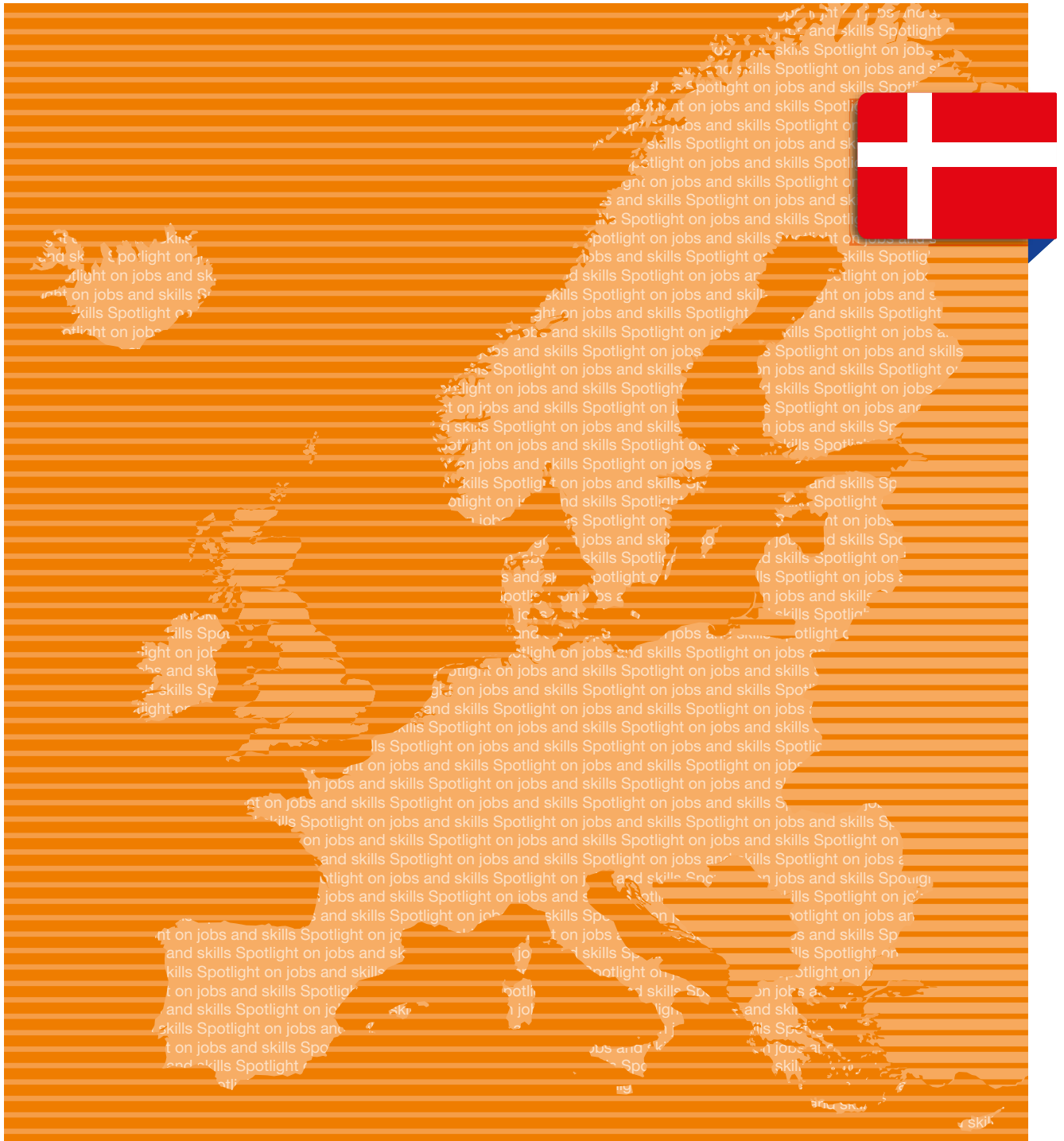




SPOTLIGHT ON JOBS AND SKILLS DENMARK

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 reports.

Recent employment developments

Denmark's unemployment rate has remained consistently below the EU average in recent years. In 2020, it was 6% compared with 7% in the EU. By 2023, it had fallen to 5%, while the EU average also fell to 6%. Youth unemployment (15-24) stayed at around 12%. The unemployment rate for prime-aged workers (25-49) remained stable at (5%), while it fell slightly over the same period for older workers (50-64), from 4% to 3%. Gender gaps narrowed between 2020 and 2023: the female unemployment rate fell from 6% to 5%, and the male rate dropped marginally, remaining around 5%.

