



August 2024

Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024

Europe and Central Asia

Key points

- ▶ In Europe and Central Asia, youth unemployment and NEET rates have now fallen below their pre-pandemic values. At 14 per cent in 2023, the youth unemployment rate was 1.4 percentage points below the rate in 2019. Likewise, by 2023, the youth NEET rate stood at 13.1 per cent, 1 percentage point below the rate recorded in 2019.
- ▶ Among the subregions, only Eastern Europe saw an increasing rise in the share of youth NEETs. Also, employment rates for both young men and young women remain very low in the subregion; only one in four young person (25.3 per cent) was in employment in 2023; this is one of the lowest rates of all the world's regions.
- ▶ Gender disparities in youth labour market outcomes in the region are relatively small when seen against global averages. But in Central and Western Asia, sizable gender gaps reveal the continuing (though slightly improved) disadvantages of young women. The NEET rate of young women in the subregion was 1.8 times higher than that of young men in 2023 (at 24.1 per cent and 13.4 per cent, respectively).
- ▶ Youth unemployment rates are expected to increase very slightly from 14 per cent in 2023 to 14.1 per cent in 2024, before declining to 13.8 per cent in 2025.
- ▶ Young adults with low levels of education face severe disadvantages in their labour market outcomes. They have both higher NEET rates than those with higher-level degrees and a higher chance of working a low-paid job. And the outcome gaps have grown over time, pointing to a worsening of inequalities of opportunities in the region.
- ▶ Uncertainties both within and outside youth labour markets are weighing on young people in the region, pushing down their well-being. The relative well-being of young people worsened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many young people feeling uncertain about their future economic prospects and their hopes of financial independence.

► Introduction

This regional outlook is based on the [Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024: Decent work, brighter futures](#) (hereafter GET Youth 2024).¹ For two decades, the *GET Youth* reports have striven to provide timely and relevant information on how well young people are doing in their ambitions to attain decent work. In so doing the report has investigated the where, why and how of young people's labour market vulnerabilities, and highlighted the policy measures and interventions that aim to support youth job creation and effectively set young people on the pathway to a bright future of work.

As an anniversary edition, the *GET Youth 2024* looks back on what has been achieved since the dawn of the twenty-first century while also looking ahead to what may lay in store for youth employment in an era characterized by crises and uncertainties.

This Regional Brief accompanies the main report with a more in-depth analysis of the key labour market indicators for youth in the Europe and Central Asia region, based on ILO modelled estimates and available national labour market statistics.²

► Regional outlook for youth in the labour market

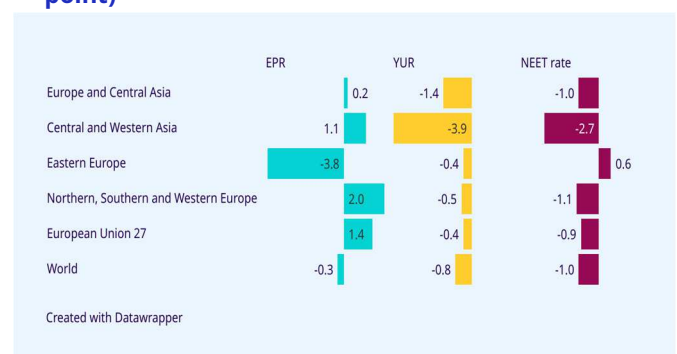
Post-COVID-19 recovery has been achieved, but other crises, including the war in Ukraine, have left their mark.

In Europe and Central Asia (ECA), both youth unemployment rates and youth NEET rates – that is, the share of young people who are not in employment, education or training – have fallen below their pre-pandemic values. By 2023, the youth NEET rate in the region stood at 13.1 per cent, one percentage point below the rate of 14.1 per cent recorded in 2019 and well below the global rate of 20.4 per cent (annex table 1). The picture is even more positive regarding the regional youth unemployment rate which fell from 16.8 per cent in 2019 to 14.0 per cent in 2023.³

There are, however, important regional variations in the current outlook for youth employment. Things have gone especially well in Central and Western Asia; with a substantial increase in the youth employment-to-population ratio (EPR) and the region's largest decreases in both the youth NEET and youth unemployment rates (figure 1). This is largely due to an increase in the demand

for young workers as production shifted to offset production losses in Eastern Europe and because of outmigration of young people to the Russian Federation where labour shortages grew with the onset of the war in Ukraine.

► **Figure 1. Change in key youth labour market indicators, ECA and subregions, 2019–23 (percentage point)**



Note: YUR = youth unemployment rate; EPR = (youth) employment-to-population ratio; NEET = (youth) not in employment, education or training. Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023 (EPR), May 2024 (YUR) and August 2024 (NEET).

