



# LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE SOURCES

## Country fiche - BULGARIA

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Innovating the use of Labour Market Intelligence  
within European Universities - LMI-EUniv



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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
EU	European Union
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IO	Intellectual Output
IO	Intellectual output
IP	Internet Protocol
LISER	Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence
LMI-EUniv	Innovating the use of Labour Market Intelligence within European Universities
LMO	Labour Market Observatory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OJA	Online Job Advertisement
OVATE	Skills Online Vacancy Analysis Tool for Europe (Skills OVATE)
PES	Public Employment Service
R&D	Research and Development
TU	Tallinn University
WUT	West University of Timisoara

# BACKGROUND

## LMI-EUniv project

“Innovating the use of Labour Market Intelligence within European Universities - LMI-EUniv”, the project was the subject of a successful application to Key Action 2 - Cooperation among organisations and institutions - of the Erasmus+ programme.

## Consortium

The consortium is composed of West University of Timisoara (project leader), University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy), University of Tallinn (Estonia), Prospektiker - (Spain) and Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (Luxembourg).

## Aims

The primary focus of the project is to understand how are European Universities using labour market information and labour market intelligence in the planning and delivery of their provision and how can this be improved. Therefore, the project aims to help HEI to develop appropriate skills and competencies through better matching of education supply to demand through innovative learning and teaching practices.

## Objectives

The LMI-EUniv project has three main objectives: (1) to map essential LMI sources at national level, (2) to explore how HEI in Europe are using LMI, and (3) to produce a training course, guide and a Labour Market Intelligence Hub. This will be an online platform, aggregating LMI sources and information, and aims to become a reference point for all HEI.

# INTRODUCTION

This country fiche provides information concerning the essential LMI sources at national level with a particular focus on LMI sources used by HEI. It was developed within the Intellectual Output 1 of the LMI-EUniv project - Mapping essential LMI sources at national level. The role of the country fiches is to systemize information related to LMI sources and gather them into a LMI Hub. The country fiches will form the basis for the Data (Evidence) Report and in turn, will inform the production of the Final Report.

During the inception phase of the project, we have noticed the existence of a large number of LMI sources but also a lack of information about them. We consider that having access to a single point of information with LMI sources will enable HEI to better use this for their activities. Thus, this research represents the first step in this direction through mapping the LMI sources at the European level.

We believe that this study is the first of its kind focused on LMI sources across Europe and is in itself a considerable innovation. Through this activity, we are seeking to influence how universities in Europe view, analyse, utilise and produce their own LMI to aid with their decision-making. Further, we aim to make this available to help stakeholders such as policymakers in national and regional governments, employers, and regional development agencies to be better able to bring their demand-side knowledge to support universities and ensure higher education supply fits to current and future labour market need.

The Final Report Recommendations given the project's geographical coverage and the pressing need for action on using labour market intelligence should have considerable transferability potential.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Demography

On the 1st of January 2022, Bulgaria had a population of 6,827,262 inhabitants. Bulgaria's population is on a descendent trend, decreasing by 0.8 per cent between 2021 and 2022. About 51.5 per cent of Bulgaria's population is female, and 48.5 per cent of the population is male. In terms of population, Bulgaria represents about 1.50 per cent of European Union population. The median age was 43 years. The birth rate of 8.3 births per 1,000 population and a death rate of 14.7 deaths per 1,000 population. Life expectancy estimated for the year of 2020 was 73.6 years, with 70.0 years for males and 77.5 years for females. The age structure is relatively balanced, with the largest age group being 25-54 years old. Age dependency ratio (% of working-age population) in Bulgaria was at 57.27 per cent in 2021. Romania is the main provider of immigrants in European Union. Bulgaria has a significant number of emigrants, mainly to EU countries, which has contributed to population decline. It is estimated that more than 1,500,000 people left the country since 1990.

## Labour market

In early 2022, Bulgaria's labor market showed characteristics similar to pre-COVID levels. The Q4 2022 Workforce Survey by the National Statistical Institute confirms a gradual recovery of the labor market after COVID-19, with an activity rate of 82.9 percent for the 25-64 age group and 43.1 for the age group 20-24.

The employment rate for the same period was 79.9 percent for the age group 25-64, while for the age group 20-24 it was much lower, reaching only 39.9 percent. The largest number and share of employed persons (61.3 per cent) work in the service sector, followed by industry (30.3 per cent) and agriculture (6.2 per cent). The number of employed people increased in 7 out of 19 economic sectors, with the largest growth in the ICT sector (8.7 per cent). The processing industry and retail and wholesale sectors showed a decrease in employed persons.

The unemployment rate in the fourth quarter of 2022 was among the lowest in EU, by 3.6 percent (for the age group 25-64). Also, a low unemployment rate was registered among the age group 20-24, by only 7.4 percent (compared to 12.9 in EU2007).

In January 2022, 11,788 job vacancies were announced, 11 per cent for specialists, 15 per cent lower than January 2019, according to EURES. The market is in demand for skilled labor. The current skill shortage is expected to increase in the next years. Challenges in the labor market are driven by rapidly changing market conditions, declining investment growth, and slow economic growth. It is estimated that the green transition and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan will increase the demand for new skills in the labor market.

