



SPOTLIGHT ON JOBS AND SKILLS GREECE

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

Greece's unemployment rate has remained consistently above the EU average in recent years. In 2020, unemployment stood at 16 %, more than double the EU average of 7 %. By 2023, this figure fell to 11 %, with the EU average at 6 %. Youth unemployment (aged 15-24) also dropped from 35 % in 2020 to 27 % in 2023. Unemployment among adults aged 25-49 decreased, from 17 % to 12 %, and the rate for older workers aged 50-64 declined from 12 % to 7 %. A gender gap was present in 2023, with unemployment at 14 % for women and 9 % for men.

Greece's labour market has experienced notable fluctuations over the past decade. Employment growth between 2015 and 2019 was considerably above the EU average (+2 % annually compared to +1 % for the EU). However, between 2019 and 2020, employment declined more sharply than in the EU, falling by -3 % compared with a -1 % drop in the EU. This was followed by a modest recovery between 2020 and 2023, with employment growing by +1 % annually in both Greece and the EU.

In 2023, the employed population in the country was distributed across a broad range of sectors ⁽¹⁾. The highest employment shares were in wholesale and retail trade (17 % compared with 13 % in the EU-27), agriculture, forestry and fishing (11 % versus 4 %), and manufacturing (10 % versus

16 %). Conversely, the lowest employment shares were recorded in mining and quarrying, water and waste treatment, and energy supply services, each below 1 % (Figure 1).

Service and sales workers represent the largest occupational group, accounting for 23 % of total employment in 2023. The top three sectors where these workers are employed are distribution and transport (73 %), non-marketed services (12 %), and business services (9 %). Within the distribution and transport sector, wholesale and retail trade (50 %), and accommodation and food (21 %) are the sub-sectors that employ most of these workers.

The employed population is predominantly medium- and high-qualified (47 % and 37 % respectively, compared with 46 % and 38 % in the EU-27). In 2023, just under half of workers held a medium-level qualification, over one third had a high-level qualification, while 15 % did not have a qualification or were low-qualified. Men accounted for 57 % of the employed population in 2023 (54 % in the EU on average). The workforce is strongly concentrated in the 25-49 age group (60 % of total employment compared with 57 % in EU-27). Workers aged 50-64 accounted for 34 % (32 % in the EU), while those aged 15-24 made up 5 % (8 % in the EU). The share of workers aged 65+ remained below 3 % (3 % in the EU).

In 2023, the share of young people (aged 15-24) who were neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) was 12 %, higher than the EU average of 9 %. The NEET rate among young women stood at 11 %, and 12 % among young men, compared with at 9 % in the EU for both genders. This highlights the need for continuous policy efforts to address the challenges faced by this population group and to support them.

Recent skills and learning developments

Analysis of [Cedefop's online job advertisements](#) (OJAs) shows that in 2023, most advertisements in Greece targeted professionals (27 % compared with 25 % in the EU) and associate professionals (18 %, on a par with the EU average) and service

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

and sales workers (17 % versus 12 %). Most online job advertisements were posted by employers in business services (55 % compared with 51 % in the EU), distribution and transport (23 % versus 14 %) and non-marketed services (10 % versus 12 %). Greece is among the EU countries with a high share of OJAs for researchers and engineers in the public sector and defence (17 %), and office associate professionals in education (14 %). The high demand for highly qualified staff in construction is also notable: 30 % of OJAs in the construction sector were for professionals, compared to 18 % in the EU on average.

Among professionals, the highest demand was for office professionals (29 % of OJAs), followed by ICT professionals (27 %), and researchers and engineers (22 %). Most OJAs for office professionals are for sales, marketing, and public relations professionals (61 % of OJAs for office professionals), followed by finance professionals (21 %) and administration professionals (18 %).

According to [Cedefop's European Skills Index \(ESI\)](#), Greece ranked 29th out of 31 countries in 2024, maintaining the same position as in 2017. The skills activation pillar (27th rank) was the best-performing ESI pillar for the country, partly thanks to the indicator on early leavers from training (ranked fifth). The pre-primary pupil-to-teacher ratio (ranked fifth), and the share of low-wage workers (ISCED 5–8) (ranked sixth) are also notable. In contrast, performance is weakest for the overqualification rate among tertiary graduates (ranked 31st) and the employment rate of recent graduates (ranked 30th).

According to Cedefop's digital skills level, in 2023, one fifth of the population had above-basic digital skills, below the EU average of 27 %. Digital skills attainment is slightly higher among the employed population and 25- to 34-year-olds, where the share was 27 % and 35 % respectively, compared with 33 % and 39 % in the EU.

In 2023, 5 % of the employed population took part in learning, well below the EU average of 14 %. Participation was higher among women (6 %) than men (4 %). A total of 6 % of those aged 25-49 participated in learning, while those aged 50-64 participated much less (2 %).