¹ The term "youth" is typically considered to encompass the age group of 15 to 24 years old, with "adults" considered to be those aged 25 and over. However, where relevant, the discussion is expanded to cover the broader age range of 15 to 29 years old. Data are presented by subregion and by country income group level and are disaggregated by sex. ILO regions and subregions are defined in Appendix A of ILO, [World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024](#), and country income groupings are defined according to the [World Bank's income classification](#).

² The *GET Youth 2024* report concentrates its analysis on global estimates and subregional estimates that include the three subregions that together

aggregate to Europe and Central Asia: Eastern Europe; Northern, Southern and Western Europe; and Central and Western Asia. This Regional Brief presents data by the aggregate and by subregions.

³ The two phenomena are related since unemployed youth is a subcategory of NEET, along with youth who are inactive (neither employed nor unemployed). The majority of young NEETs are those who are inactive. In 2023, of the 14 million young NEETs in the region, about 5.9 million were unemployed and 8 million inactive and out of school.

Positive results for youth employment are also seen in the subregion Northern, Western and Southern Europe and the European Union grouping.⁴ For the former, the youth unemployment rate declined by half a point from 2019, to 14.4 per cent in 2023. The youth NEET rate in the subregion, at 9.9 per cent in 2023, was the lowest of all the world's regions.

On the other hand, Eastern Europe has seen a big reduction in employment and stands out for having an extremely low youth employment rate for both young men and young women; only one in four young people (25.3 per cent) were in employment in 2023. There was a modest decline in the youth unemployment rate and a slight increase (+0.6 percentage points to 12.9 per cent) in the share of youth in NEET status (the only subregion to show an increase in the youth NEET rate). Raw data on youth employment (not shown) indicate numbers have declined since 2019, even as the youth population was growing, and that the youth inactivity rate was increasing well above the pre-crisis trendline. These signals together indicate a deteriorating situation in regard to youth prospects in the subregion, as the war in Ukraine has permeated into the realms of diminished educational participation, mobilization of young soldiers and lost investment in job creation.

Gender gaps continue, especially in Central and Western Asia where one in four young women was in NEET status

Throughout the period, and in common with all other regions in the world, the NEET rates of young women in ECA are higher than the NEET rates of young men (at 14.8 per cent and 11.3 per cent, respectively). But this trend differs by subregion. In Central and Western Asia, the NEET rate of young women was as much as 1.8 times higher than that of young men in 2023 (at 24.1 per cent and 13.4 per cent, respectively; annex table 3). In Eastern Europe, the rate of young women was 1.3 times higher.

Northern, Southern, and Western Europe (and the EU-27) stand out with regards to young NEETs; first, given its low level, and second, as the only of the world's regions to

have a higher youth NEET rate for young men (at 10.4 per cent in 2023) than young women (at 9.4 per cent). The youth unemployment rate of young men was also higher than that of young women, a gender gap that is also contrary to the other two subregions.

Across ECA, young women lag behind young men when it comes to employment, but less so in the subregion of Northern, Southern and Western Europe. The female-to-male gender gap in the youth EPR was small in the subregion, at 2 percentage points in 2023 (see annex table 2). The gender gap in the youth EPR was moderate, at 6 percentage points, in Eastern Europe, but reached a very high level of nearly 17 percentage points in Central and Western Asia. The high share of young NEETs among young women and the high gender gap in youth employment reflects the continuing limitations that many young women in Central and Western Asia have in their pursuit of education or employment due to the disproportionate share of domestic and caregiving responsibilities placed on them.

Outlook in 2024 and 2025

ILO projections suggest a flattening of the recovery in 2024 and 2025 for young people in the region. At an expected 1.1 per cent in the European Union in 2024 and 1.8 per cent in 2025, growth is proving sluggish, which is expected to limit further improvements in youth outcomes in the subregion. Growth prospects are higher in Emerging and Developing Europe, a grouping that covers most of Eastern Europe and Central and Western Asia; the IMF estimates a 3.1 per cent GDP growth in 2024, falling to 2.8 per cent in 2025.⁵

For the region as a whole, youth NEET rates are projected to fall marginally from 13.1 per cent in 2023 to 13 per cent in 2024, remaining unchanged into 2025. Similarly, youth unemployment rates are expected to increase very slightly from 14 per cent in 2023 to 14.1 per cent in 2024, before declining to 13.8 per cent in 2025. Renewed efforts will be needed to ensure the effective integration of young people into decent work in the region in the coming years.

⁴ The 27 EU countries include 19 countries in the Northern, Southern and Western Europe subregion, seven are in Eastern Europe and one (Cyprus) is in the Central and Western Asia subregion.

⁵ Real GDP growth from IMF, World Economic Outlook (April 2024), datamapper.

