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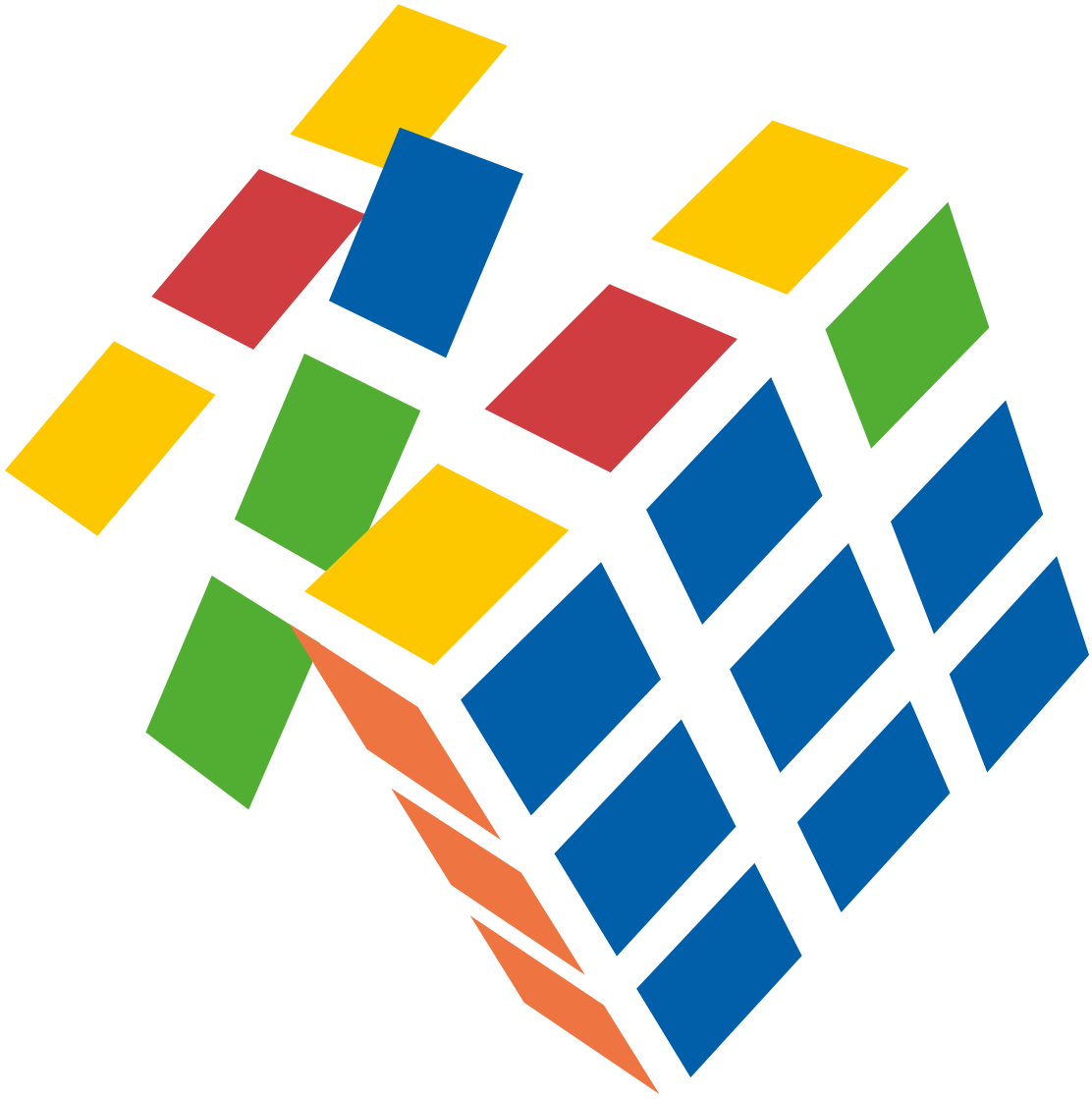