Denmark's labour market has shown moderate growth over the past decade. Employment growth between 2015 and 2019 (2% annually) was slightly above the EU-27 average (1%). It then fell slightly between 2019 and 2020 (1% per year), almost on par with the EU average. Between 2020 and 2023, Denmark's employment growth rebounded (2% annually), outpacing the EU-27 (1%).

In 2023, the employed population was spread across a wide range of sectors ⁽¹⁾. (Figure 1). The highest shares were in health and social care (19% versus 11% in the EU-27), wholesale and retail trade (15% versus 14% in the EU-27), and manufacturing (11% versus 16% in the EU-27).

Professionals were the largest occupational group in 2023, accounting for almost a third of total employment. They were followed by service and sales workers, and associate professionals, each

accounting for 18%. Office associate professionals (9%), care workers (8%), and trades workers (7%) also had significant employment shares.

Denmark's employed population is predominantly high- and medium-qualified. In 2023, 41% of workers were highly qualified, 40% held medium-level qualifications, and 19% held low-level qualifications. Men made up 53% of the employed population and women 47%. The age distribution of employment shows a concentration in the 25-49 age group, which accounted for 52% of total employment. Workers aged 50-64 accounted for 30%, while younger workers (15-24) made up 14%. The share of workers aged 65 and over remained low at 5%, slightly above the EU average of 3%.

In 2023, 7% of young people (15-24) were [neither in employment nor education or training](#) (NEETs), below the EU average of 9%. The NEET rate was the same for young men and women. Although below the EU average, it remains an area for improvement for future policy action.

Recent skills and learning developments

Analysis of [Cedefop's online job advertisements](#) (OJAs) shows that in 2023, most vacancies in Denmark were for professionals (23%) and service and sales workers (22%). Associate professionals accounted for 16% of OJAs, followed by managers (11%), trades workers (10%), and clerks (6%). OJAs for elementary workers (6%) and for operators and assemblers (4%) represented smaller shares of total demand. Among OJAs for professionals, most were for researchers and engineers (22%), and health professionals (19%), and the lowest share for teaching professionals (13%). Over two-thirds of OJAs for researchers and engineers advertised jobs for engineering professionals (excluding electrotechnology), which are central to several key sectors of the national economy. As Denmark is one of EU's leaders in the green economy, the high demand for architects, planners, surveyors and designers (17%) may reflect building renovations and other green construction activities. Among OJAs for health

⁽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 \(2023\)](#).

professionals, nursing and midwifery professionals (38%) and medical doctors (33%) had the largest market shares.

According to [Cedefop's European Skills Index](#) (ESI), Denmark ranked third out of 31 countries in 2024, with a total score of 66.7 (Figure 2). Over the past seven years, Denmark's overall score improved from 62.4 in 2017 to 66.7 in 2024, moving from fourth to third place. At pillar level, Denmark ranked fifth in skills development (63.8), eighth in skills activation (67.5), and eighth in skills matching (68.3). Denmark performs strongly in activating and matching skills, with very low long-term unemployment (1%, ranked first) and high recent training participation (28%, ranked second). However, it faces persistent challenges in educational attainment and participation in vocational programmes. The weakest indicators include upper secondary attainment (and above) (74%, ranked 27th) and the share of VET students at upper secondary level (39%, ranked 22nd). Policy initiatives such as [Skilled for the future](#) (Faglært for fremtiden), and [Prepared for the future](#) aim to make VET more attractive to prospective students.

In 2023, 39% of the population had above-basic digital skills, significantly higher than the EU average of 27%. This trend was also reflected among the employed population and the 25-34 age group, where the shares were 43% and 54% respectively, compared with 33% and 39% in the EU.

In 2023, 31% of the employed population took part in learning, well above the EU average of 14%. Participation was higher among women (37%) than men (26%). By age group, one-third of those aged 25-49 participated in learning, compared with 28% among those aged 50-64.

Future employment trends

From 2023 onwards, employment is projected to rise through to 2035. Employment will remain stable until 2030, followed by a modest growth of 0.2% per year from 2030 to 2035. This means that employment growth in Denmark will remain below the EU-27 annual growth rate of 0.4% over the same period.

Based on [Cedefop's skills forecast](#) projections, employment is expected to grow most strongly in information and communication technology (+30% in 2035 compared with the level of 2022), real estate, professional, scientific and technical activities (+26%), and electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (+24%). These sectoral trends reflect the focus on the green transition and advanced technologies. By contrast, accommodation and food service activities (-21%), agriculture, forestry and fishing (-12%), wholesale and retail trade (-10%) are projected to experience the strongest employment declines over the same period.