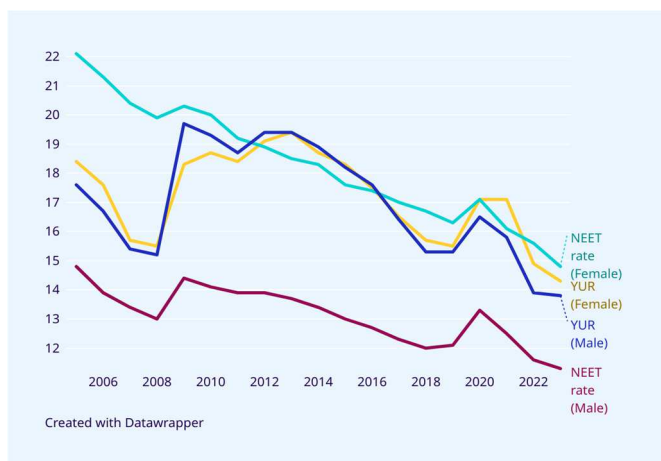
► A changing landscape of youth employment

In the spirit of the anniversary of the series, the [GET Youth 2024](#) report brings updated evidence to various topics of relevance to the current dialogue on youth employment. To the extent possible, the aim is to highlight how the landscape that connects young people's prospects to labour market outcomes has changed since the beginning of the millennium. This Brief summarizes the main points relevant to Europe and Central Asia.

A region “on track” in SDG target 8.6 to lower number of young NEETs

Turning to the longer-term picture, one can see the significant progress in bringing down both youth unemployment and NEET rates in the ECA region over the last two decades (figure 2).

► **Figure 2. Youth unemployment rates and youth NEET rates by sex, ECA, 2005–23 (percentage)**



Note: YUR = youth unemployment rate; NEET = (youth) not in employment, education or training.

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, May 2024 (YUR) and August 2024 (NEET).

In 2015, the share of young people who are neither in employment, education or training, the NEET rate, was established as SDG target 8.6 to measure progress in promoting the labour market integration of young people. In the region, NEET rates are low by global standards, a

signal of good infrastructure in education and training systems and (comparatively) limited barriers in young people's access to job. In Central and Western Asia, the subregion with the highest youth NEET rate, the share declined by 2.8 percentage points between 2015 and 2023. The decline was sharper in the NEET rate of young women (4.3 percentage points), although there is still work to be done to improve the integration of young women in the subregion (see previous section).

Progress in lowering youth NEET rates since the adoption of SDG target 8.6 was most impressive in the subregion Northern, Southern and Western Europe. The rate fell from 12.8 per cent in 2015 to the world's lowest rate of 9.9 per cent in 2023. This is due in part to the extensive implementation of youth employment policies in the region, most notably the Youth Guarantee established by all Member States of the European Union in 2013. The programme, adapted to the context of each EU country, applies an integrated approach towards “guaranteeing” young people a quality offer in either employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship.

The success of the programme in helping to reduce NEET rates between 2013 and 2019 led to the programme's extension and expansion in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.⁶ Several neighbouring countries – above all in South-Eastern Europe – have sought to implement similar programmes following the model of the Youth Guarantee.

Youth anxieties are on the rise, highlighting barriers along the expected pathways to adulthood

In recent years concerns have emerged about the well-being and mental health of young people. Blanchflower et al. (2024) have noted that in Europe and elsewhere since 2011 the traditional U-shaped age profile in well-being has been replaced by a purely positive relationship, with well-being now increasing with age and ill-being decreasing.⁷ In other words, young people today are generally less happy than older cohorts.

⁶ Now in its second phase with a Reinforced Youth Guarantee. See: EU Council Recommendation, [A Bridge to Jobs - Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee](#), 2020/C 372/01, 30 October 2020.

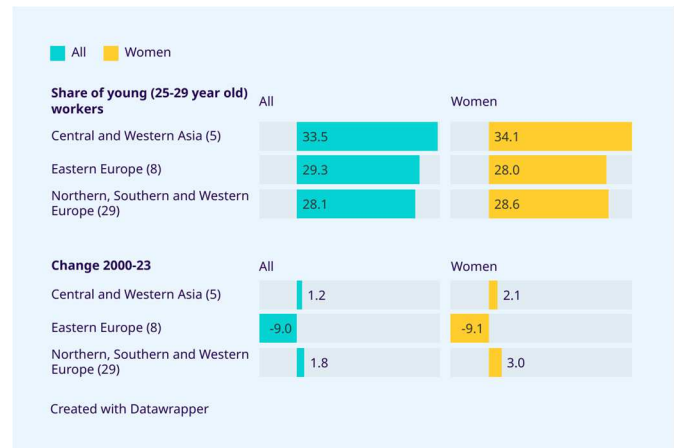
⁷ David G. Blanchflower, Alex Bryson, Anthony Lepinteur and Alan Piper, “Further evidence on the global decline in the mental health of the young”, NBER Working Paper No. 32500, 2024.

