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**Session 4– Supporting paper**

**WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE BULGARIAN LABOUR MARKET**

Submitted by National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria \*

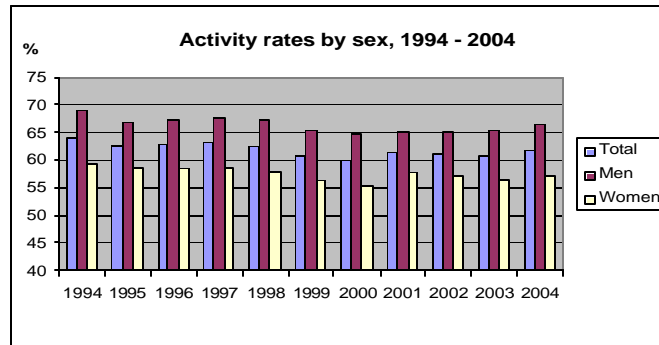
1. The economic activity of the population in Bulgaria is at a relatively low level in comparison with other European countries. After a continuous decline until 2000, a favored situation is observed during the last three to four years, when the economic activity stabilizes and slightly increases. The activity rate of population aged 15-64 years stands at 61.7% in 2004.

**I. Participation of Women in the Labour Market**

2. The women's activity rate follows the same tendency as the total activity rate, but at lower level. In 2004 the female rate is 57.2% - 9.2 percentage points lower than the rate for males. For the last ten years this gender difference has been stable in a range of 7.6 – 9.5 percentage points.

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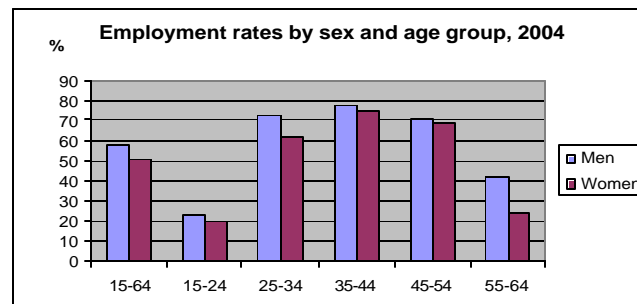


3. The situation is similar in regard of employment. The female employment rate for population aged 15 - 64 years in 2004 is 50.6% compared with 58.0 % male employment rate. It should be noted that in the prime age groups, particularly 35-54 years, the gender gap in the employment rate is very small. The discrepancy is apparent for the age range 20-29 years and 55 - 64 years.

4. The lower employment of women in young age is mainly affected by the highest participation in education of women and their child care duties. *(It should be taken into account that in LFS persons on maternity leave over 135 days are not considered employed).*

5. The lower employment rate for women in the older age groups is clearly linked to lower official retirement age of 5 years for women. *Until 2000 the official retirement age was 55 years for women and 60 years for men. According to the changes in our legislation since 2001 the official retirement age for women and for men has increased each year by 6 months (reaching 57 and 62 respectively in 2004). Another condition envisaging the employment experience should also be fulfilled.*

6. Mainly due to the impact of mentioned changes the employment rate of women aged 55-64 years has increased from 7.4% in 1994 to 24.2% in 2004 (10.3% in 2000).



7. The education-specific employment rates show that the high-educated women are in a closer employment situation as men. The employment rates for population with tertiary education are respectively 82.9% for men and 76.1% for women. Lower educational levels correspond to stronger gender differences in the employment.

8. Generally women who are in employment have higher educational level than men. 32.6% of employed women have obtained tertiary education in comparison to 20.2% for men.

### Structure of employment and employment rates by educational level and sex - 2004

Educational level	Structure - %		Employment rates - %	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	58.0	50.6
Tertiary	20.2	32.6	82.9	76.1
Upper secondary	60.1	51.5	67.9	58.1
Lower secondary or lower	19.7	15.9	33.0	24.0

9. Concerning the professional status women are more often employees (88.3%), than self-employed, without employees - 6.7%, and only 2.1% employers. The share of self-employed and employers are roughly 2 times lower than the respective percentage of these categories among men.

10. Private employers offer fewer job opportunities for women than for men. 53.2 % of employees in private sector are men compared to 46.8% women. Women have an advantage in the public sector.

11. Women are the great majority of employed in Education (77.9), Health and social work (76.9%), Finance intermediation (68.0%), and Hotels and restaurants (60.5%). On the other side, as expected, the share of women is very small in Construction (9.4%), Mining and quarrying (17.5%), Electricity, gas and water supply (23.5%), and Transport and communication (26.5%).

12. Among occupational classes, women are underrepresented compared to men in Legislators, senior officials and managers (32.9%), Craft and related trade workers (27.0%) and Plant and machine operators and assemblers (32.3%). They clearly dominate in the group of Clerks (71.9%), Service workers (65.2%) and Professionals (64.8%).

