



SPOTLIGHT ON JOBS AND SKILLS ROMANIA

2025

Introduction

Drawing on its rich country-level skills intelligence, Cedefop develops its Spotlights on jobs and skills for EU-27 Member States, Iceland and Norway. The Spotlights provide insights into the current labour market landscape, future trends, and skills anticipation in each country. The analysis is based on Cedefop's skills intelligence online tool, its skills forecast, the European Skills Index (ESI), online job advertisements, sectoral and occupational skills intelligence, and country-specific skills anticipation.

Recent employment developments

Romania's unemployment rate has consistently remained below the EU average between 2011 and 2023. However, unlike the EU average, this rate has not returned to pre-COVID-19 levels, rising from 4% in 2019 to 6% in 2023. Employment relies heavily on manufacturing (20% versus 16% in the EU-27) and wholesale and retail trade (17% versus 13%), followed by agriculture (12% versus 4%) and construction (10%, the highest in the EU) (Figure 1). Education and ICT services together employ 7% of the national workforce – significantly lower than the EU average of 11%. Employment in health and social care, a key sector for addressing demographic challenges, is also comparatively small (5% versus 11% of total employment in the EU-27).

A quarter of Romanian workers are professionals or associate professionals, while 32% are trades workers, operators, or assemblers. In 2023, among professionals, the employment share of teaching, and legal, and social professionals was among the lowest in the EU. The same applies to associate professionals, particularly science and engineering technicians, and legal and social associate professionals. In contrast, Romania stands out with a higher-than-EU average employment share for farmworkers and gardeners (8%), drivers and vehicle operators (8%), metal and machinery workers (6%), construction workers (6%), other manufacturing workers (4%), protection workers (3%), and agricultural labourers (2%).

Medium-qualified workers dominate the

employed population (64% versus 46% in the EU-27). In 2023, only 23% of the employed population held high-level qualifications – the lowest in the EU. The share of highly qualified workers is particularly low in health and social care (30%) compared to other EU countries. This highlights the need for re- and upskilling in the care sector to address the demographic challenges and the relative shortage of highly skilled workers better. In 2023, the share of employed individuals participating in training was below the EU average (9% versus 14%) but has improved significantly since 2020.

Women make up 43% of the workforce (EU average at 46%). Among major employment sectors, gender imbalance is particularly pronounced in construction, where female participation is among the lowest in the EU (6%). Nearly two-thirds of the employed population are aged between 25 and 49 (EU average at 57%), while only 1% are over 65 (EU average at 3%). This suggests that Romania may be slightly better positioned to address the ageing challenge than most EU countries. Notably, the share of workers aged 25-49 is particularly high in the fast-growing and 'young' ICT sector (85%, among the highest in the EU), as well as in occupations relevant to the digital transition – ICT professionals (90%), technicians (75%) – and among health professionals (74%). However, the share of youth aged 15-24 neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) is the highest in the EU (17% overall and 20% for females). Initiatives and policies that enable and motivate young people to pursue education and training can help improve employment levels and reduce gender imbalances.

Recent skills and learning developments

In 2023, half of the online job advertisements (OJAs) collected by Cedefop and Eurostat in Romania were for roles in the business services sector. Clerks – primarily accounting clerks – were in demand in a quarter of these ads. In the remaining online job market, professionals, service and sales workers, operators and assemblers, and elementary workers had nearly equal shares. Reflecting digitalisation trends, online job ads for professionals frequently targeted ICT workers

(33%), and researchers and engineers (23%). Among health professionals (13% of online job ads for professionals), demand for nursing staff was twice as high as for medical doctors (38% versus 19%).

[Cedefop's European Skills Index](#) (ESI) ranks Romania among the lowest-performing countries in 2024, particularly for the skills development and skills activation pillars. In skills development, indicators such as participation in recent training, reading, maths and science scores among 15-year-olds, and the share of adults with high-level digital skills were notably low. Poor performance in skills activation signals challenges in the transition from education to employment, and in labour market participation among people aged 20-54. However, Romania's skills matching pillar score has significantly improved since 2017, placing the country among the top five in 2024 (Figure 3). Key improvements include reductions in long-term unemployment, underemployment among part-time workers, overqualification rates among tertiary graduates, and qualification mismatches.