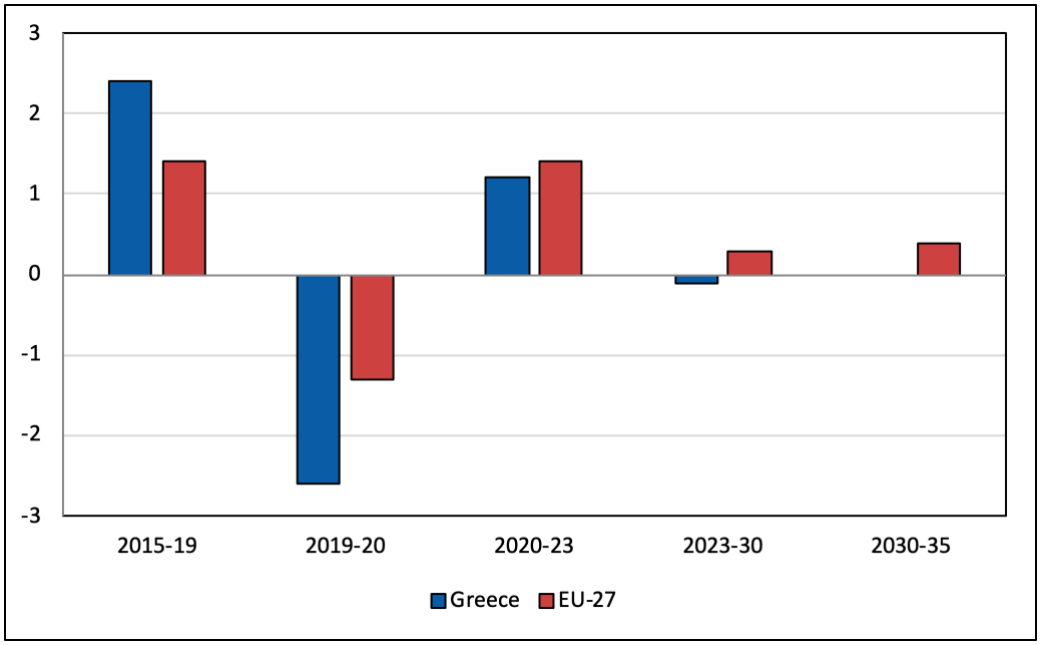
2025 skills forecast

Greece

1. Employment outlook

Employment in Greece is forecast to remain broadly static over the forecast period, compared with slight growth in the EU-27 as a whole. Figure **1** shows that employment in Greece grew quite a bit faster than the EU-27 average over 2015-19 but fell more sharply in 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Employment in Greece is also estimated not to have bounced back quite as strongly as the EU-27 average over 2020-23. Across the forecast period, employment in Greece is forecast to see very little growth, falling by around 0.1% pa over 2023-30 and remaining static over 2030-35, compared with growth of around 0.3-0.4% pa over the whole period for the EU-27.

Figure 1. **Annual percentage employment growth in Greece and the EU-27, 2015-35**



Source: Cedefop (2025 Skills Forecast).

