



# SPOTLIGHT ON JOBS AND SKILLS HUNGARY

2026

## 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 reports.

## Recent employment developments

In Hungary, the unemployment rate has fallen to 4% over the years, well below the EU average of 6% in 2023. However, employment rebounded more slowly between 2020 and 2023 after the COVID pandemic than in the EU. Unemployment is significantly higher among low-skilled individuals and 15- to 24-year-olds, while the unemployment rate among highly skilled people is marginal at 2%.

In 2023, almost half of the employed population (46%) worked in distribution and transport or non-marketed services <sup>(1)</sup>, sectors with roughly equal employment shares. Manufacturing and business services have the third- and fourth-largest employment shares (Figure 1). Hungary has some of the highest employment shares of machine and plant operators (4%) and assemblers (3%) in the EU – occupations which play a key role in the manufacturing sector. The country also records above-EU-average shares of researchers and engineers (37%) and science and engineering technicians (50%) in manufacturing, reflecting rapid digitalisation and skills upgrading. Many graduates from education and social sciences find professional or managerial roles. Notably, the employment share of health professionals (2%) is the lowest in the EU.

The gender distribution in employment has remained stable in recent years, with men making up a slightly larger share of the labour force in 2023

(53% male, 47% female). In Hungary, women are well-represented in traditionally male-dominated professions, such as operators and assemblers (the highest share in the EU), and science and engineering technicians (23% compared with 19% in the EU on average). However, men continue to dominate employment in all high-tech occupations. Among EU countries, Hungary has the highest share of male ICT professionals (85%), pointing to a need for further efforts to close the ICT gender gap.

Reflecting the demographics of the overall population, the largest employment share belongs to workers aged 25-49, while the youngest age group (15-24) is least represented. The share of 15- to 24-year-olds neither in employment, education or training (NEET) decreased to just under 10% in 2023, remaining marginally above the EU average. Further policy interventions to support NEETs would be beneficial, particularly in less developed regions, rural areas, and among Roma communities, where early school leaving rates are particularly high (European Commission. Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2024). These vulnerable groups are a priority in the 2024 [Youth Guarantee Plus \(EDIOP Plus 4.1.1-23\) national plan](#).

## Recent skills and learning developments

[Cedefop's analysis of online job advertisements](#) (OJAs) shows a growing demand for highly skilled professionals in Hungary. In 2023, the share of high-tech occupations, particularly researchers and engineers, and engineering professionals in fields such as water and waste treatment, energy supply, and ICT services, was higher than the EU average, reflecting the country's transition towards a circular economy and renewable energy. Strong demand for high-tech occupations is linked to employment in knowledge-intensive services (4%) and high-tech manufacturing (8%), both above the EU average. Few OJAs requested health associate professionals or machine and plant operators compared to the EU average.

In 2023, six out of 10 workers had medium-level qualifications, often attained through vocational

(1) To learn more about the classification of sectors, occupations, and qualification levels discussed in this report, see [Annex 2 of Cedefop Skills forecast methodological framework \(2023\)](#).

education and training (VET), while three out of 10 were highly skilled. Hungary also has relatively low and below-EU-average overqualification rates (18% compared with 23% in the EU).

According to [Cedefop's European Skills Index](#) (ESI), Hungary ranked 13th out of 31 countries in 2024, with a total score of 62. Hungary performs well in skills matching (2nd out of 31 countries). The indicators for this pillar are shown in Figure 2. Nearly 90% of recent graduates (aged 20-34) were in employment in 2022. The country has increased its overall ESI rank since 2017, mainly due to greater participation in VET at the upper secondary level and a reduction in long-term unemployment rates.

With low participation in learning among the employed population (nearly 11%), only 33% of workers had above-basic digital skills in 2023, below the EU average of 14%. However, adults' basic digital skills and participation in learning have improved significantly in recent years.

## Future employment trends

Employment is expected to decline marginally by 2035 at an annual rate of less than 1%. After growing over the previous 15 years, the labour force is expected to remain stable. Population ageing will occur alongside higher participation rates in all age groups, with the largest increases forecast for the 60-64 and 30-34 age groups.

Up to 2035, employment is expected to rise in non-market services, particularly in public administration and defence, which are projected to grow by 1% annually. Employment in business and other services will rise slightly, driven mainly by research and development, market research, professional services, architecture and engineering, and financial and insurance activities. The largest fall in jobs is forecast for the primary sector and utilities, which are expected to lose 2% of employment annually.

Employment in occupations such as professionals, technicians, and associated professionals is expected to grow until 2035. Increased digitalisation and the green transition will boost demand for science and engineering

and other highly skilled professionals. However, employment in low skilled occupations that support manufacturing and in the service sector will fall. The number of metal and machinery workers and building and related trade workers is expected to decline because of automation. However, many jobs for elementary occupations will emerge due to high replacement demand.

## Future skills and learning trends

By 2035, one third of the workforce will hold a high-level qualification, compared with 45% in the EU-27. The increase in the high-skilled workforce (+15%) in Hungary over the period 2022-2035 will be lower than the average trend in the EU as a whole (+33%). By 2035, most workers (59%) will have medium-level qualifications. Trends in expected job openings by 2035 will reflect the composition of the workforce. Nearly 59% of job openings will require medium-level qualifications (approximately 14 percentage points above the EU average), and 34% of them will be for highly qualified people. Demand for low-level qualifications is expected to fall.

