



Meeting of the Group of Experts on

Quality of Employment – 9th November

**Session 1: Quality of employment during the
Covid-19 pandemic and after**

*Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on
employment: Showcase of employment
indicators to assess the impact of the crisis*

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➤ Quarterly Statistics Explained articles based on data from the Labour force Survey

Labour market in the light of the COVID 19 pandemic - quarterly statistics



[Draft \[view page\]](#)

The beginning of 2020 was marked by an outbreak of the worldwide pandemic COVID-19, leading almost all governments around the globe to take restrictive measures, of which social distancing had a pivotal role. To prevent the spread of the virus and to ensure distancing of people, many businesses were temporarily shut down and many employed people confined to their homes.

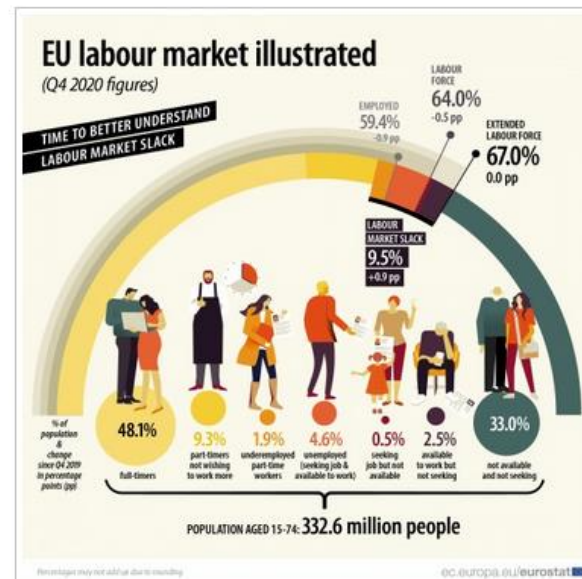
As an outcome, the health crisis strongly affected the economic life and the labour market. The lock-down and other health-related measures implied a slowdown of the business activity. The consequences on the labour market may be considerable, among others: people may have lost their employment, hiring of staff could have been cancelled or frozen, unemployed people may have made a break in their job search for family reasons, employed people may have reduced their working hours or simply stopped working for a time.

This online publication contains articles on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market, showing quarterly data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Its aim is to report on some specific aspects of the labour market that may have been impacted, such as the labour market slack which refers to all unmet needs for employment (including the unemployment), the employment, the absences from work and the number of hour worked before and during the crisis. An additional article is dedicated to the methodological issues of sample size and non-response in the LFS quarterly data collection.

The articles focus on the four quarters of 2020, comparing them with the corresponding quarters of 2019 but also looking at the whole time series.

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All releases

FOCUS on 2020 and the crisis

Focus on the key consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on the labour market

1: Unemployment and the crisis

Population overview (15-74) in Q4 2020: 



Percentages may not add up due to rounding

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Q1 and Q2 2020:

- Employment **down**: Q1:-0.4 p.p. / Q2:-1.4 p.p.
- Unemployment +/- **stable**: Q1: +0 p.p. / Q2: +0.1 p.p.

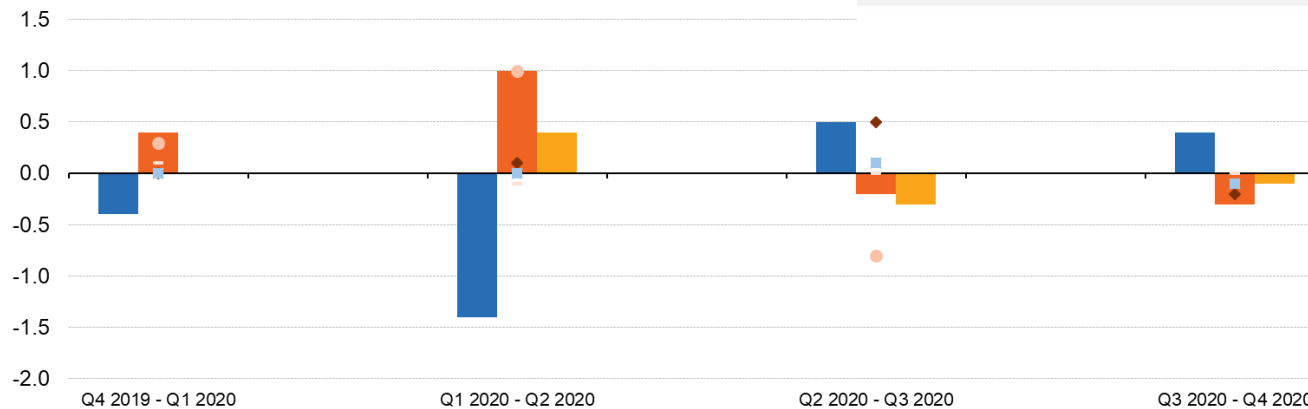
→ **Slack up**: Q1:+0.4 p.p. / Q2: +1.0 p.p. caused by the increase of people who are available to work but are **not** looking for it

Development of the share of unemployed people and people available to work but not seeking in the EU, Q1 2005 - Q4 2020 (15-74, in % of extended labour force)



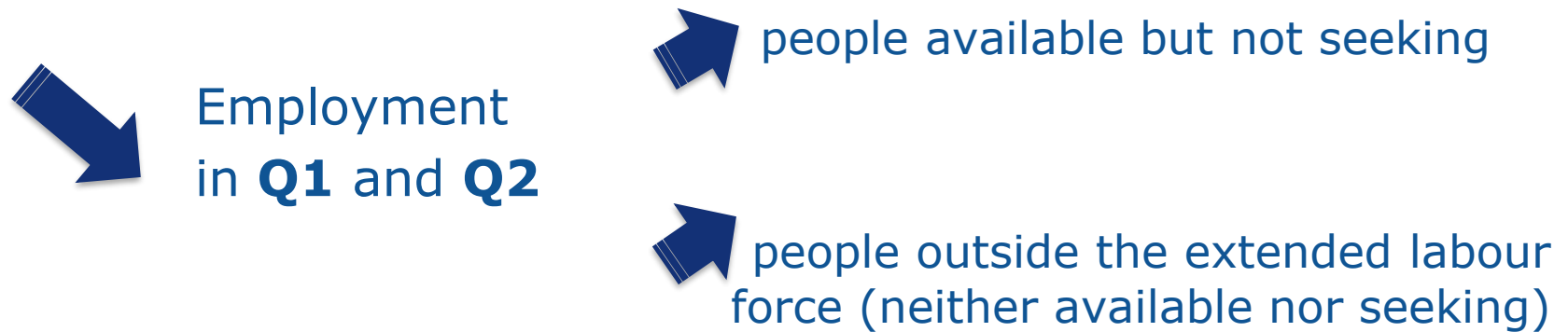
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Quarterly development of the employment, the labour market slack and its components, EU, Q4 2019 - Q4 2020 (in percentage points, population aged 15-74)