Future employment trends

Looking ahead, employment is expected to decline slightly between 2022 and 2035, by almost -1 %, contrasting with the +5 % growth projected for the EU-27 over the same period.

[Cedefop's skills forecast](#) shows relatively large employment growth between 2022 and 2035 in electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (+53 % compared with +20 % in the EU-27), construction (+15 % versus +1 %), and information and communication (+14 % versus +20 %). Notable growth is also projected in human health and social work activities (+12 % versus 11 %), arts and recreation activities (+9 % versus +4 %), and manufacturing (+7 % versus +2 %).

More moderate increases are expected in wholesale and retail trade (+7 % versus +4 %), mining and quarrying (+7 % compared with a decline of -15 % in the EU on average), and financial and insurance activities (+3 % versus +4 %). In contrast, employment is projected to decline sharply in agriculture, forestry and fishing (-50 % versus a -30 % in the EU-27), and in administrative and support service activities (a decline of -11 % compared with a +7 % growth in the EU-27).

By 2035, service workers and shop and market sales workers (26 % compared with 16 % in the EU), and professionals (24 %, on a par with the EU) will jointly account for the lion's share of employment. The former are expected to grow relatively fast in employment terms (+15 % compared with +2 % in the EU-27), along with plant and machine operators and assemblers (+13 % versus +4 %). For professionals the expected employment growth of +9 % is much lower than the EU average trend of +20 %.

Reflecting projected sectoral employment trends, employment is expected to decline most sharply among skilled agricultural and fishery workers (-50 % versus -24 %). Employment for legislators, senior officials and managers (a decline of -27 % compared with a +2 % increase in the EU-27), and craft and related trades workers (-14 % versus -2 %) is also expected to shrink.

Following wider EU trends, the Greek labour force is anticipated to become increasingly high-skilled. The high-qualified labour force is projected to grow

by +1 % annually, below the EU average of +2 %, while the medium-qualified labour force is expected to grow by +1 %, more than the EU average. In contrast, the labour force with no or low qualifications is projected to decline by -9 % annually, a much steeper drop than the EU average of -3 %. Female participation is forecast to grow slightly, while male participation is expected to decline, diverging from the EU trend of balanced gender growth in the labour force. Ageing will have a visible impact, with labour force growth expected to be strongest among those aged 65+ (+7 % annual growth rate), slightly above the EU average of +6 %. Growth is also positive for those aged 60-64 (+3 %) and 55-59 (+2 %), and above the respective EU average (2 % and 1 %). Younger cohorts aged 20-24 (+2 %) and 25-29 (+1 %) will increase but middle-aged cohorts will shrink.

Future skills and learning trends

Between 2022 and 2035, Greece's labour market is projected to experience structural upgrading in skills demand. By 2035, skilled non-manual occupations are expected to account for the largest share of employment at 38 %, increasing by 4 percentage points. High-skilled non-manual occupations will represent one third of the workforce, with employment growing by 1 percentage point. Employment in skilled manual occupations is projected to fall by -21 %, but will still account for 21 % of total employment. Elementary occupations will make up 7 % of employment in 2035, with employment declining slightly over the years. These trends reflect Greece's gradual movement towards higher-skilled non-manual roles and a shrinking employment share of manual occupations.

[Employment in high-tech occupations](#) is projected to grow by +4 % between 2030 and 2035, well below the EU-27 average of +7 %. This expansion is largely concentrated in a limited number of sectors, with notable growth in energy supply services (+26 %), construction (+16 %), and accommodation and food (+14 %). At the other end of the spectrum, employment in high-tech roles is projected to decline in administrative services (-36 %) and in water and waste treatment (-8 %).

Employment in the overall [high-tech economy](#) is projected to grow by almost +5 % between 2030 and 2035, on a par with the EU-27 average. More noticeable growth is projected in knowledge-intensive services (+6 % compared with +9 % in the EU) than in high-technology manufacturing (a little under +2 % compared with slightly above +2 % in the EU).

Expected skill shortages

[Cedefop's Labour and Skills Shortage Index](#) shows that employers in Greece will face the highest shortages for plant and machine operators and assemblers, service workers and shop and market sales workers, and elementary occupations (Figure 3). For plant and machine operators and assemblers, and for elementary occupations, shortages are driven mainly by existing imbalances (mismatches between workers' qualifications and job requirements). Shortages of service workers are expected to be primarily driven by supply shortages and replacement needs that emerge as workers retire or change careers.