2. Labour force overview

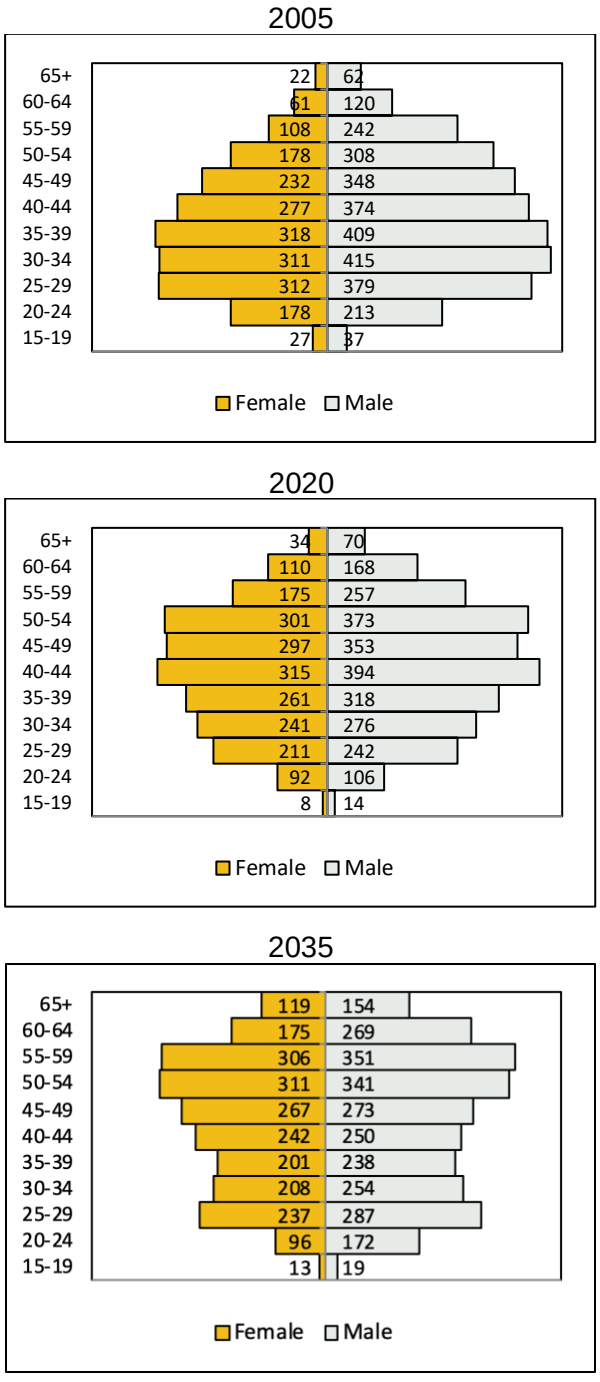
Figure **2** shows Greece's labour force by age group in 2005, 2020 and 2035. Changes in the labour force in Greece over the forecast period will continue to be driven by the ageing population and increasing participation rates in most age groups. However, the total labour force in Greece is projected to increase by around 3.6% over 2020-35, which is an improvement on the decline of more than 6% seen over the previous 15 years, but compares with an expected increase in the labour force of just under 10% over 2020-35 for the EU-27. The total participation rate in Greece is however forecast to increase by 6 pp over 2020-35, compared with an increase of 4 pp in the total rate for the EU-27. Total population is forecast to fall by around 6.6% over 2020-35, compared with a fall of just over 1% seen over 2005-20.

All population age groups between 15 and 54 in Greece are forecast to decline during 2020-35, with particularly strong falls forecast for those aged 35-49, while the population aged 55 and above, and particularly those aged 65 and above, is forecast to grow quite strongly, reflecting trends in the relevant younger cohorts in preceding periods.

The participation rates of all age groups are forecast to grow over 2020-35, with the strongest increases projected for the 55-59 age group (26 pp), 60-64 age group (19 pp) and 20-24, 25-29 and 45-49 age groups (15-16 pp).

The pattern of differences between changes in male and female participation rates in Greece is mixed, with female rates increasing faster than male rates for 35-59 year-olds, and the reverse true for 20-29 and 60 year-olds and above. Overall, the total participation rate for females is projected to increase by 6 pp and for males to increase by 5 pp in Greece over 2020-35, greater than the increases forecast for the EU-27 as a whole.