- Employed people (excl. Underemployed part-time workers)
- Slack
- People outside the extended labour force (neither available nor seeking)
- Underemployed part-time workers (slack component)
- Unemployed people (slack component)
- People seeking work but not immediately available (slack component)
- People available to work but not seeking (slack component)

→ Looking at unemployment was not enough - in contrast with previous crisis for which unemployment counterbalanced the decrease in employment



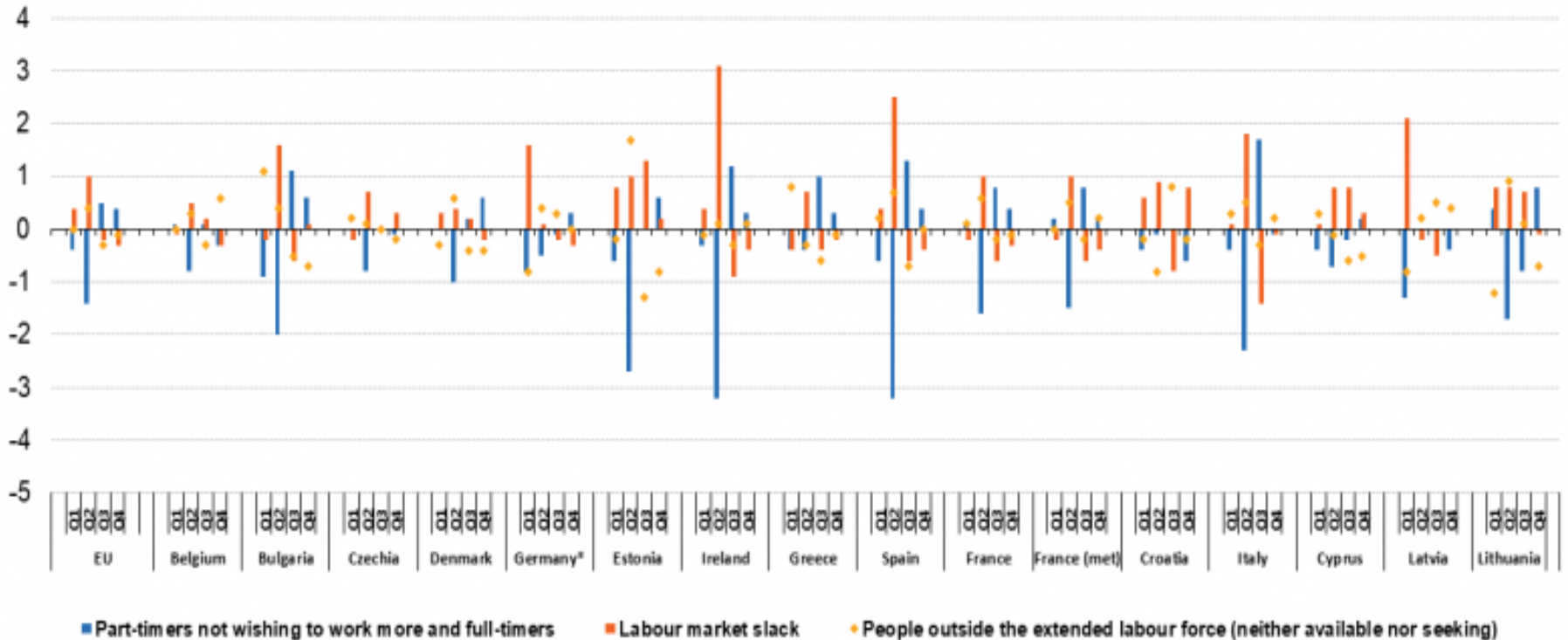
(schools closed, business shutdowns, etc.)

In Q3: employment together with unemployment increased (each +0.5 p.p.) while people available to work but not seeking and people outside the extended labour force (neither available nor seeking) decreased (-0.8 p.p. and -0.3 p.p.)

In Q4 : Employment up (+0.4 p.p.); unemployment down (-0.2 p.p.) ; slack down (-0.3 p.p.)

Quarterly development by labour category and EU Member States, Q4 2019 - Q4 2020

(People aged 15-74, quarter-on-quarter comparison, in p.p., protocol order 1st set)



Note: This figure presents the difference in percentage points between two quarters of the share of part-timers not wishing to work more and full-timers, the share of labour market slack and the share of people outside the extended labour force in % of the total population aged 15-74; *Provisional data and low data reliability for Germany in Q4 2020;

Low reliable data and break in series are reported by category and by country in the attached excel file

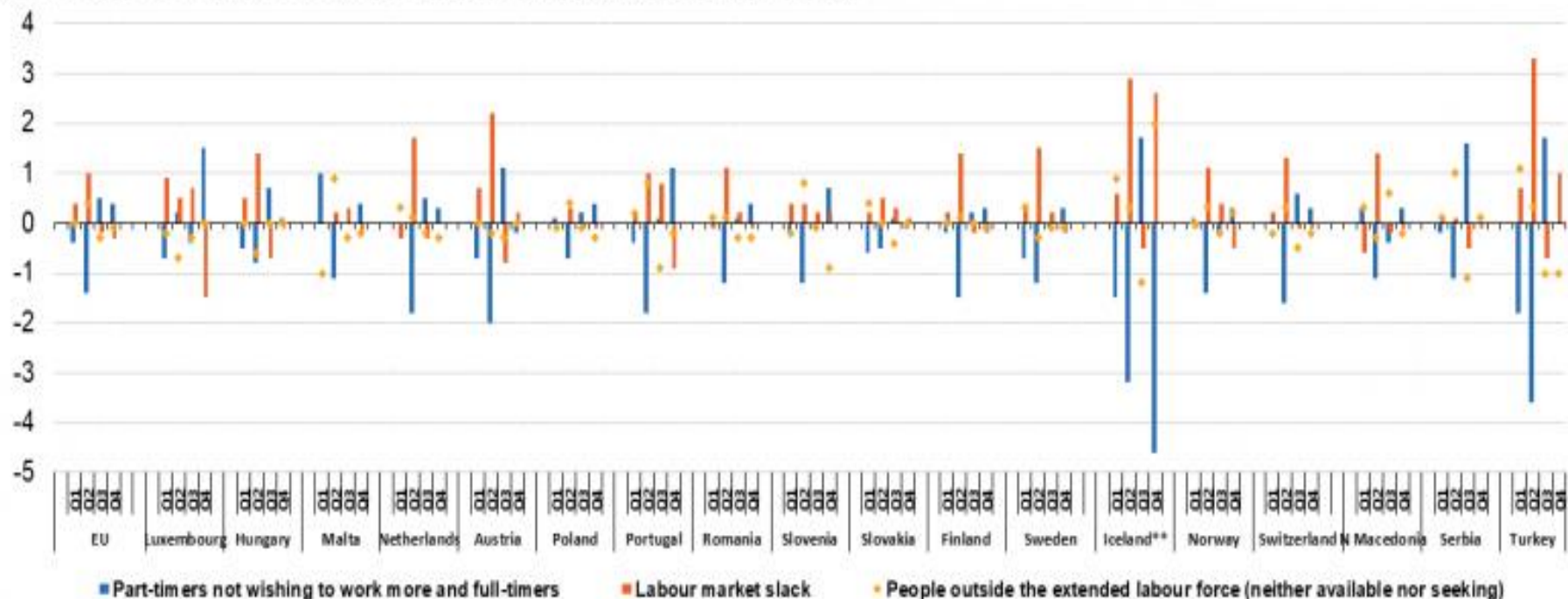
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Source: Eurostat (data online code: lfsi_sup_q and une_rt_q)