The pandemic seems to have re-enforced these trends, as young people feel less secure in the capacity of their incomes to meet the rising costs of living.⁸ The *GET Youth 2024* reports on results of the latest wave of the World Values Survey, finding that just over half of young people aged 15–29 in the Northern, Southern and Western Europe and Eastern Europe subregions (52 per cent and 53 per cent, respectively) felt their standards of living to be *worse off* than their parents (main report, figure 1.9).⁹ The share was lower – and the positive sense of social mobility higher – in Central and Western Asia (40 per cent feeling worse off than their parents in their standard of living).

At the same time, worries of young people about losing their job in ECA are below the global average, though still ranging from 42 per cent in Northern, Southern and Western Europe to 61 per cent in Central and Western Asia (main report, figure 1.9). This means that despite the region's improved youth unemployment rates, young people still somehow do not feel secure about their jobs, or rather they have doubts about the capacity that their jobs bring to putting them on the pathway to financial independence.

Yet there is little evidence of a worsening of job quality for young people over time. The *GET Youth 2024* found only a slight increase in the shares of young adults (aged 25 to 29) working in the less secure forms of work (either in temporary paid work or self-employment) since the early 2000s. The shares in 2023 were 28 per cent in Northern, Southern and Western Europe, 29 per cent in Eastern Europe and 33 per cent in Central and Western Asia (figure 3). Also, Eurofound (2024) reported signs of improvements in job quality for young people, at least compared to the pandemic years, with fewer involuntary temporary contracts, greater perceived job security and better work–life balance reported.¹⁰

► **Figure 3. Average share of young adult workers (aged 25 to 29) in insecure categories of work in 2023 (percentage) and change in share from 2000 to 2023 (percentage point), by ECA subregion**



Note: Calculations are simple averages of existing country-level data in 2000 (in the range of 2000 to 2010) and 2023 (between 2015 and 2023, excluding 2020). The number in parentheses indicates the number of countries covered in the regional average.

Source: Calculations based on annual data in ILOSTAT, YouthSTATS database.

What seems to be stressing young people in the region are the external pressures that come with a rising cost of living and an inability of wages to keep pace. The *GET Youth 2024* does not look systematically at wages, but in an examination of real wage growth among young adults in 16 countries, it found that results diverged for the two countries examined from the region, Poland and Spain. In Spain, the annual monthly earnings of paid young adult employees adjusted by the Consumer Price Index (aka the real wage), stagnated or saw negative growth over the period 2013 to 2021, improving only in 2022 (main report, figure 2.3). These results contrasted strongly to the wage results of Poland where the real wages of young adults were more than 40 per cent higher in 2022 than in 2013. While such results are not conclusive, they do add to the hypothesis of young people's struggle to gain financial independence in the face of rising costs, at least in "old" Europe where the rise in housing costs are proving particularly problematic.

⁸ Eurofound, *Becoming adults: Young people in a post-pandemic world*, 2024. The publication finds a rising incidence of mental health related issues affecting young people compared with those aged 30 and over. As factors behind youth anxieties in the region, the report points to the rising cost of living and challenges with housing that cause an inability to move out of the parental home.

⁹ The *World Values Survey*, Wave 7 (2017–22).

¹⁰ Eurofound, *op.cit.*

Recent evidence also suggests that demographic factors, especially the relatively large numbers of older workers now in the labour force as societies in the region become aged, has been a factor in blocking career advancement of young workers.¹¹ The consequence uncovered in Bianchi and Paradisi (2024) was that the wages of young workers compared to their older counterparts have fallen significantly in many European countries over time.

The services sector provides most jobs for young people, although agricultural employment is still substantial in Central and Western Asia.

The distribution of young workers across economic sectors varies across the region as do the changes that have occurred in this distribution during the new millennium. One commonality is that the services sector in 2021 was the main source of jobs for young people. Its share in total youth employment has seen a sizable increase since the start of the millennium. The share of youth employment in services in 2021 ranged from 53 per cent of total youth employment in Central and Western Asia to 75 per cent in Northern, Southern and Western Europe (figure 4).

Structural transformation in the region has been felt in the continuing decline in agricultural employment (all subregions). Only in Central and Western Asia does the agricultural sector still serve as an important source of employment among young people, although it has shrunk considerably over time (losing nearly 18 percentage points in its share since 2001). In 2021, one in five (21.3 per cent) young workers were engaged in agriculture.