Figure 2. **Distribution of the labour force (thousands), 2005-35**

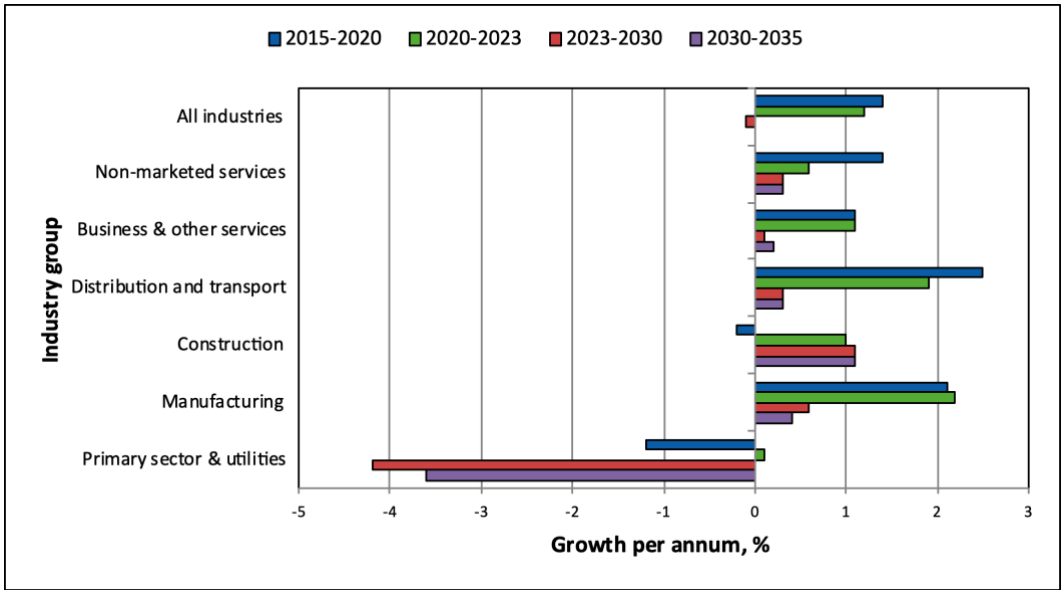


Source: Cedefop (2025 Skills Forecast).

3. Sectoral employment trends

Figure **3** shows annual average employment growth by broad sector in Greece between 2015 and 2035. Although total employment in Greece is expected to remain broadly static over the forecast period, the picture among the broad sectors is mixed. Employment in *Construction* is forecast to grow by around 1.1% pa and in *Manufacturing* to grow by around 0.5% pa, while in Distribution & transport services and Non-marketed services employment is forecast to grow by 0.3% pa. *Business & other services*, which is expected to drive employment growth in many countries, is forecast to see very little growth in Greece. Employment in the *Primary sector & utilities* is forecast to decline by 3.6-4.2% pa over 2023-35.

Figure 3**.** **Employment growth by broad sector of economic activity, 2015-35**



Source: Cedefop (2022 Skills Forecast).

In terms of sub-sectors (i.e. below the level of the six broad sectors discussed above), the growth pattern is more mixed. The *Manufacturing* sub-sectors of *other machinery & equipment*, *basic metals & metal products*, *electrical equipment, Non-metallic mineral products* and *food, drink & tobacco, and* are all forecast to see relatively strong employment growth (1% pa or above) over the forecast period, although, apart from *Food, drink & tobacco* and *basic metals & metal products,* they each account for only a very small proportion of employment in Greece. The *Business & other services* sub-sectors of *arts & entertainment*, *research & development*, *media and computer programming & information services* are also all forecast to grow by at least 1% pa over 2023-30, and generally faster over 2030-

35. Still, the *Business & other services* sub-sectors of *real estate activities*, *market research & other professional services* and *administrative & support services* are all forecast to see declines in employment over the forecast period. The decline in employment in *Primary sector & utilities* is due to the forecast continued decline in *agriculture*, which accounted for more than 10% of total employment in Greece in 2020. In *Distribution & transport services*, the large sub-sectors of *wholesale & retail trade* and *accommodation & catering services* are forecast to see employment growth, albeit relatively modest, over the forecast period.