By 2035, most occupational groups are expected to grow, especially those requiring high skills. Professionals (13% increase) are expected to remain the largest occupational group, and employment of technicians and associate professionals (+12%) and legislators, senior officials and managers (+28%) will also rise. By contrast, employment is forecast to decline for skilled agricultural and fishery workers (-38%), craft and related trades workers (-30%), clerks (-26%), plant and machine operators and assemblers (-11%), and service workers and shop and market sales workers (-5%).

The labour force is projected to become more highly qualified by 2035. The number of workers with high qualifications is projected to grow annually by 2%, in line with the EU average. The number of medium-qualified workers is expected to decline marginally, and employment for low-qualified workers will fall (-2% compared with -3% in the EU). Population ageing will have a relatively modest impact, with the highest annual labour force growth expected among those aged 65+ (3% compared with 6% in the EU) and those aged 60-64 (1% compared with 2% in the EU). Modest growth is projected for prime-age cohorts, while the labour force aged 50-59 is projected to decline.

Future skills and learning trends

Between 2022 and 2035, Denmark's labour market is projected to undergo notable structural shifts in skills demand. By 2035, high-skilled non-manual occupations are expected to account for over half of total employment, increasing by 14%. Skilled non-manual occupations will represent 22% of employment, but employment in these occupations will likely decline by almost 11%. Elementary occupations will make up about 11% of employment, with a modest 4% increase of jobs at that level. Skilled manual occupations will account for 11% of employment, much lower than their current share, because of a sharp employment decline of 24%.

Employment levels of high-tech occupations are forecast to grow by 25% between 2022 and 2035, well above the EU-27 average growth rate of 15%. This trend confirms the expected growth of high-skilled occupations and indicates the ongoing spread of high-tech roles beyond traditional technology sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fishing (+38%) and transport and storage (+33%). By contrast, employment in high-tech occupations is expected to decline sharply in mining and quarrying (-27%).

Employment in Denmark's high-tech economy is expected to grow by 10% between 2022 and 2030, compared with an EU average of 8%. Growth will be particularly strong in knowledge-intensive services (+25% compared with +14% in the EU), while high-technology manufacturing is projected to decline by 4% (compared with an average EU growth of 4%).

Expected skill shortages

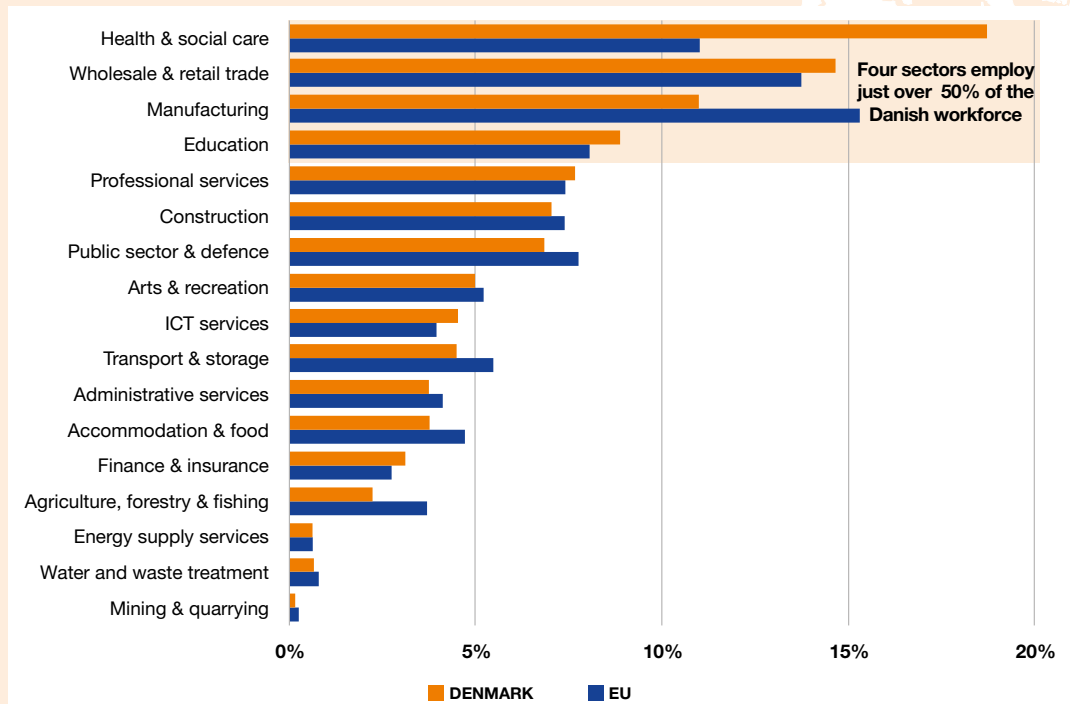
Based on Cedefop's Labour and Skills Shortage Index, the country is expected to face the highest shortages for elementary occupations, skilled agricultural and fishery workers, and plant and machine operators and assemblers (Figure 3). To a slightly lower extent, shortages are also expected for legislators, senior officials and managers, technicians and associate professionals, service workers, and shop and market sales workers. Milder bottlenecks are expected for professionals, clerks, and craft and related trades workers.