Employment down in Q2 in EU (-1.4 p.p.); Spain, Ireland (-3.2 p.p.), Estonia (- 2.7 p.p.), Italy (-2.3 p.p.)

Quarterly development by labour category and EU Member States, Q4 2019 - Q4 2020

(People aged 15-74, quarter-on-quarter comparison, in p.p., protocol order 2d set)



Note: This figure presents the difference in percentage points between two quarters of the share of part-timers not wishing to work more and full-timers, the share of labour market slack and the share of people outside the extended labour force in % of the total population aged 15-74; **Break in series in Iceland in Q4 2020

Low reliable data and break in series are reported by category and by country in the attached excel file

Source: Eurostat (data online code: lfsi_sup_q and une_rt_q)

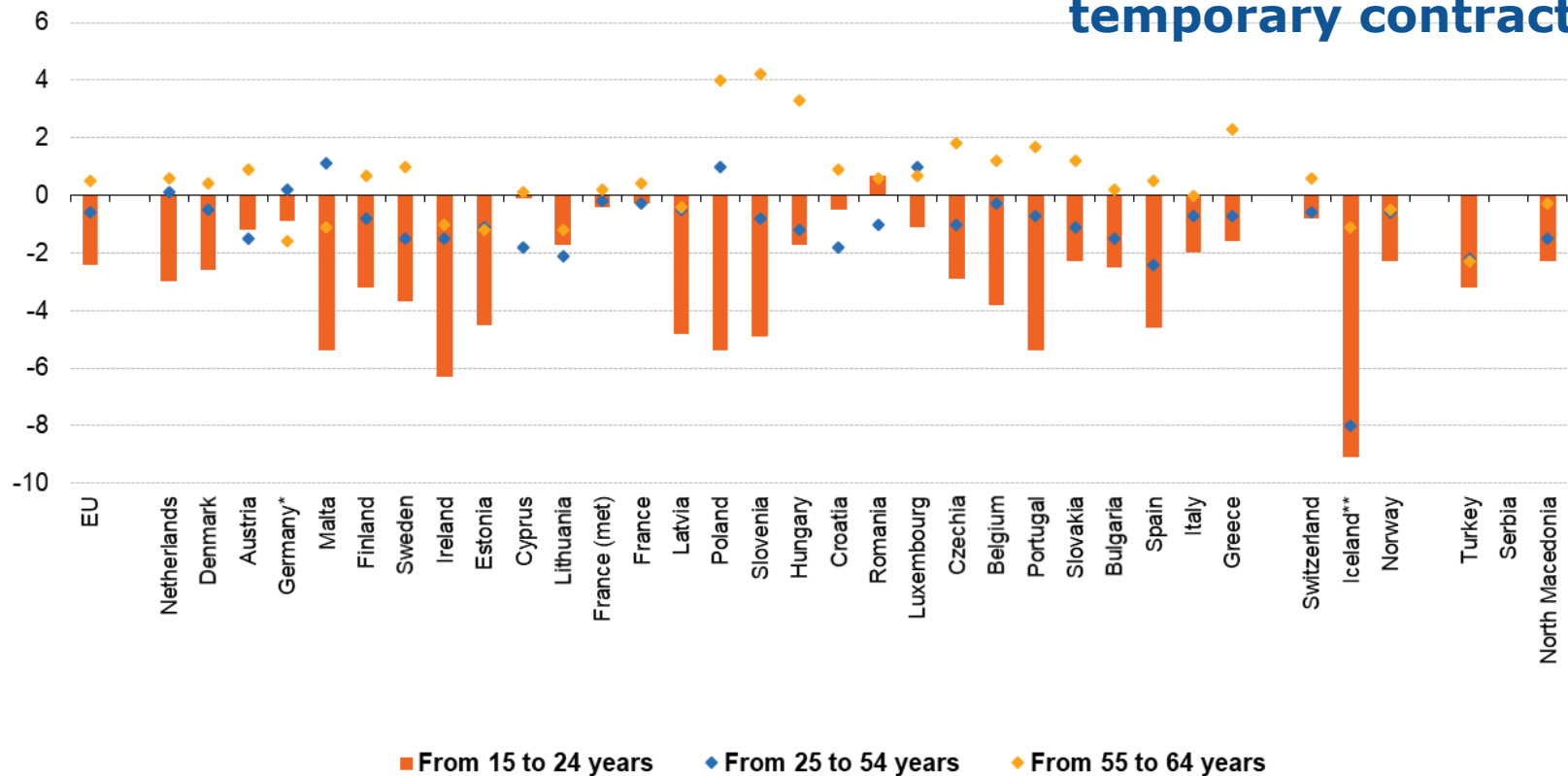
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Countries with slack up: Austria and Netherlands
 Countries with people outside the LF up: Estonia, Bulgaria, Malta

2. Young people: most affected

49.2% in Q4 2019 and 46.1 % in Q4 2020 of young employees had temporary contracts

Change in the employment rate by age group and country
(Q4 2020 compared with Q4 2019, in percentage points)



Note: *Provisional data and low data reliability for Germany in Q4 2020; **Break in series in Iceland in Q4 2020. France (met) refers to France Metropolitan