According to 2023 Eurostat data, Romania has the second-lowest share of workers with above-basic digital skills in the EU (12% versus 33% in the EU-27). This issue is particularly pronounced for 25- to 34-year-olds, of whom only 13% possess above-basic digital skills – far below the EU average of 39%. Boosting digital skills through re-training and reskilling is crucial for meeting the growing demand for ICT-related skills (see 'Future employment trends' below), and for helping Romania navigate the challenges of the digital transition.

Future employment trends

According to [Cedefop's Skills Forecast](#) projections, Romania's labour force is expected to grow at a significantly faster pace than the EU average until 2035 (1.3% versus 0.6% annually). This will be accompanied by similarly higher annual employment growth (0.7% versus 0.4% in the EU-27). Between 2022 and 2035, employment is expected to expand substantially in ICT (151%), real estate, professional, scientific and technical activities (55%), and financial and insurance

activities (49%). Conversely, employment in agriculture, forestry and fishery – sectors that accounted for 11% of employment in 2022 – is expected to decline by 40% by 2035. Employment in manufacturing is expected to grow further by 34%, while more modest increases are anticipated in wholesale and retail trade (14%). Notably, employment in the human health and social care sector, which was relatively low in 2022 compared to the EU average, is expected to grow by 27%.

All occupational groups – except for skilled agricultural and fishery workers – are expected to benefit from the projected employment increases. By 2035, professionals will account for 20% of the employed population. Employment growth will be particularly strong among ICT professionals (137%) and business and administration professionals (58%). Growth in employment for plant and machine operators and assemblers (30%), as well as critical healthcare occupations – health professionals (20%), associate health professionals (29%), personal care workers (53%) – largely reflects forecasted sectoral developments.

Female labour force participation is likely to increase much faster than the EU average (2% versus 0.5% annually), helping to narrow the gender gap in the country. The labour force is ageing more rapidly than in other EU Member States. Anticipated annual labour force growth is highest among older cohorts: those aged 65+ (19% versus 6% in the EU-27), 60-64 (8% versus 2%), and 55-59 (5% versus 0.5%). Meanwhile, the share of workers aged 30-54 is expected to decline.

Future skills and learning trends

By 2035, the vast majority of Romania's employed population (93%) is expected to hold medium or high qualifications. Similar to the EU average, the share of low-qualified workers is projected to drop. On the supply side, 84% of Romania's labour force is expected to possess medium or high-level qualifications. However, the gap between demand and supply may lead to skills shortages, which will require targeted policy interventions. National [employment growth in high-tech occupations](#) is expected to be twice as high as the EU average

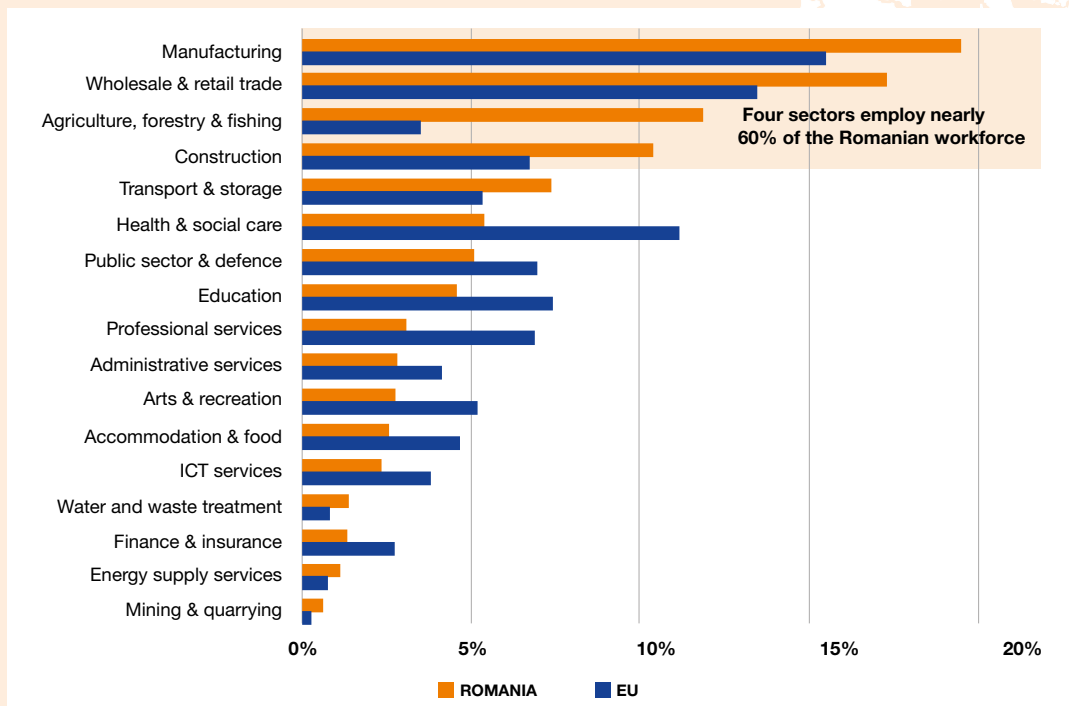
(31% versus 15%), further highlighting the urgent need to develop advanced digital skills across the workforce.