DENMARK

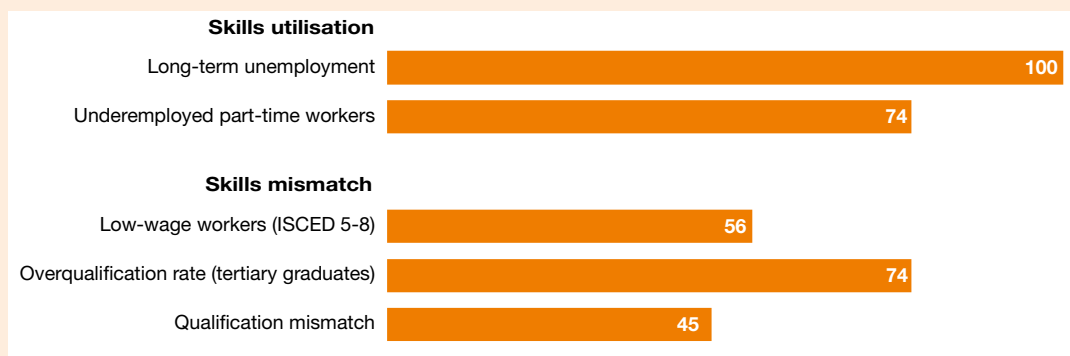
Jobs and skills in figures

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



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

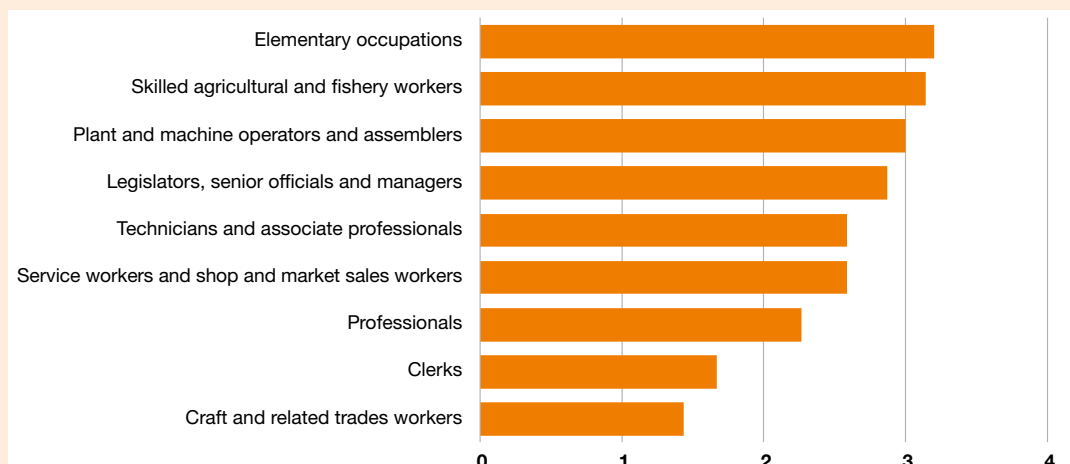
ESI skills matching pillar in Denmark, 2024



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, Denmark



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 quantiles of the occupation (here for all EU-27).

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



Further information

- Cedefop. (2023). [Skills anticipation in Denmark](#). Data insights series.
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- Christensen, J., & Juul-Wiese, T. (2024). [Implementing European priorities in VET: making national VET agile, flexible, innovative, attractive, inclusive and quality-assured: Denmark](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives.

[Cedefop Skills intelligence tool](#)

[Cedefop Skills forecast](#)

[Cedefop Skills OVATE](#)

[Cedefop European Skills Index](#)

[Cedefop Labour and Skills Shortage Index](#)

This Spotlight was drafted by Cedefop's Skills intelligence and foresight team.

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