4. Job openings by occupational group

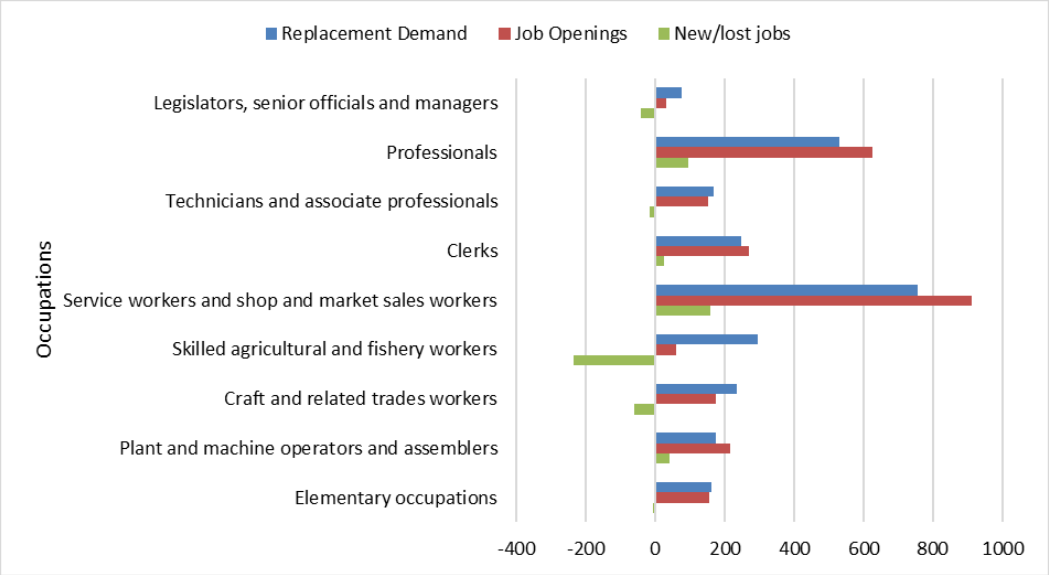
Cedefop skills forecasts estimate the total job openings by occupational group as the sum of net employment change and replacement needs. Net employment change refers to new jobs created or lost due to the expansion or contraction of employment in that sector or occupation. Replacement needs arise as the workforce leaves the occupation due to retirement or career changes. Replacement needs, generally, provide more job opportunities than new jobs, meaning that significant job opportunities arise even in occupations declining in size (i.e. agricultural workers are a typical example, as ageing workers employed in the sector will need to be replaced).

Figure 4 shows the total job openings by broad occupational group over 2022-35. The number of job openings indicates the number of jobs required to be filled due to lost/newly created jobs and those that need replacement workers.

Most broad occupations except for *Professionals*, *Clerks*, *Service workers shop and market sales workers* and *Plant and machine operators and assemblers* are expected to experience a decrease in the number of jobs over this period, reflecting the forecast by sector. There will still be many job openings due to replacement demand. *Service workers and shop and market sales workers* and *Professionals* are the two broad occupations expected to generate the largest number of job openings over the forecast period, accounting for 35% and 24% of total job openings, respectively.

At the more detailed level, most job openings (taking both new/lost jobs and replacement needs together) as a share of all job openings are expected to be in *Personal service workers* (16%), *Sales workers* (13%), and *General keyboard clerks* (7%). Of these, none is expected to see a decline in the number of jobs. The *Market-oriented skilled agricultural workers* are also expected to provide many job openings, driven entirely by replacement demand as the total number of jobs is expected to contract for these occupations. Similarly, *Electrical and electronic trade workers* are expected to see substantial job openings, due entirely to replacement demand. Even among elementary occupations, *Cleaners and helpers* and *Food preparation assistants* are projected to see many job openings, due to replacement demand.

Figure 4. **Total job openings, 2022-35**



Source: Cedefop (2025 Skills Forecast).

5. Drivers of occupational change

Within the Cedefop skills forecast, future employment growth (or decline) of occupations is further broken down by separating national economic components from regional industrial and economic effects, helping to interpret what is driving the change. From this perspective, employment growth can be explained by three possible drivers: (a) overall economic trends (i.e., growth or decline), (b) shifts of employment between sectors, and (c) changes in the occupational structure within sectors (i.e., factors making some occupations more important than others).

An increasing specialisation in many sectors influences the occupational composition of employment in Greece. This is reflected in stronger occupation-specific effects, leading to increasing shares of professionals, technicians, and associate professionals in the economy. These changes reflect changes in job organisation in many sectors and, in many cases, an increasing specialisation. Along with these specialisations, there is also a move towards managing these new work forms. High-skilled occupations that can benefit from this trend are, for example, *Information and communications technology professionals.*

Health professionals, as well as *Associate health professionals*, both benefit from the increase in the underlying health sector, yet not all the increases in employment translate into higher employment in these important health

occupations (employment for associate health professionals is expected to decrease). An increasing specialisation will also lead to a larger share of other occupations in that sector.