In all subregions, young people today are also less likely to work in manufacturing than young workers two decades prior.¹² Still, the employment base in industry is not negligible with still from 22 per cent (Northern, Southern and Western Europe) to 29 per cent (Eastern Europe) of young people finding work there.¹³

► **Figure 4. Youth employment by economic sector in 2021 (percentage) and change in share from 2001 to 2021 (percentage point), by ECA subregion**



Source: ILO modelled sectoral estimates, November 2022 (unpublished).

Young people with lower levels of education are increasingly penalized in their access to work and quality of work.

ECA shows an increasing inequality in youth employment outcomes by levels of educational attainment, which emphasizes the importance of promoting the employment prospects of more vulnerable young people. Young people with lower levels of education, typically correlating with those from lower-income households, have both higher NEET rates than youth with higher-level degrees and a higher share of young workers in low-paid jobs.¹⁴ And the disadvantages of the lesser-educated have worsened over time. For instance, figure 5 shows that the youth NEET rate of a person with basic education was 30 percentage points higher than that of a tertiary-educated young person in 2023, compared to a difference of 25 points in 2003. The gap in young adults working a low-paid job between the tertiary-educated youth and the

¹¹ Nicola Bianchi and Matteo Paradisi, "Countries for old men: An analysis of the age pay gap", NBER Working paper no. 32340, 2024. For example, the age-pay gap between the wages of the under-35's and the wages of the over 55's, rose by 41 per cent in the UK between 1979 and 2018, by 36 per cent in Germany between 1996 and 2017, and by 96 per cent in Italy since 1985.

¹² The slight gain in the share of industrial employment among youth in Central and Western Asia in figure 4 is a gain in the employment shares in non-manufacturing industry (construction, mining and utilities). The share

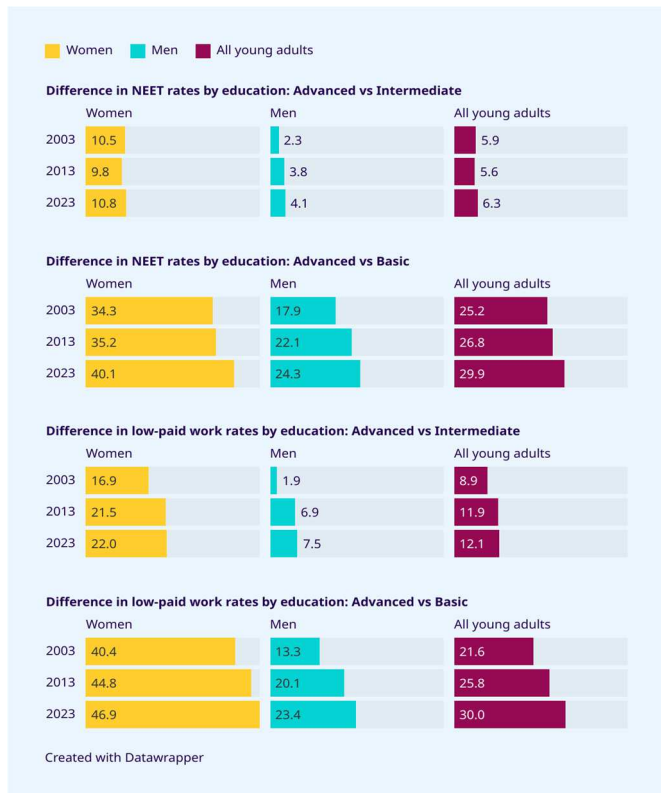
of youth employment in manufacturing decreased by 1 percentage point over the period (main report, table 2.2).

¹³ For comparison, the share of youth employment in Industry in North America was smaller at 14 per cent in 2021.

¹⁴ A worker in low-paid employment is one whose hourly earnings were less than two-thirds of median hourly earnings.

basic-level educated youth was 30 percentage points, up from 21.6 points in 2003.¹⁵

► **Figure 5. Difference in youth NEET rates and shares of low-paid workers by educational attainment, young adults (aged 25 to 29), 2003–23 (percentage point)**



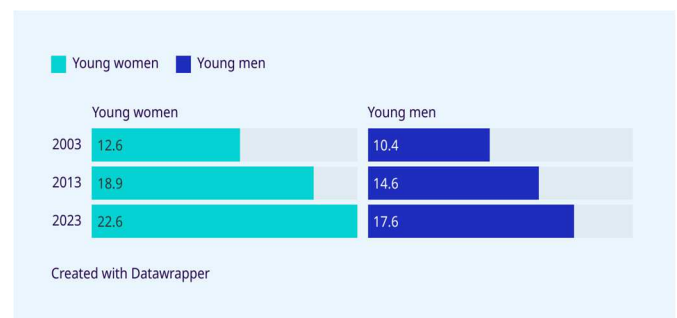
Note: The figure reports the percentage point difference between the indicator values for young people aged 25–29 with advanced (tertiary) educational attainment and those with Intermediate (secondary) or Basic (primary) educational attainment based on available country data. For each country, available observations are averaged so that 2003 refers to the mean value of available country-level data for the period 2001–05; 2013 refers to the mean value for 2011–15; and 2023 to the mean value for 2021–23. The regional figures are unweighted cross-country averages. The low-paid employment rate reports the share of young employees (aged 25–29) whose hourly earnings at all jobs were less than two-thirds of median hourly earnings.
Source: Calculations based on ILO processed household survey micro datasets.