## Higher education market

The higher education system in Bulgaria is organized into universities and colleges, offering undergraduate and graduate programs. There is a system of accreditation and quality assurance in place to ensure the standards of education provided. The universities are governed by the Ministry of Education and Science and offer a range of academic and professional programs. Some universities also have research centers and institutes.

There are 52 higher education institutions including universities, specialized higher education institutions, and self-dependent colleges. Out of these, 38 are public institutions and 14 are private. The universities are 32 in total, with 27 being public and 5 being private. The specialized higher education institutions are 17, with 11 being public and 6 private. There are only 3 self-dependent colleges, which are all private.

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” has the largest enrollment among all higher education institutions in Bulgaria, with over 19,000 students, according to the 2020 edition of the Bulgarian University Ranking System. The University of National and World Economy and Plovdiv University follow closely with over 15,000 students each. New Bulgarian University is the only private university among the top ten universities by student count. On the other hand, “Lyuben Groys” Theater College has the lowest enrollment with only 39 students. As of April 2020, there were 198,428 students in Bulgaria, with 54% enrolled in the top ten largest universities.

# LMI SOURCES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

## LMI providers

LMI comprises any information and knowledge about labour market dynamics. It covers topics such as labour demand and supply, unemployment, employment and earnings, emergence of new occupations, new skills required on labour market, post-graduate path, career expectations, etc.

The Bulgaria labour market is dominated by a large number of actors organised on multiple levels. Most of them provides LMI in different forms. The Government, through its departments and specialised agencies represents the main provider of LMI.

### National Statistical Institute

The National Statistical Institute (NSI) of Bulgaria is the official national agency responsible for collecting, compiling, processing, and disseminating statistical information about the country's economic, demographic, and social conditions. The NSI provides data to various users, including government agencies, international organizations, researchers, and the general public.

*Information System INFOSTAT* is a component of the National Statistical Institute. It provides statistical information on the demographic and socio-economic conditions and development of Republic of Bulgaria. The system provides to users possibility to create tables with data on various indicators, as well as for visualizing the results graphically. The system allows the results and their metadata to be downloaded in the following formats: xlsx, csv and pdf. The access is free of charge for limited content and paid access for full data.

### Public Employment Service

The National Employment Agency of Bulgaria is a government agency that is responsible for providing employment services to job seekers and employers. Services include job



placement, training programs, and unemployment benefits. The agency also collects and provides labor market information to the government and other organizations. The main data collection comprises unemployment monthly data series. The National Employment Agency is an executive agency to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy

## Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education in Bulgaria provides various statistical data, including data on enrollment and graduation rates, funding for education, teacher demographics, and educational attainment of the population.

A particular source of Labour Market Intelligence provided by the Ministry of Education is made available through different sources.

*The web-portal "Rating system of the higher schools in Bulgaria"* was created in 2010 as a result of the implementation of the project "Development of a rating system for the higher schools in the Republic of Bulgaria (RSVU\_BG)". It was further developed in the period 2013-2020 within the framework of projects BG051PO001/3.2.04-0001 "Development of the rating system of higher schools" under the Operational Program "Development of Human Resources" 2007-2013, co-financed by the European Social Fund of the European union and BG05M2OP001-2.005-0001 "Maintenance and improvement of the developed rating system of higher schools" - Phase 1, financed by the Operational Program "Science and Education for Smart Growth", co-financed by the European Union through the European Structural and Investment Funds. The portal provides information about unemployment incomes, most common professions and positions among graduates of various professional fields and higher schools in Bulgaria. It also provides the possibilities for comparisons according to dozens of other indicators.

*Web.mon.bg* examines the current deficits in higher education policy, attempting to make a brief analysis of the situation. It comprises a Map of Higher Education in Bulgaria which outlines certain recommendations and proposals.

## Ministry of Labour

Ministry of Labor and Social Protection is the main provider of statistics on the number of employees, unemployment, wages, and social insurance. Information is provided by occupation and at the sectoral level. It covers both regional and national level. National Agency for Employment (PES) is functioning under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

## Academic and research institute

In Bulgaria there are few research institutes that provide information related to labour market.

*The Institute of Market Economy (IME)* is a think tank and research organization based in Bulgaria. It was founded in 1991 and is considered one of the oldest and most influential think tanks in the country. The IME conducts research and analysis on a wide range of economic and policy issues, with a focus on market-oriented solutions and policies. The organization also publishes a number of publications, such as policy briefs and research reports, and organizes conferences, seminars, and other events. The institute covers all country's 28 regions. Data are compiled from qualitative research and from various sources such as: National Statistical Institute (NSI), National Social Security Institute (NSSI), the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), the National Centre for Public Health and Analyses (NCPHA), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS), or the National Revenue Agency (NRA).

## Non-governmental organisations

*Education Bulgaria 2030* is a non-profit association for public benefit. The organisation tracks trends in education and annually publish a monitoring report. There are provided information about educational structure, post-graduate path etc.

## Assessing the sources of LMI at national level

Once the sources of LMI have been identified, their quality is needed to be assessed. There are many organisations that produce LMI but only through a standardized evaluation

process they can be considered as being qualitative. The quality of LMI sources is sustained by their representativeness, validity and reliability.

The **Table 1** below contains a list of LMI sources identified at national level and their rating in accordance with LMI-EUniv methodology.

Table 1: LMI Sources at national level

[SEE THE LMI SOURCES HERE](#)

# REFERENCES

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