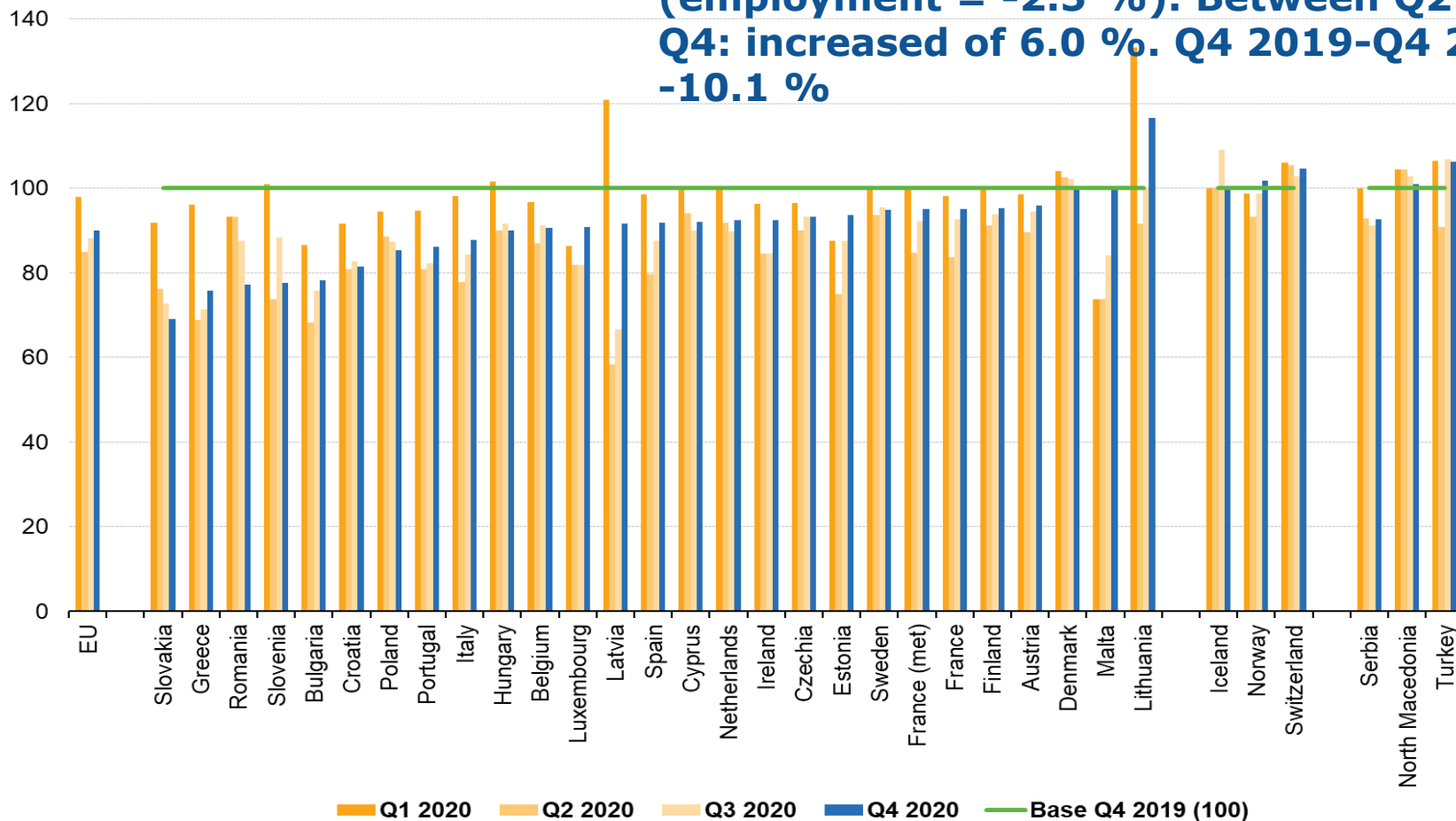
Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsj_emp_q)

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3. Temporary contracts down

Temporary contracts= 10.6 % of total EU employment in Q4 2020 (11.7 % in Q4 2019). From Q4 2019 to Q2 2020: - 15.1 % (employment = -2.5 %). Between Q2 and Q4: increased of 6.0 %. Q4 2019-Q4 2020: -10.1 %

Development of temporary contracts in each quarter of 2020, Q4 2019=100

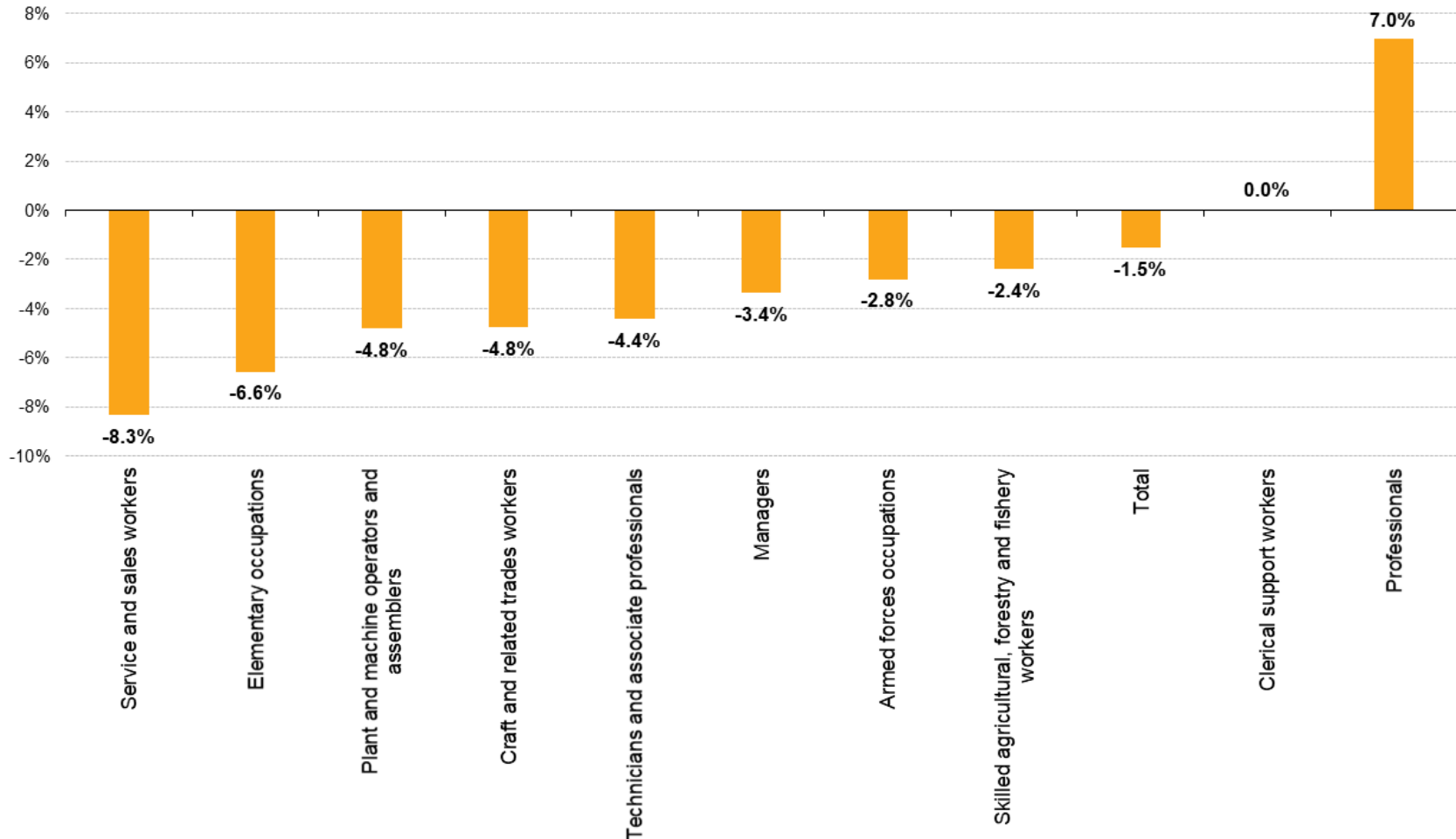


Note: Missing 2020 data for Germany, France (met) refers to France Metropolitan

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_pt_q)