It is also the case that the share of young adult women working a low-paid jobs in the region are still significantly

higher than that of young men at all levels of education. This gender difference is, however, much more pronounced at lower levels of educational attainment.

The data thus demonstrate some clear and increasing advantages in labour market outcomes for young people who manage to stay in school and earn a tertiary degree. However, there are also signs that the capacity of the economy to absorb the increasing numbers of tertiary-educated youth may be slowing. Over the past two decades, the share of young adults who are overeducated for the job that they do has increased. This can result when a person cannot find a job that makes use of their higher-level degree and instead takes up a job where the tertiary degree is not necessarily needed.¹⁶ In 2003, 12.6 per cent of young working women (and 17.6 per cent of young working men) were overeducated for their job compared to nearly 22.6 per cent (10.4 per cent for men) in 2023 (figure 6).

► **Figure 6. Share of young adult workers (aged 25 to 29) who are overeducated, 2003–23 (percentage)**



Note: An overeducated worker is one whose level of educational attainment is above the ISCO educational requirements for their occupation. See the main report for more discussion of this concept.
Source: Calculated from ILO processed household survey micro datasets.

¹⁵ The greater benefits of education have primarily been the result of increases in the NEET rates and in the prevalence of low paid work among young people who did not obtain higher education, rather than a

substantial improvement in these indicators for young people with tertiary qualifications (not shown).

¹⁶ For example, a bike delivery rider with a university degree.

► Moving ahead

There have been positive developments in the labour market outcomes of young people in Europe and Central Asia in recent times. Youth unemployment rates have come down, reaching a historic low of 14 per cent in 2023. The struggles introduced by the pandemic have mostly eased, and many young people have seen a return to normality in their schooling and work transitions.

Yet, structural challenges persist. Eastern Europe has seen a significant worsening of the youth labour market outlook in the wake of the war in Ukraine. Only one in four young people (25.3 per cent in 2023) were in employment in 2023 in the subregion. In Central and Western Asia, youth outcomes have been positive but sizable gender gaps persist and there is some vulnerability in the subregion's reliance on outmigration of youth. In Northern, Southern and Western Europe, economic growth prospects for the near future are low, calling into question the subregion's capacity to continue to absorb young labour market entrants at its current pace.

More generally, this Brief discusses the general rise in anxiety levels among young people, some of which stems from feeling of insecurities around labour market prospects. In Europe, young people are finding it increasingly challenging to meet their “adulthood markers” of leaving the parental home due to rising housing costs. The disillusionment that comes when expectations are not met by reality could be a factor behind the worsening mental wellbeing of young people in the region, compared to their older counterparts.

Another area of concern regards the deepening of inequalities among young people in the region. Despite some progress, young women in Europe and Central Asia still face NEET rates which are above those of young men. And they have a much higher prevalence of being in low-paid work. Higher education tends to reduce these gender disparities but does not eliminate them.

What's more, there has been an increase in the inequalities of employment outcomes by levels of

educational attainment. Young people unable to stay in school through the higher levels are increasingly disadvantaged when it comes to both getting a job and getting a decent job in the region.

Much has been done to address youth employment challenges in the region, especially through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the European Union. Yet more is still needed. To help ease youth anxieties and offset inequalities, institutions will need to guide young people through the complexities of the school-to-work and youth-to-adulthood transitions. Helping young people to keep their hopes alive must become a shared mission involving all segments of society.

Bringing decent work to all young people and setting them on pathways to bright futures requires scaled-up action on multiple fronts and a long-term “real” commitment on the part of policymakers to work with social partners and young people themselves on an integrated approach to youth employment. Without repeating the policy implications of the main report, the following are a few priority areas of action that are especially relevant to supporting youth employment in Europe and Central Asia:

- Tackle youth labour market inequalities through carefully targeted intervention with the specific aim of supporting the entry into the labour market of more vulnerable young people.
- While continuing to boost educational access and attainment for all young persons, more (and better) actions are required to boost job creation through gender-responsive macroeconomic and sectoral policies.
- In all action areas, keep youth in the driver's seat of policymaking, and promote and strengthen the institutions of youth-inclusive social dialogue.