13. Part-time jobs are still not a very used way for women to reconcile work and family life as it is in many other countries. Only 2.7 % of women work part time (slightly more often than men) and for a majority of them this kind of job is not a matter of personal preferences.

14. There is a small deviation in the job tenure between man and women. Women stay a little longer at the same employer than men. 30.5% of women have not changed the employer for 10 and more years, compared to 27.6% of men. The average job tenure is 7.8 year for women and 7.2 year for men.

15. Seven percent (79.1 thousand) of women have a contract with limited duration (The corresponding percentage for men is 7.7). In the last two years the number of employees (including women) with temporary jobs rapidly increased as a result of numerous active labour market programmes - temporary jobs schemes, recruitment subsidies etc.

16. According to LFS data, 27.8 thousand or 2.3% of female employees work on their main job without a formal contract with the employer. The experts' opinion is that the number of women working in lower productivity jobs, without employment protection is fairly higher.

17. In 2004, the lowest value of unemployment rate (12 %) for the whole period was registered in the LFS since the LFS has been carried out (since 1993). In terms of ILO definition the women's unemployment rate is 11.5%, which is 1 percentage point lower than the corresponding rate for men. The highest female unemployment rate was observed in 1993 - 1994, and male unemployment had its peak in 2001.



18. Contrary to LFS data, data on registered unemployment in employment offices shows the majority of women among unemployed. Women are about 55% of registered unemployed but 45% of ILO unemployed. This could be explained with the fact that the women more often than men rely on employment offices to help them to access the labour market.

19. In Bulgaria long-term unemployed represents almost 3/5 of the total unemployed. This is still a serious problem both for men and women although the decline of their number and percentage in 2004 (more noticeable for men). With the duration of unemployment one or more years are 57.7 % of unemployed men and 61.2% of unemployed women. This gender gap could be considered an exception of the general tendency over the last ten years when the percentage of the long-term unemployed does not deviate significantly between genders. In most unfavourable situation are unemployed women with lower education – over 70% of them stay in unemployment one year or more.

20. The existence of very large group of discouraged persons (who have given up looking for a job), whose size in Bulgaria is almost equal to those of unemployed, demonstrates serious problems for many people to access to the labour market. Women represent 47.9% of persons who belong to this category. Here again people with low education form the greatest part. The educational level of the discouraged group is lower than unemployed, which once more proves that the education and qualifications are strongly linked to the participation in the labour market. About 56% of discouraged women have lower education (up to lower secondary), when the share of high educated women in this group is only 7.5%.

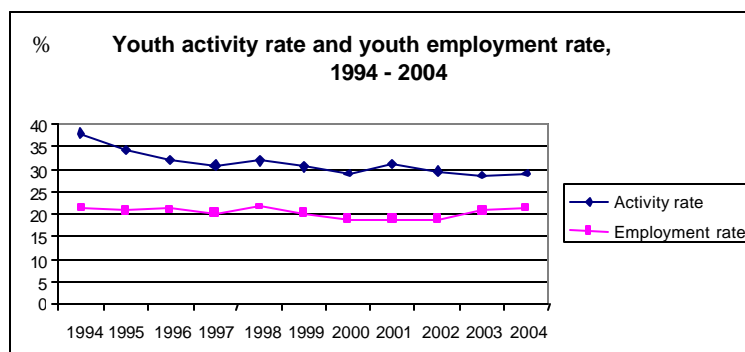
#### Structure of employed, unemployed and discouraged persons by educational level and sex - 2004

Level of education	Employed		Unemployed		Discouraged	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Tertiary	20.2	32.6	7.4	16.2	4.0	7.5
Upper secondary	60.1	51.5	52.4	49.0	39.6	36.6
Lower secondary or less	19.7	15.9	40.2	34.8	56.4	55.9

## II. Participation of young people in the Labour Market

21. In 2004 the number of young people in the labour force is 307.4 thousand (annual data), which represents an overall activity rate of 29.0% - 31.9% for young men and 25.9% for young women. The development of youth activity rate is characterized by sharp decrease between 1993 and 1996, and relative stabilization from 1997 to 2004 at the range of 29 - 32%.

22. The youth employment rate is steady during the last ten years. In 2004 the youth employment rate stands at 21.5% (23.4% for young men and 19.6% for young women).