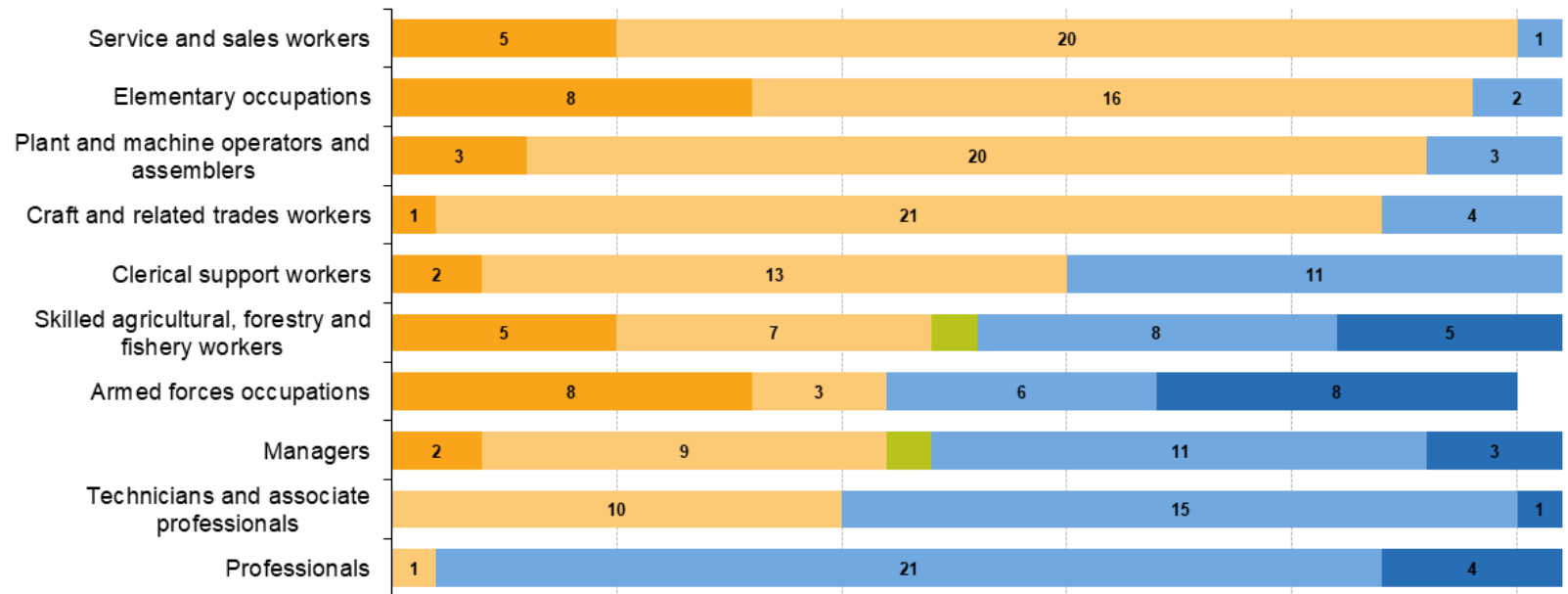
4. Occupations: Service and sales workers: - 8.3 % and - 6.8 %, professionals: + 7.0 %

Growth rate of employment by occupational group in the EU
(Q4 2020 compared with Q4 2019, in %)



More than half EU MSs with more managers, technicians and associate professionals and professionals in Q4 2020 compared to Q4 2019

Number of EU Member States by type of growth and by occupational group
(Q4 2020 compared with Q4 2019)



■ Decrease ++ (more than 10%) ■ Decrease + (10% or less) ■ Stable (0%) ■ Increase + (10% or less) ■ Increase ++ (more than 10%)

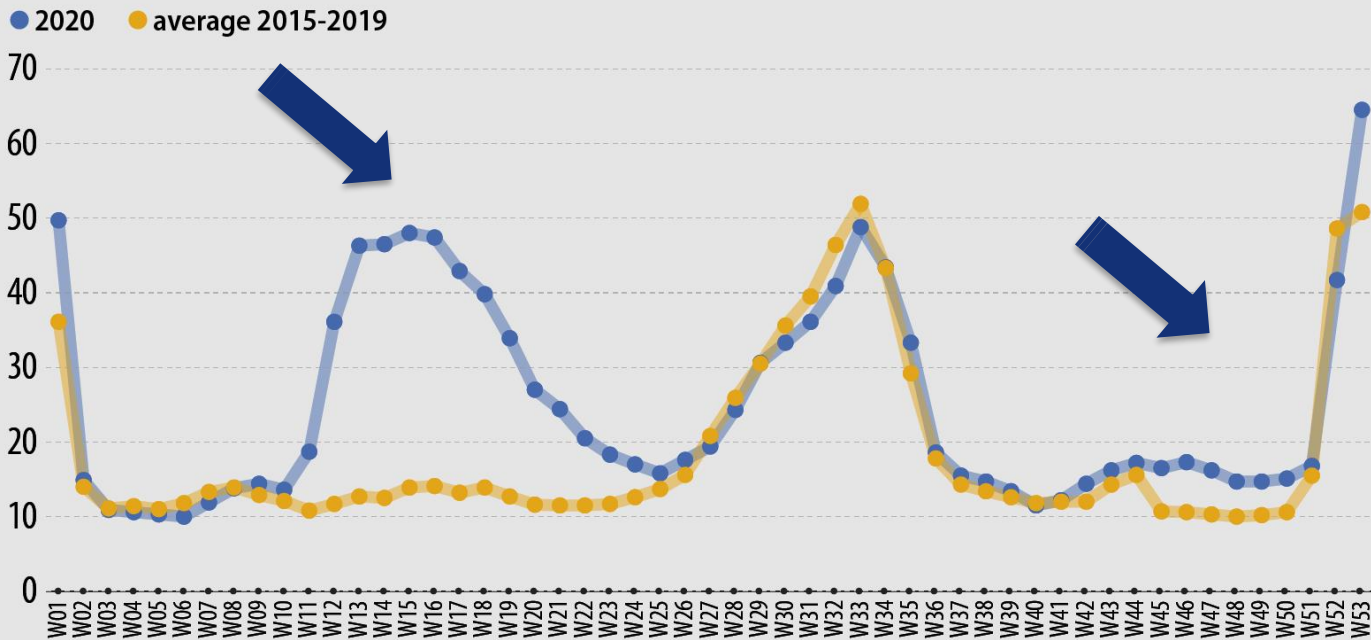
Note: Missing Q4 2020 for Germany; confidential and missing data for Luxembourg relating to Armed force occupations
Low data reliability and breaks in series are reported by country and occupational groups in the attached excel file