► Subregional summaries

Central and Western Asia

- Youth unemployment rates have fallen significantly since 2019, from 17.7 per cent to 13.8 per cent in 2023. Indeed, the subregion experienced a relatively small shock to youth unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic. In part this was due to a temporary increase in youth labour demand triggered by the war in Ukraine and outmigration to offset the accompanying labour shortages experienced by the Russian Federation.
- Similarly, at 18.6 per cent in 2023 the NEET rate was well below its 2019 value of 21.3 per cent continuing a strong decline visible since records began in 2005 when the NEET rate stood at 30.6 per cent. Still, the NEET rate in the subregion remains above the regional average of 13.1 per cent in 2023 due to the high rate of young women; nearly one in four young women (24.1 per cent) was NEET, compared to 13.4 per cent of young men.
- The share of workers in agriculture has fallen significantly in the two decades since the start of the 21st century. Yet still one in five young workers (21.3 per cent) are employed in the sector. The subregion also had a slightly higher share of workers in insecure forms of employment (at 33 per cent in 2023) compared to the other subregions.

Eastern Europe

- Eastern Europe has fared least well of the subregions since the pandemic in the context also of the war in Ukraine. The employment-to-population ratio fell by almost 4 percentage points between 2019 and 2023 and is expected to recover only marginally by 0.5 percentage points by 2025. The employment-to-population ratio is expected to reach only 25.8 per cent in 2025, still 8 percentage points below the regional average of 33.8 per cent.
- Similarly, in 2023, the youth unemployment rate, at 13.3 per cent, was just 0.4 percentage points below its pre-pandemic value of 13.7 per cent in 2019. At 12.9 per cent in 2023, the youth NEET rate was slightly above its 2019 value of 12.3 per cent.
- Some improvement is expected in the youth unemployment rate, but not so in the NEET rate between 2024 and 2025, implying that many young people are likely to exit from the labour market as challenging times continue.

Northern, Southern and Western Europe

- The subregion has weathered the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, in part due to the swift discretionary action of governments along with the pre-existence of the Youth Guarantee framework. Although the youth unemployment rate increased substantially between 2019 and 2020, by 2022 at 14.2 per cent, it was already well below the 2019 value of 14.9 per cent. From 2023, however, the youth unemployment rate has been creeping back up raising some concerns.
- The picture regarding the NEET rates is even more favourable in the subregion. Already in 2019, the youth NEET rate was 11 per cent, down nearly 4 percentage points from its high of 13.8 per cent in 2013. At 9.9 per cent in 2023, the subregional NEET rate was the world's lowest.
- Gender gaps are small. It is the only among the world's subregions to have had a higher youth NEET rate for young men than young women in 2023.

► Annex: Additional tables

► **Table 1. Youth unemployment rate by sex, Europe and Central Asia region and subregions, select periods and 2019–25 (percentage)**

Region/subregion/country income group	2000–04 (average)	2015–19 (average)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total									
Europe and Central Asia	18.4	16.6	15.4	16.8	16.4	14.3	14.0	14.1	13.8
Central and Western Asia	18.3	15.7	17.7	17.9	16.8	14.8	13.8	13.4	13.4
Eastern Europe	21.3	16.0	13.7	15.7	15.6	14.0	13.3	13.0	12.5
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	16.3	17.5	14.9	16.6	16.4	14.2	14.4	14.8	14.6
European Union 27	19.5	18.2	15.1	16.8	16.8	14.7	14.7	15.3	15.1
World	12.6	14.2	13.8	15.6	14.4	13.3	13.0	12.8	12.8
Women									
Europe and Central Asia	19.0	16.7	15.5	17.1	17.1	14.9	14.3	14.4	14.2
Central and Western Asia	19.8	17.6	20.1	20.6	20.0	17.9	16.8	16.4	16.4
Eastern Europe	21.7	16.2	13.8	16.2	16.5	15.1	13.5	13.3	12.9
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	16.6	16.5	14.0	16.0	16.0	13.5	13.6	13.9	13.7
European Union 27	20.3	17.7	14.8	16.7	17.0	14.8	14.2	14.7	14.5
World	12.5	13.6	13.4	15.5	14.3	13.4	12.9	12.9	12.8
Men									
Europe and Central Asia	18.0	16.6	15.3	16.5	15.8	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.6
Central and Western Asia	17.3	14.4	16.2	16.3	14.9	12.9	12.0	11.5	11.6
Eastern Europe	21.0	15.8	13.6	15.3	14.9	13.2	13.1	12.7	12.3
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	16.0	18.3	15.6	17.2	16.7	14.7	15.2	15.7	15.4
European Union 27	18.9	18.5	15.3	16.8	16.7	14.7	15.1	15.9	15.6
World	12.6	14.5	14.1	15.7	14.5	13.3	13.0	12.8	12.8

Note: 2024 and 2025 are projections.