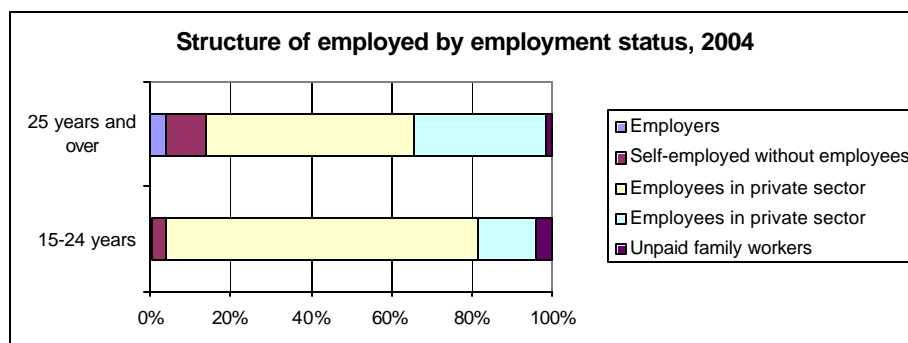


23. There are some explicable reasons for the lower activity and employment of young people, the main of which is that this is the period of transition from school to labour market - 53.3% of persons belonging to the age group 15 - 24 are still in education. Another reason is that the legal lower age to work as employee is 16 years in Bulgaria. Due to that circumstance probably the rates, calculated for age range 16-24 years gives better indicator for the employment situation of young people in our country – for 2004 the employment rate for this age group is 23.9% (26.0% for young men and 21.8% for young women).

24. Young women who attained higher education have the highest employment rate among youth – 62.3%. Young men who have attended secondary vocational education have also good position with employment rate of 50.9%. In employment only 8.6% of young population have up to lower secondary education.

25. With regard to professional status, as expected, the young people are concentrated in the group of employees. Paid employed are 91.2% of total young employed compared to 84.3% for employed aged 25 and over. Young people are also more often unpaid family workers than the older employed. Minor part of young employed are self-employed, without employees, and the percentage of employer is negligible.

26. Private sector seems more suitable and accessible for the young than public sector. The majority of young employees (84.5%) are engaged in private sector and only 15.5% in public sector. For the employees aged 25 and over the proportion between private and public sector is smaller, 61.4% and 38.6% respectively.

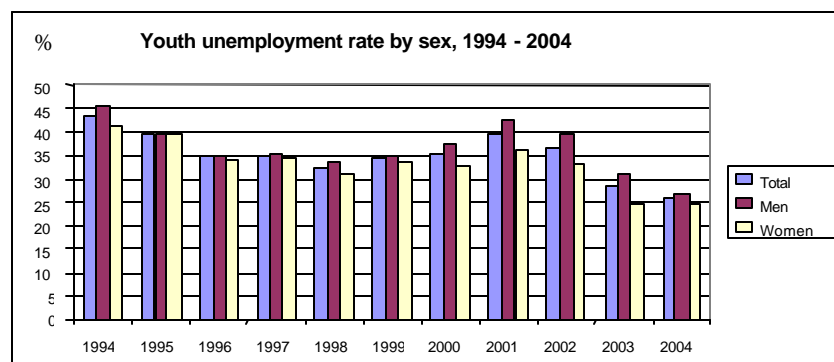


27. Within the private sector the economic activities, in which the largest percentage of young employees are working, are: Manufacturing - 32.2%, Trade - 25.3%, Hotels and restaurants -

16.6%, and Construction – 6.6%. Service occupations are most accessible for young. 27.9% work in these occupations

28. 13.6% of young employees work under contract of limited duration compared with 6.8% of older employees (aged 25 and over). Percentage of employees working without formal contract is also higher among the young - 7.8% compared to 3.0% of other employees.

29. In 2004 the youth unemployed represents 21.4% of total unemployed. The unemployment rate for the age group 15-24 years approaches 25.8%. The development of youth unemployment follows the similar pattern as for total unemployment, having the highest values in 1994 and 2001 and lowest one in 2004. The recent decline in unemployment affects noticeably the young age group. In comparison with 1994 the youth unemployment dropped by 17.2 percentage points when the total unemployment declined by 8.2 percentage points.



30. Similarly to the gender distribution there is also a difference in the age distribution of unemployed, measured by the Labour force survey, and registered unemployed. The share of people, aged 15 - 24 years among registered unemployed is around 7 - 8 percentage points lower than the corresponding percentage estimated by LFS. Young people less frequently used the employment offices to find job than other age groups and relied more on other methods of job search.

31. Young people are also affected by long-term unemployment although in a slightly lower extent than older people. Nearly a half of the young unemployed (47%) stay in unemployment one or more years due to the lack of suitable job opportunities. Slight gender difference of 2.4 percentage points (higher for men) is registered in regard of youth long-term unemployment in 2004.

32. 75% of young unemployed have never worked, of which 51.7 % have not found any job after leaving school or university, and 30.8% (all men) after completing compulsory military services. One fourth of young unemployed have some employment experience, but have left the last job mainly due to redundancy, completion of temporal or seasonal job or unsatisfactory working conditions.

33. The absence of job opportunities especially for young people without good qualification is reflected in the number of young people considered as discouraged. In 2004 they are 90.8 thousand (almost equal to the number of young unemployed), which represents 12.0% of all inactive population of the same age – 13.6% of inactive young men and 10.3% of inactive young women. About 2/3 of discouraged young persons have completed education lower than upper secondary level.