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsq_eisn2)

In 2020, five peaks in the number of absences from work were recorded in the EU: the usual ones of early January, mid-August and late December as well as two further peaks in April and November due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Absences from work by calendar week in the EU

(in million people, 20-64, experimental data)



Mid-April:
34.0
million
more
absences

Mid-November:
6.7 million
more
absences

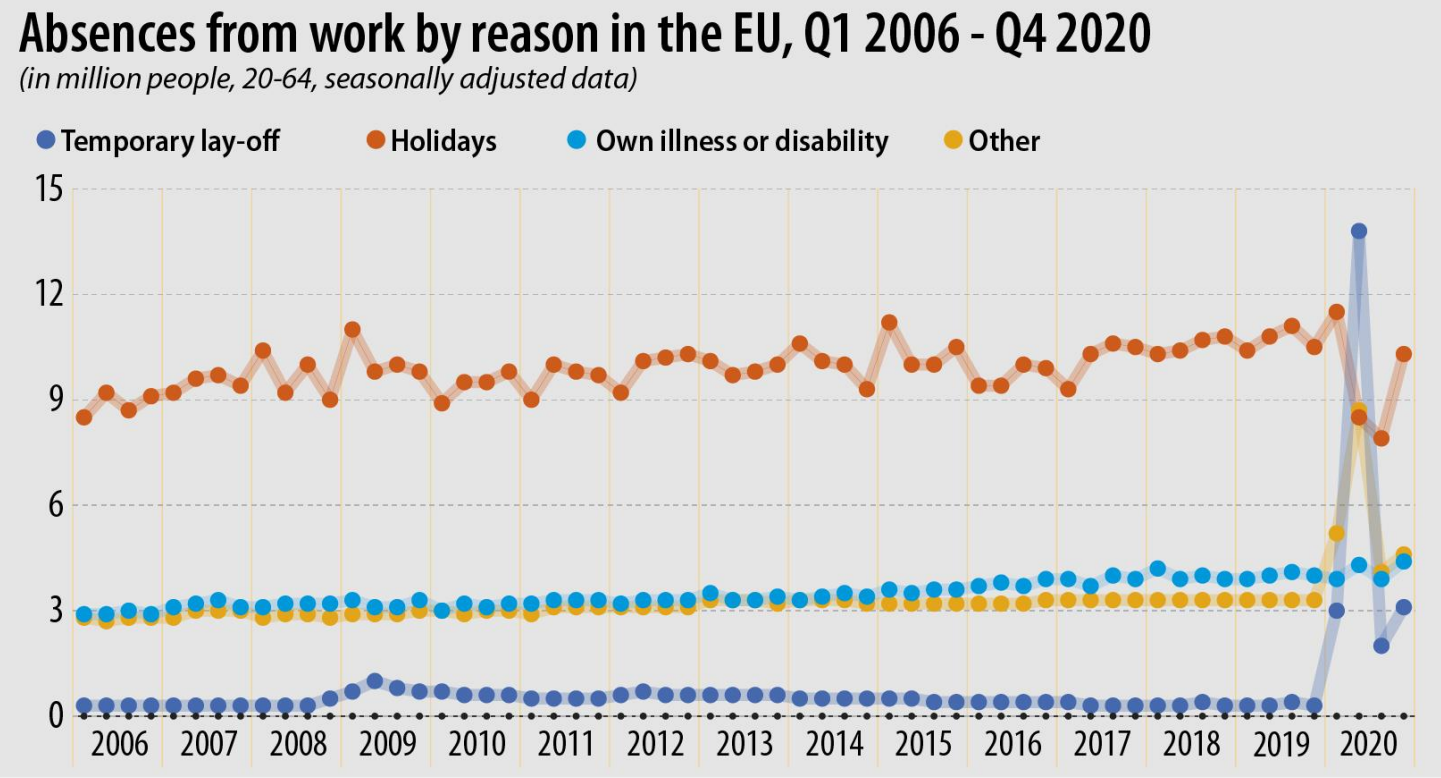
Note: In accordance with the ISO week date system, 2015 and 2020 have 53 instead of 52 weeks.

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Absence from work refers to situations in which a period of work is interrupted by a period of absence. This implies that persons are generally to be considered as having been temporarily absent from work and therefore employed

The rise of absences from work in the EU in 2020 was primarily due to the increase in temporary lay-offs

lay-offs had been relatively stable at around 0.5 million people before 2020



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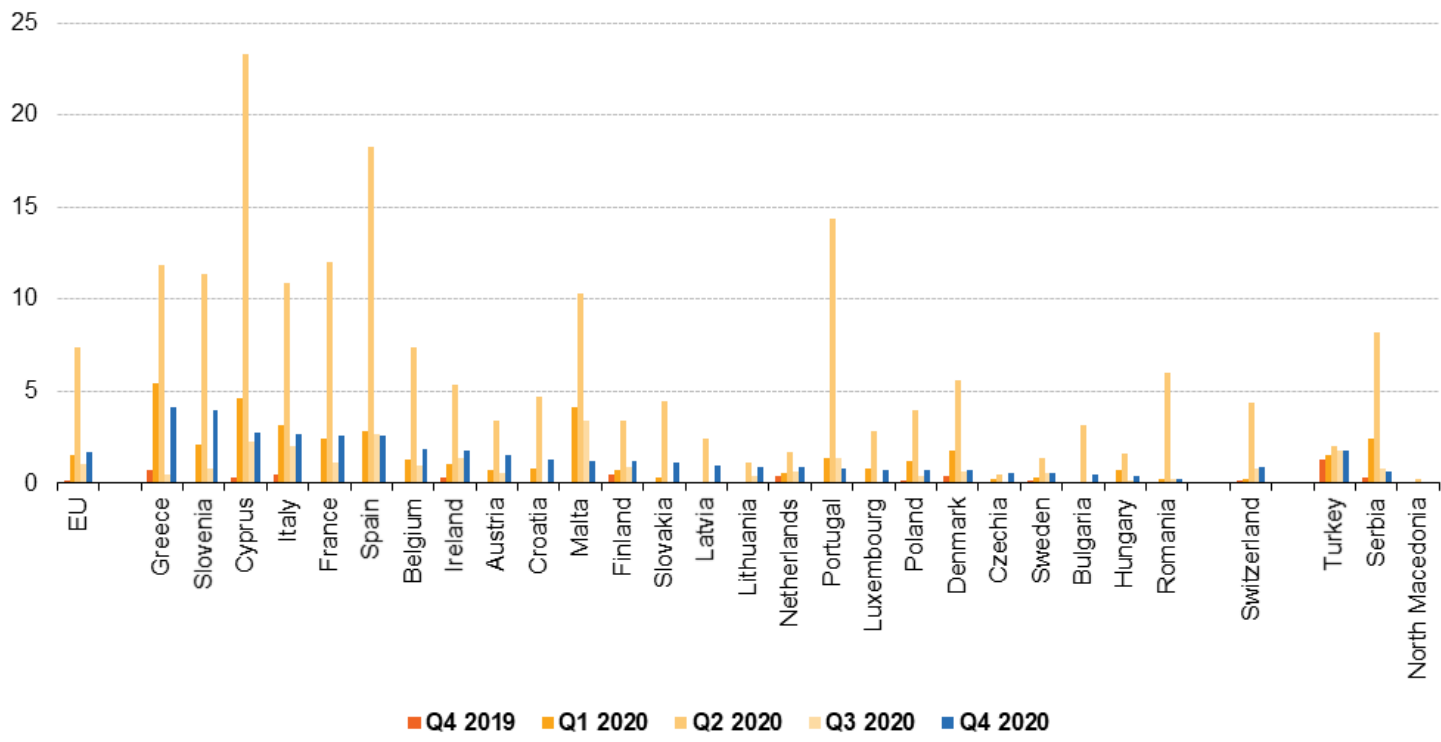
2020: 3.0 million in Q1 → 13.8 million in Q2 → 2.0 million in Q3 → 3.1 million in Q4