Expected skill shortages

According to [Cedefop's Labour and Skills Shortage Index](#), the digital and green transitions are expected to affect most severely the shortages among professionals – particularly in ICT, and science and engineering – and in elementary occupations such as refuse workers (Figure 3). Future shortages driven by expanding demand and existing demand-supply imbalances are also expected for other professional groups, including those in business and administration, as well as in legal, social, and cultural domains. Supply-driven shortages are likely to emerge for medium-skilled workers, including personal care workers, drivers and mobile plant operators, handicraft and printing workers, and certain elementary occupations such as food preparation assistants, and cleaners and helpers. These skills shortages can be mitigated through re-training and upskilling initiatives, alongside proactive education policies aimed at addressing potential future labour market imbalances.

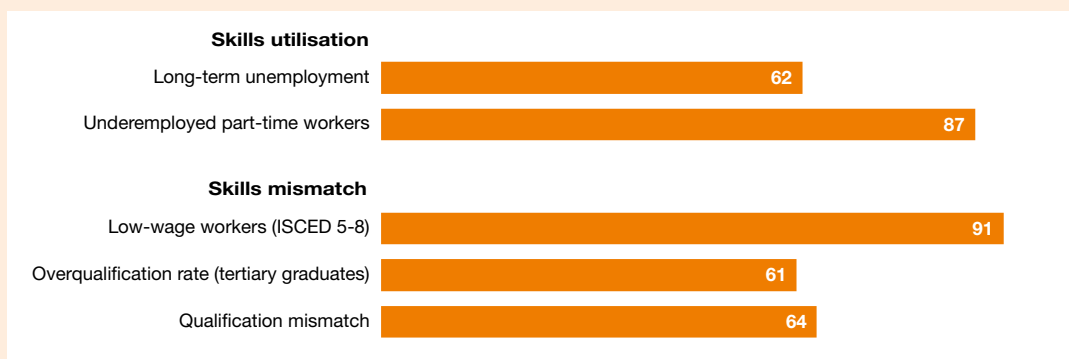
Jobs and skills in figures

Distribution of employment across sectors in Romania and in the EU, 2023, (%)



Source: [Cedefop skills intelligence tool](#).

ESI skills matching pillar in Romania, 2024



NB: The ESI measures countries' 'distance to the ideal' performance, i.e. the highest achieved by any country over a period of seven years. The ideal performance is scaled to be 100, with national scores computed and compared to that.

Example: a score of 65 suggests that the country has reached 65% of the ideal performance, with 35% (100-65) room for improvement.

Source: Cedefop ESI.

Cedefop Labour Shortage Index, Romania, 2022-35



NB: The Labour Shortage Index is the simple average of the quartiles in each of the three pillars: (1) employment growth; (2) replacement demand; (3) supply/demand imbalance (FIOD). A score of 4 indicates a higher level of shortage, and 1 no shortage. The outcome of the pillars is based on the relative evaluation in quartiles of the occupation (here for all EU-27).

Source: [Cedefop Labour and Skills Shortage Index](#).



Further information

- Cedefop. (2023). [Skills forecast methodological framework](#).
- Cedefop. (2023). [Skills anticipation in Romania](#). Data insight series.
- Cedefop. (2024). [Evolution of European skills systems: performance 2015 to 2022](#). Publications Office of the European Union.
- Cedefop. (2024). [Vocational education and training policy briefs 2023 – Romania](#). Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies.
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- Cerkez, E.B., Ivan, M., Mărginean, F.G., Radu, G.A., & Stroie, D.C. (2024). [Implementing European priorities in VET: making national VET agile, flexible, innovative, attractive, inclusive and quality-assured: Romania](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives.

[Cedefop Skills intelligence tool](#)

[Cedefop Skills forecast](#)

[Cedefop Skills OVATE](#)

[Cedefop European Skills Index](#)

[Cedefop Labour and Skills Shortage Index](#)

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