Employment in high-tech manufacturing and knowledge-intensive services is expected to remain high, thanks to the relatively stable growth of the [high-tech economy](#). By 2035, employment in some high-tech occupations will continue to grow beyond high-tech sectors, and expand in education, public services, and the defence sector.

## Expected skill shortages

According to the [Cedefop Labour and Skills Shortage Index](#), employers will find it most difficult to recruit highly qualified workers. The greatest shortages are expected among professionals, who will face the highest average levels of shortage, driven by both strong occupational growth and significant replacement demand.

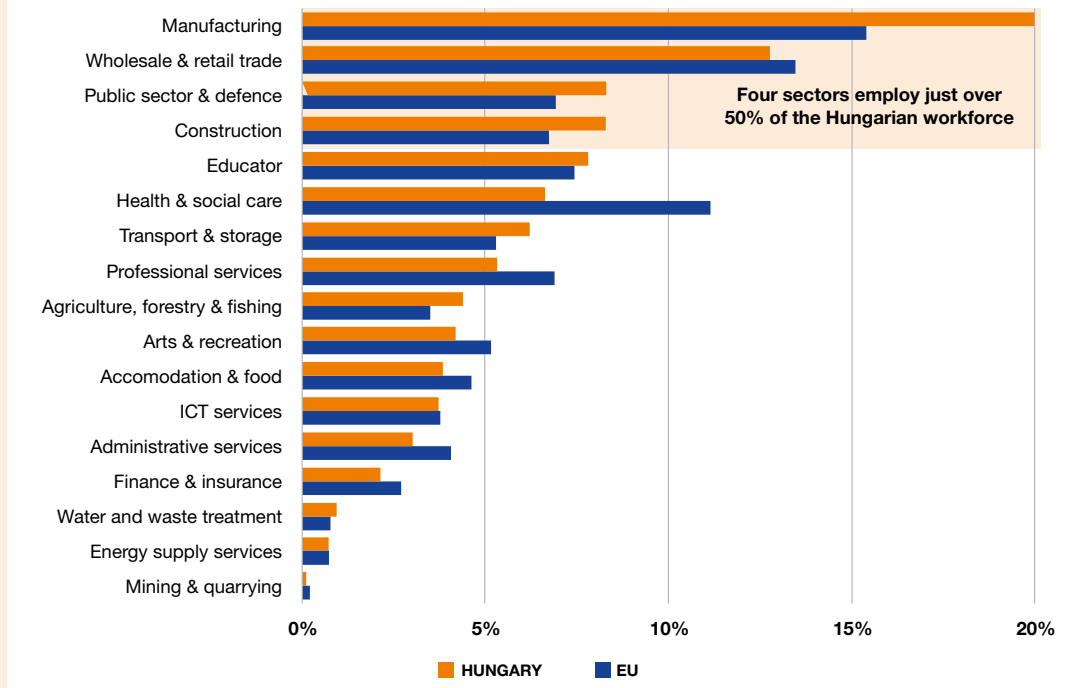
Employers recruiting skilled agricultural and fishery workers are expected to face the greatest shortages, primarily due to high replacement demand. Among non-manual roles, shortages will be most marked for clerks. These shortages are driven by a combination of current skills imbalances, replacement demand and employment growth.



# HUNGARY

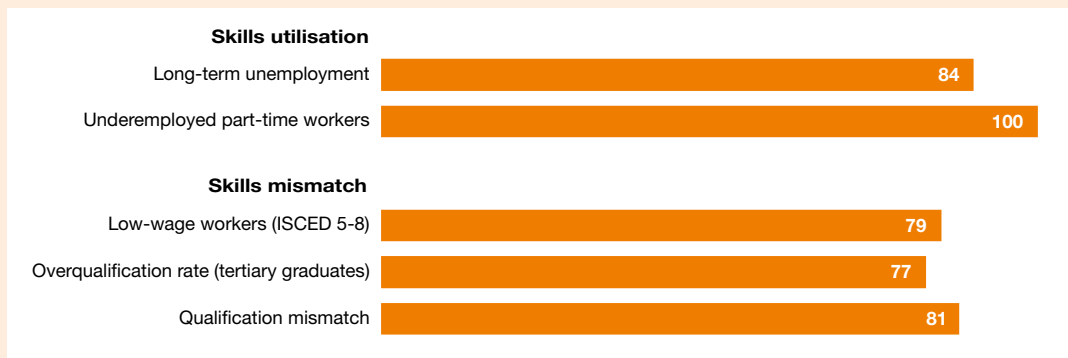
## Jobs and skills in figures

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



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

### ESI skills matching pillar in Hungary, 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 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 and Skills Shortage Index, 2022-35, Hungary



NB: The Labour and Skills 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 quantiles 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). Data insights series. [Skills anticipation in Hungary](#).
- 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 – Hungary](#). Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies.
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- Equilibrium Institute of Hungary. [Equilibrium Institute of Hungary](#).
- Hungarian Labour Force Forecast Survey. [Analysis – MMPP](#).
- Institute for Economic and Enterprise Research. [Monthly Bulletin of Economic Trends / IEER](#).

[Cedefop Skills intelligence tool](#)

[Cedefop Skills forecast](#)

[Cedefop Skills OVATE](#)

[Cedefop European Skills Index](#)

[Cedefop Labour and Skills Shortage Index](#)

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