6
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	50.5	43.6	-6.9



Table 1

Main labour market indicators, first quarter of 2022 and 2023

(Continued)

	First quarter 2022	First quarter 2023	Change (first quarter 2023 minus first quarter 2022)
<b>Male</b>			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	75.7	77.0	1.3
Employed persons - total - in thousands	1519.9	1545.5	25.6
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	1466.9	1486.3	19.4
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	56.5	63.9	7.4
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	170.6	176.5	5.9
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	1464.2	1481.7	17.5
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	309.3	320.3	11.0
Employment rate - %	57.8	59.1	1.3
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	72.1	73.5	1.4
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	20.0	21.8	1.8
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	39.5	40.6	1.1
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	77.6	79.4	1.8
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	70.9	74.3	3.4
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	76.5	72.8	-3.7
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	74.2	70.5	-3.7
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	14.9	15.6	0.7
Unemployment rate - %	4.8	4.5	-0.3
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	4.8	4.5	-0.3
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	8.0	8.1	0.1
Long-term unemployment rate - %	2.7	2.6	-0.1
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	29.3	25.5	-3.8
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	28.3	24.6	-3.7



Table 1

Main labour market indicators, first quarter of 2022 and 2023

(Continued and end)

	First quarter 2022	First quarter 2023	Change (first quarter 2023 minus first quarter 2022)
<b>Female</b>			
Activity rate (15 - 64) - %	68.7	70.4	1.7
Employed persons - total - in thousands	1348.1	1382.5	34.4
Employed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	1305.2	1333.6	28.4
Employed persons aged 15 - 24 - in thousands	35.8	49.4	13.6
Employed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	130.7	144.2	13.5
Employed persons aged 20 - 64 - in thousands	1302.4	1329.5	27.1
Employed persons aged 55 - 64 - in thousands	293.0	300.0	7.0
Employment rate - %	46.3	47.8	1.5
Employment rate (15 - 64) - %	65.4	67.3	1.9
Employment rate (15 - 24) - %	13.3	17.8	4.5
Employment rate (15 - 29) - %	31.8	34.9	3.1
Employment rate (20 - 64) - %	70.1	72.4	2.3
Employment rate (55 - 64) - %	61.7	64.4	2.7
Unemployed persons - total - in thousands	67.1	62.1	-5.0
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	66.7	61.4	-5.3
Unemployed persons aged 15 - 29 - in thousands	12.1	8.8	-3.3
Unemployment rate - %	4.7	4.3	-0.4
Unemployment rate (15 - 64) - %	4.9	4.4	-0.5
Unemployment rate (15 - 29) - %	8.4	5.8	-2.6
Long-term unemployment rate - %	2.1	1.9	-0.2
Discouraged persons - total - in thousands	23.3	19.4	-3.9
Discouraged persons aged 15 - 64 - in thousands	22.2	19.0	-3.2