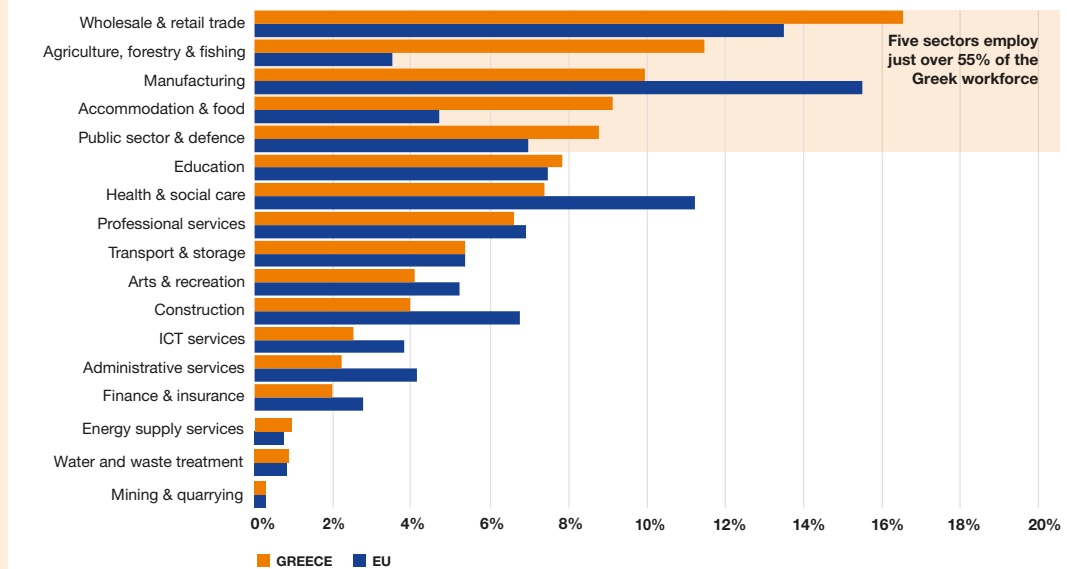
Shortages are also expected for skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related trades workers, and professionals. Shortages are present but milder for employers who need to recruit legislators, senior officials and managers, technicians and associate professionals, or clerks.



GREECE

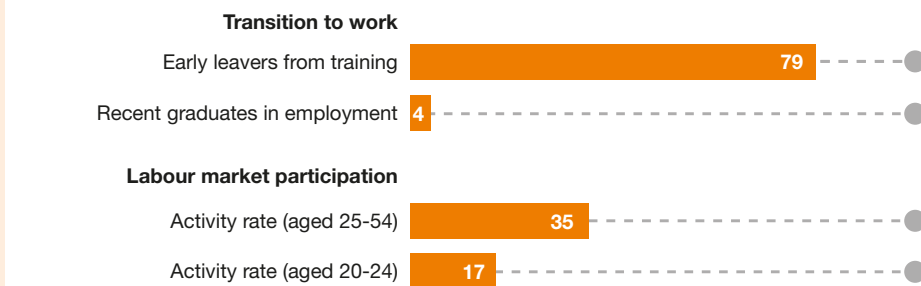
Jobs and skills in figures

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



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

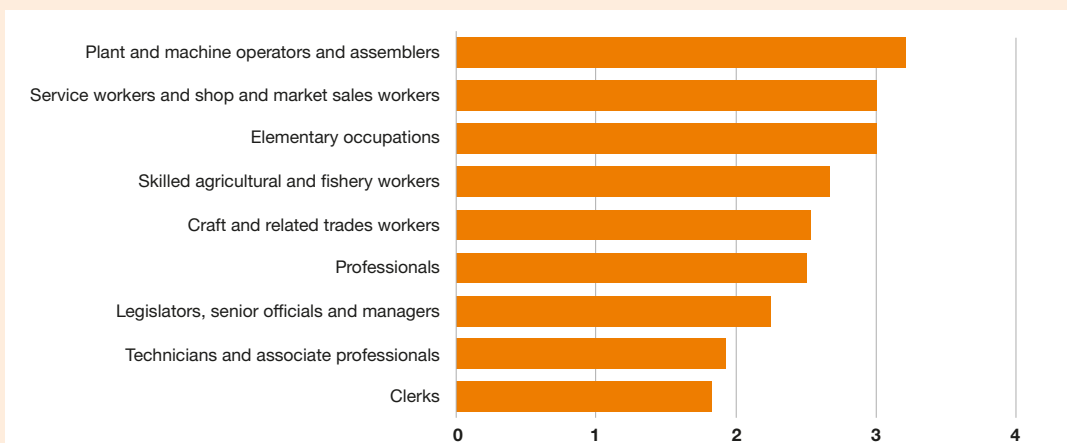
ESI skills activation pillar in Greece, 2024



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, Greece



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 (IFIOD). 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. (2020). *Strengthening skills anticipation and matching in Greece: labour market diagnosis mechanism: a compass for skills policies and growth*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- Cedefop. (2023). *Skills anticipation in Greece*. Data insights series.
- Cedefop. (2023). *Skills forecast methodological framework*.
- Cedefop. (2024). *Evolution of European skills systems: performance 2015 to 2022*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- Cedefop. (2025). *Skills forecast report – Greece*.

[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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