Therefore, the overall effect of occupational change depends on several factors that need to be considered together. Increasing digitalisation and moving towards a more service-oriented economy, including within manufacturing, will lead to a greater use of higher-level occupations. At the other end of the spectrum, lower-level occupations supporting production and the service sector seem to be decreasing as well as some intermediate occupations.

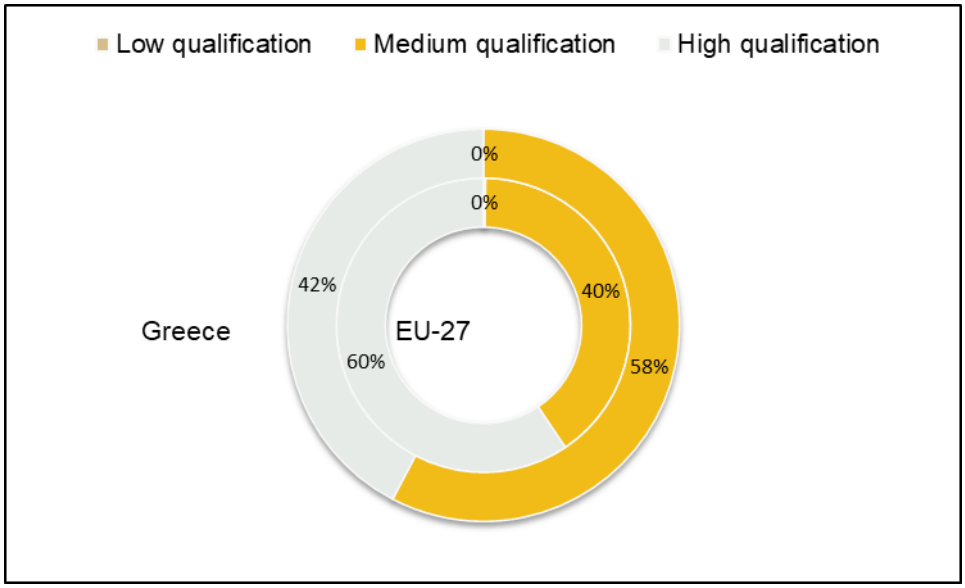
The strength of most intermediate occupations, with a strong intermediate qualification level in Greece, limits the overall effect on medium-qualified occupations. *Building and related trade workers, as well as industry-based Metal, machinery, and related trade workers,* are expected to decrease, most likely due to increases in automation within the sectors. Clerical work is partly expected to see a decrease in its employment share in all but *General clerks* and *Customer service clerks*.

6. Demand for and supply of skills

Within the Cedefop skills forecast, skills are proxied by the highest level of qualification held by individuals in the labour force and employment. Three levels are distinguished: high, medium, and low, corresponding to the official ISCED classification. The occupational group also indicates the skill level required, as some occupations (e.g. professionals) typically require high-level skills, while others (e.g. elementary) typically require only basic ones. Therefore, occupational groups are also linked to a skill level.

Figure 5 describes the share of qualification relative to the EU average. The figure shows job openings (newly created jobs as well as replacement needs if they surpass any possible decline). Well over half (58%) of the total job openings that are expected to be created in Greece over the period up to 2035 are expected to require medium-level qualifications, about 18 pp more than the EU-27 average (see Figure 5). About 4 out of 10 (42%) of total job openings will require high-level qualifications, and, at this aggregate level, none will require low-level qualifications.