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, May 2024.

► **Table 2. Youth employment-to-population ratio by sex, Europe and Central Asia region and subregions, select periods and 2019–25 (percentage)**

Region/subregion/country income group	2000–04 (average)	2015–19 (average)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total									
Europe and Central Asia	35.1	33.7	34.1	31.9	32.4	33.8	34.2	34.0	33.8
Central and Western Asia	34.9	34.3	33.8	31.4	32.8	34.5	34.9	34.8	34.6
Eastern Europe	30.5	29.4	29.0	26.9	26.1	25.4	25.3	25.5	25.8
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	39.4	35.9	37.1	35.1	35.8	38.2	39.2	38.6	38.1
European Union 27	34.1	31.7	33.1	31.2	32.0	33.7	34.5	34.2	33.9
World	44.1	35.8	35.2	33.2	34.1	34.7	35.0	34.6	34.6
Women									
Europe and Central Asia	31.1	29.9	30.3	28.2	28.7	30.0	30.5	30.3	30.1
Central and Western Asia	27.1	26.3	26.1	23.8	24.8	26.0	26.4	26.4	26.4
Eastern Europe	27.7	25.7	25.5	23.3	22.8	22.1	22.2	22.4	22.6
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	36.3	34.6	35.6	33.6	34.4	36.9	37.9	37.3	36.9
European Union 27	30.9	29.6	30.8	28.8	29.6	31.3	32.3	32.0	31.7
World	36.3	28.8	28.3	26.3	27.1	27.6	28.2	27.9	27.9

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Men									
Europe and Central Asia	39.0	37.3	37.6	35.4	35.9	37.4	37.7	37.4	37.2
Central and Western Asia	42.6	42.0	41.3	38.7	40.4	42.5	43.0	42.8	42.4
Eastern Europe	33.2	32.9	32.4	30.2	29.3	28.5	28.2	28.5	28.9
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	42.3	37.2	38.6	36.4	37.2	39.5	40.3	39.8	39.3
European Union 27	37.1	33.7	35.3	33.4	34.3	35.9	36.7	36.3	36.0
World	51.5	42.3	41.7	39.6	40.6	41.3	41.3	40.9	40.9

Note: 2024 and 2025 are projections.

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

► **Table 3. Youth NEET rate by sex, Europe and Central Asia region and subregions, select periods and 2019–25 (percentage)**

Region/subregion/country income group	2000–04 (average)	2015–19 (average)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total									
Europe and Central Asia	17.3	14.7	14.1	15.1	14.3	13.5	13.1	13.0	13.0
Central and Western Asia	28.4	21.2	21.3	22.6	20.5	19.7	18.6	18.6	18.5
Eastern Europe	15.5	12.9	12.3	13.4	13.5	13.3	12.9	12.9	13.0
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	12.6	11.9	11.0	11.9	11.1	10.2	9.9	9.9	9.9
European Union 27	12.3	11.5	10.5	11.5	11.2	10.1	9.6	9.6	9.6
World	22.4	21.4	21.4	23.2	21.8	20.9	20.4	20.4	20.4
Women									
Europe and Central Asia	20.8	17.0	16.3	17.1	16.1	15.6	14.8	14.8	14.8
Central and Western Asia	37.5	27.9	27.3	28.4	26.2	25.7	24.1	24.0	24.0
Eastern Europe	18.3	15.0	14.4	15.5	15.7	15.5	14.9	14.9	15.0
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	13.5	11.8	10.8	11.4	10.5	9.8	9.4	9.4	9.4
European Union 27	13.1	11.7	10.8	11.5	11.1	10.1	9.4	9.4	9.4
World	32.3	30.1	29.8	31.1	29.8	29.1	28.1	28.2	28.2
Men									
Europe and Central Asia	13.9	12.4	12.1	13.3	12.5	11.6	11.3	11.3	11.3
Central and Western Asia	19.5	14.7	15.4	17.0	14.9	13.9	13.4	13.3	13.2
Eastern Europe	12.7	10.9	10.2	11.4	11.4	11.2	11.0	11.0	11.0
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	11.8	12.0	11.1	12.3	11.6	10.6	10.4	10.4	10.4
European Union 27	11.5	11.4	10.3	11.4	11.3	10.1	9.7	9.7	9.8
World	13.1	13.3	13.6	15.8	14.3	13.3	13.1	13.1	13.1

Note: 2024 and 2025 are projections. Global and regional estimates for NEET rates are available from 2005.

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, August 2024.

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