

Employment rate for working age population down 65.4pct in Q1; unemployment up 4.3pct

In the first quarter of 2020, the employment rate for the working age population (aged 15-64) was 65.4%, decreasing by 0.6 percentage points against the one recorded in the previous quarter, whereas the unemployment rate stood at 4.3%, up 0.4 pp against the previous quarter, according to the data published by the National Institute of Statistics (INS) on Friday.

According to the INS, in Q1 2020, the employment rate for the population aged 20-64 was 70.6%, 0.6 percentage points over the national target of 70% established in the context of the Strategy Europe 2020.

In the same period, Romania's active population was 8.902 million people, of which 8.520 million were employed and 382,000 were unemployed.

The number of employed persons decreased as compared to the previous quarter by 1.6%, but it was higher than the one recorded in the corresponding quarter of the previous year by 0.4%, while the number of unemployed increased as against both the previous quarter (by 7.9%) and the first quarter of 2019 (by 5.1%).

In the first quarter of 2020, the employment rate for the working-age population (15-64 years) was 65.4%, decreasing as against the one recorded during the previous quarter by 0.6 percentage points, but increasing as compared to the same period of the previous year by 1.2 percentage points.

The employment rate was higher for men (74.3% as against 56.2% for women) and for residents in the urban area (67.1% as against 63.2% in the rural area). The employment rate for youth (aged 15-24) was 23.9%.

The unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2020 was 4.3%, increasing with 0.4 percentage points as compared with the one recorded in the previous quarter and by 0.2 percentage points as compared to the same period of the previous year.

By gender, the gap between the two unemployment rates was 1.4 percentage points (4.9% for men as against 3.5% for women), while by residential areas it was 1.8 percentage points (5.3% for the rural area, as against 3.5% for the urban area). By age groups, the unemployment rate reached the highest level (17.6%) among young persons (aged 15-24).

"Taking into account the reference period of the data, as well as the specific definitions of the survey, specified in the methodological notes of the press release, the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on the main indicators (employment, unemployment) is not noticeable for the first quarter of 2020. Beyond that, the effects of the pandemic are visible in the increase in the number of employed persons absent from work (employed persons who, although in employment, did not work even one hour during the reference week, being on leave - of various types, days off, temporary interruption of work for various reasons, etc.)," the INS mentions.

The number of employed persons who did not work even for one hour in the reference week was 198,000 persons in the first quarter of 2020, almost double compared to the fourth quarter of 2019 (+ 89.3%) and higher by 66.9% than the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Economic or technical difficulties of the employer (lack of raw materials, customers or orders) - was indicated as a reason for the absence by 12.1% of persons, unlike previous periods when this reason had insignificant shares. Over a third of the number of persons absent from work (37.0%) were on vacation (including holidays, compensation leave), while 1.1% were absent due to illness. Most persons (49.8%) indicated other reasons (including parental leave up to 2 years, maternity leave, unpaid

leave, etc.).