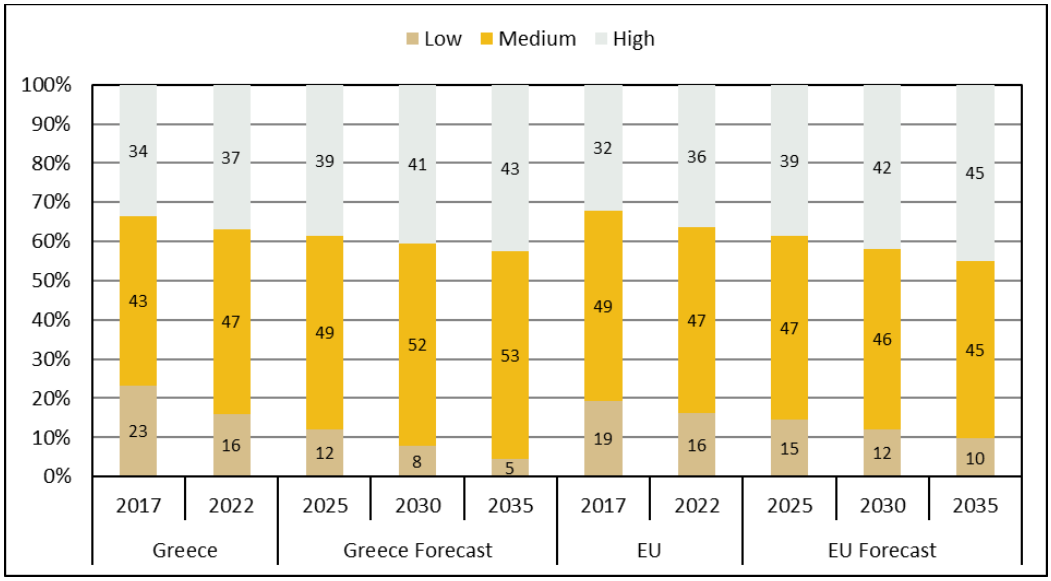
Figure 5. **Shares of total job openings by level of qualification, 2022-35**



Source: Cedefop (2025 Skills Forecast).

Future labour supply trends depend on the size of the working-age population (defined as those aged 15 or older), labour market participation rates, and the extent to which people acquire formal qualifications.

Figure 6. **Labour force by qualification level**



Source: Cedefop (2025 Skills Forecast).

Greece is expected to experience strong changes in the shares of qualifications of the labour force, as seen in Figure 6. The share of people with high-level qualifications in Greece is expected to increase to 43% by 2035. The share of the medium qualified labour force is expected to increase to 53%, remaining the largest qualification group in Greece. Those with low levels of qualification are expected to diminish, from 16% in 2022 to only 5% in 2035. In Greece, the proportion of the labour force with medium-level qualifications is higher than the EU-27 average, while that of the lower educated is below the EU average.

In Greece, the supply of low- and medium-skill workers is expected to be below what is required by demand by 2035, while the supply of high-skill workers is expected to broadly meet the demand for those qualifications.

The **labour shortage index** is a method to summarise three elements of potential labour shortage: (1) employment growth, (2) replacement demand, and (3) Supply/Demand imbalance (IFIOD). The outcomes at the occupation level are grouped into four quartiles: those with a low indication of shortage get the value 1, and those with the highest indication of shortage will get the value 4. The total outcome of the individual elements is a simple average of the elements. In Figure 6, the length of the bar gives the overall outcome, where higher levels indicate more shortage. The outcomes of the three elements are also given to quickly evaluate the influence of employment growth - replacement demand, and - supply-demand imbalances.

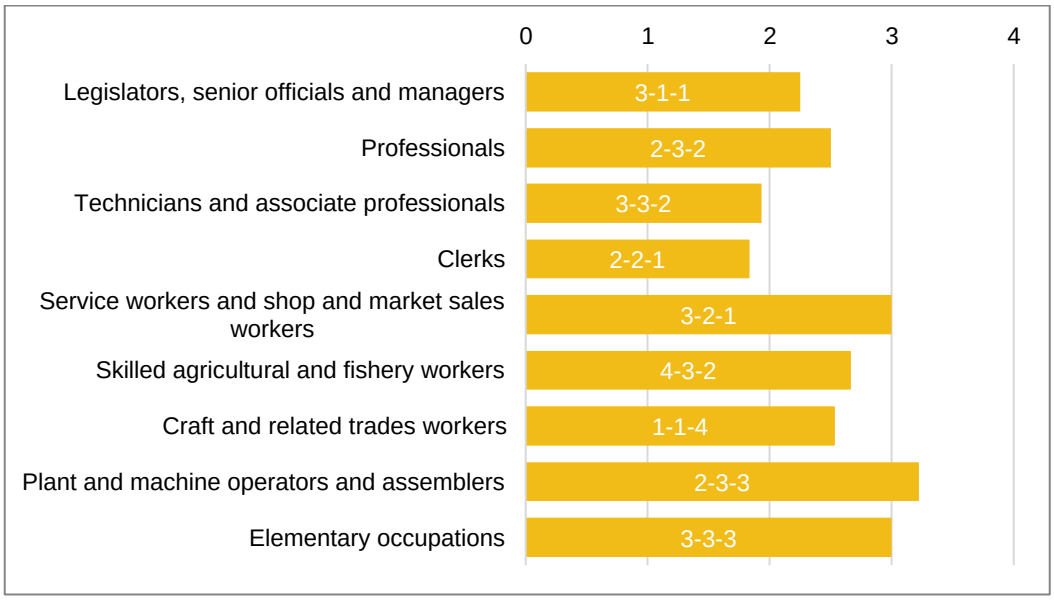
Greece faces some labour market tightness throughout the forecast period. Hiring difficulties arise mainly among low- and medium-qualified. The labour shortage index is calculated at the ISCO 2-digit level and then aggregated to the ISCO 1-digit level. The first number in the figure gives the quantile of the growth, a 4 being the highest quantile of growth and 1 the lowest. The second number is the replacement demand. The third is the imbalance, usually dominated by low/intermediate qualified in this forecast).