People on “temporary lay-off” are those whose written or unwritten contract of employment, or activity, has been suspended but have an assurance of return to work within a period of 3 months or receive at least 50% of their wage or salary from their employer



No Member State had a share of temporary lay-offs among employed people greater than 1 % in Q4 2019

Absences from work due to temporary lay-off, Q4 2019 - Q4 2020
 (as % of employment, age group 20-64, seasonally adjusted data)



There was a certain repetition of countries among top 3 with the highest share in 2020



Note: For information about data availability, reliability and breaks in time series please refer to the "Source data for tables and graphs" section.



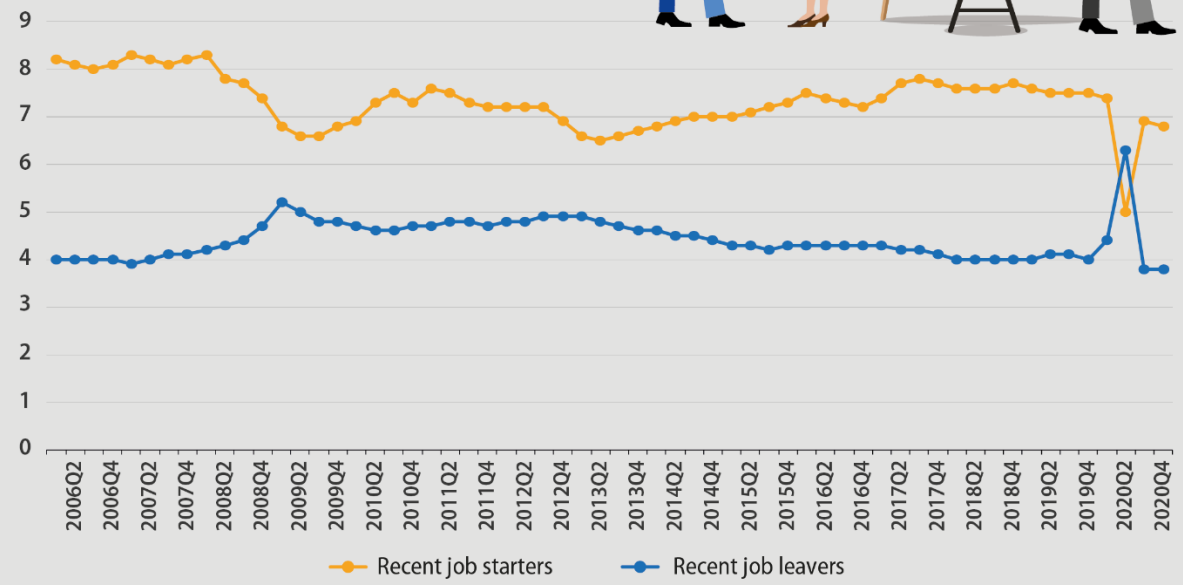
- Q1 2020: Greece - 5.4 %; Cyprus - 4.7 %; Malta - 4.1 %
- Q2 2020: Cyprus - 23.3 %; Spain - 18.2 %; Portugal - 14.4 %
- Q3 2020: Malta - 3.4 %; Spain - 2.7 %; Cyprus - 2.3 %
- Q4 2020: Greece - 4.1 %; Slovenia - 4.0 %; Cyprus - 2.8 %



Q2 2020 was the only exception to the fact that recent job starters consistently outnumbered recent job leavers in the EU since Q1 2006

Recent job starters and leavers, EU, Q1 2006 - Q4 2020

(in million persons, age group 20-64, seasonally adjusted data)



in Q2 2020, recent job leavers peaked at 6.3 million while job starters fell to 5.0 million

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Recent job leavers are those persons who report to have left their job in the last 3 months before the interview