The highest value of the labour shortage index can be found among *Plant and machine operators* and among *Service workers and shop and market sales assistants*. This is driven by the underlying occupations' growth, high replacement needs, and skills imbalances.

Among the skilled manual occupations, the highest shortages are expected among *Assemblers (4-2-4),* who have among the highest employment growth and imbalances. Among the skilled non-manual occupations, the highest shortage is expected among *Personal service workers* (3-4-3). This is driven by being among the highest group for replacement demand and second highest for employment growth and imbalances. Among the high-skilled workers, *Legal, social*

and cultural professionals (4-4-1) and Associated *legal, social and cultural professionals* (4-3-2) show the greatest imbalances. While the shortage among the professionals is driven by high employment growth and replacement demand, the replacement demand is slightly lower among the associate professionals. Among the *Associate professionals,* imbalances are higher given their employment of workers with intermediate qualification levels.

Figure 7. **Labour Shortage Index, 2022-35**



Source: Cedefop (2025 Skills Forecast).

Cedefop methodology

The Cedefop Skills Forecast offers quantitative projections of future trends in employment, by sector of economic activity and occupational group. Future trends in the level of education of the population and the labour force are also estimated. Cedefop's forecast uses harmonised international data and a common methodological approach allowing cross-country comparisons between employment trends in sectors, occupations and qualifications. The forecast and methodology is validated by a group of national experts. The forecast does not substitute national forecasts, which often use more detailed methodologies and data, while they also incorporate in-depth knowledge of a country's labour market.

The latest round of the forecast covers the period up to 2035. The forecast takes account of global economic developments up to November 2023. The European Economy is expected to grow despite monetary tightening on phasing out of fiscal support.

The key assumptions of the baseline scenario incorporate the Eurostat population forecast available in June 2023 (Europop 2023) ([1]), and the short-term macroeconomic forecast produced by DG ECFIN in November 2023 ([2]). The source of historical labour force data is the European Labour Force Survey, which in 2022 underwent important methodological changes, causing a break in the time series for several variables, including the labour force. Consequently, in many Member States, the participation rates in 2021 are noticeably above/below historical trends. Moreover, some Member States experienced significant revisions in the historical data series for sectoral employment from the National Accounts.

The Cedefop Skills forecast 2025 is consistent with the objectives set by the European Green Deal by incorporating suitable assumptions about additional investment, power sector technologies, energy balances, and carbon pricing.

Energy and commodity price forecasts from the World Bank and the IEA are used as inputs to the Cedefop Skills Forecast.

([1]) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/population-projections/database

([2]) https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-forecast-and-surveys/economic-forecasts/autumn-2023-economic-forecast-modest-recovery-ahead-after-challenging-year_en

For the latest update and access to more detailed Cedefop skills forecast data please visit:
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For more details, please contact Cedefop's Skills Forecast team at:
Skills-Forecast@cedefop.europa.eu