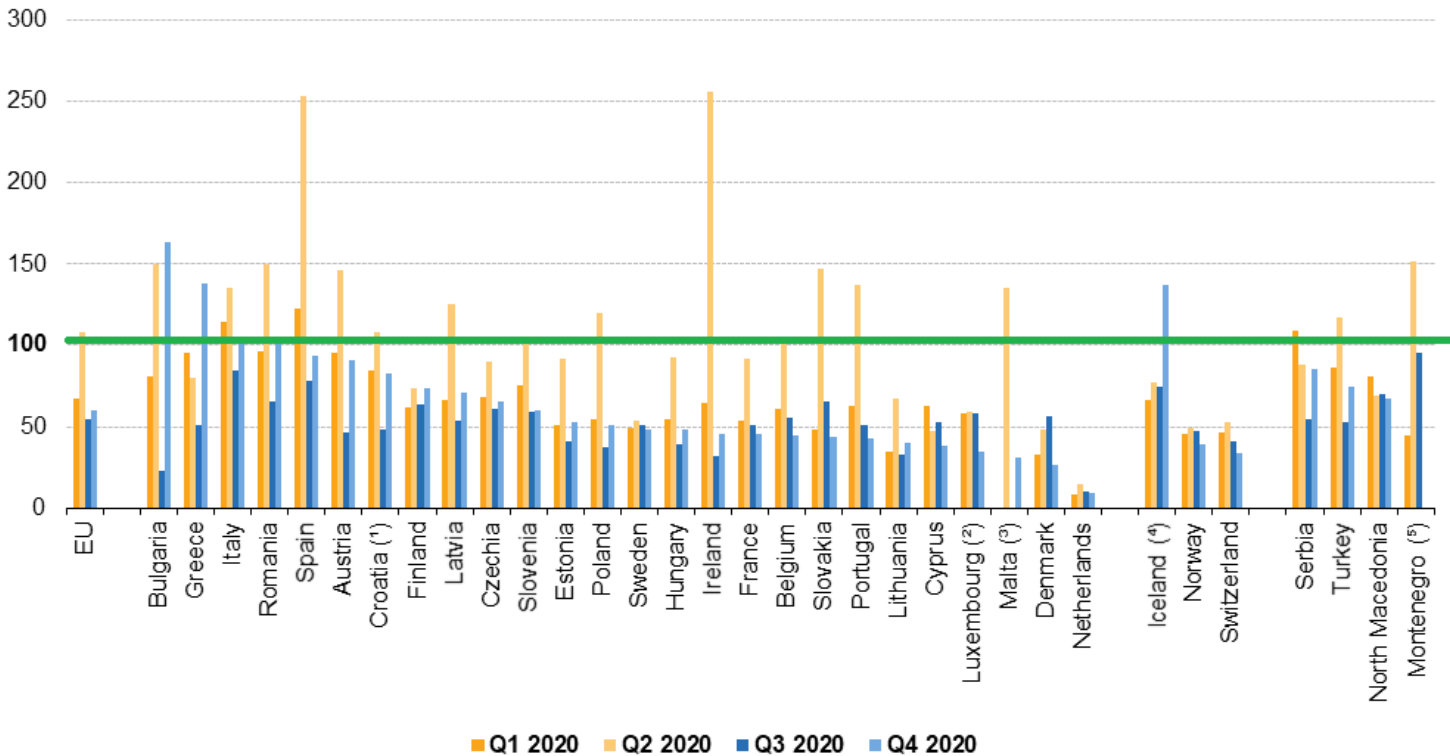
Recent job starters are those persons who have started their employment in the last 3 months before the interview



In which countries the number of recent job leavers surpassed the number of recent job starters?

Ratio of recent job leavers to recent job starters, Q1 2020 - Q4 2020

(in %, age group 20-64, non-seasonally adjusted data)



Q1 2020: 2 MS
 Q2 2020: 14 MS
 Q3 2020: 0 MS
 Q4 2020: 4 MS

Notes: No data available for Germany for Q1-Q4 2020; Countries are sorted by descending order of Q4 2020 results.

- (1) Data with low reliability: recent job leavers in Q1-Q3 2020, recent job starters for Q2 2020.
- (2) Data with low reliability: recent job leavers for Q4 2020.
- (3) Data not available due to very low reliability: recent job leavers for Q1 and Q3 2020; data with low reliability: recent job leavers for Q2 and Q4 2020, recent job starters for Q2 2020.
- (4) Break in time series since Q4 2020.
- (5) Data for Q4 2020 not available.

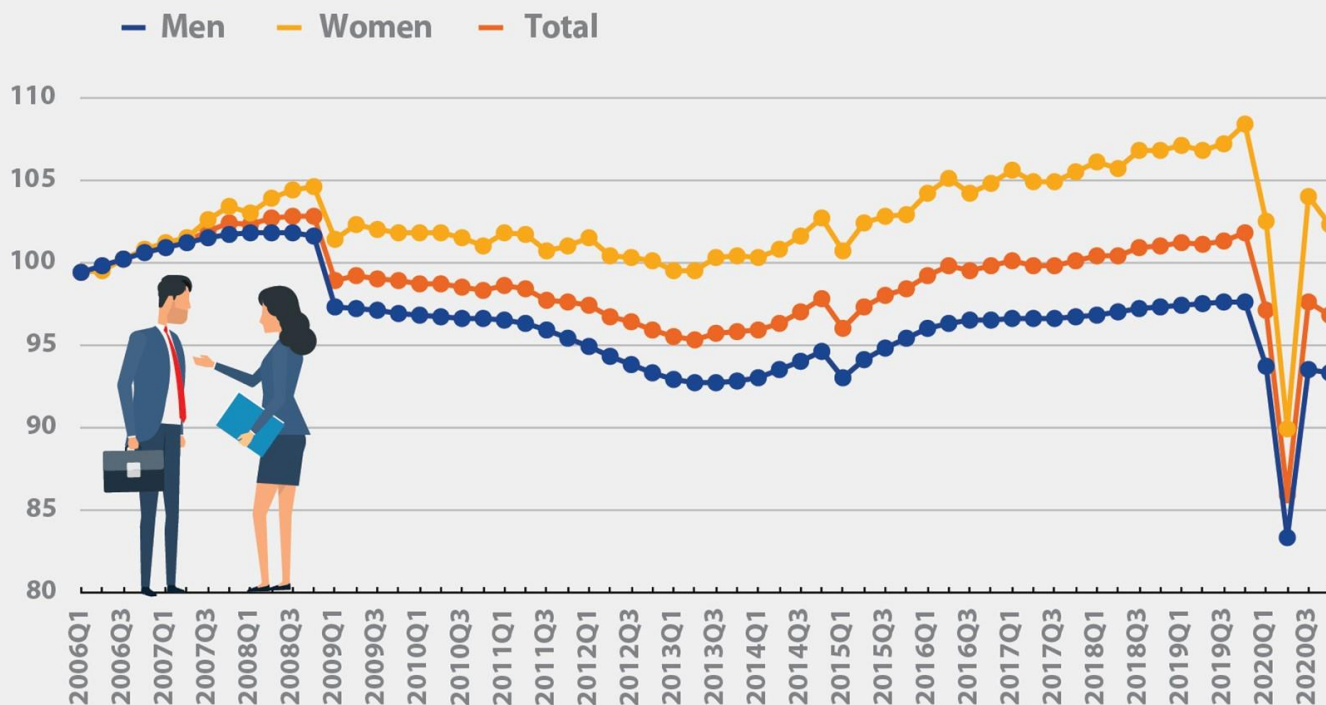
Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_sta_q, lfsi_lea_q)

Hours of work: women more affected than men, especially in Q2 and Q4 2020

Total EU employed population : 101.8 index points in Q4 2019;
85.9 index points in Q2 2020; 96.8 index points in Q4 2020

Total actual hours worked in the main job in the EU

(from Q1 2006 to Q4 2020, 2006=100, people aged 20-64, seasonally adjusted data)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_ahw_q)

For women:
108.4 points in Q4 2019 versus 102.3 points in Q4 2020 (-6.1 index points) and 89.9 points in Q2 2020 (-18.5 index points).
For men: 97.6 points in Q4 2019 to 93.3 points in Q4 2020 (-4.3 points) and 83.3 points in Q2 2020 (-14.3 points).

Highest decreases compared to Q4 2019:

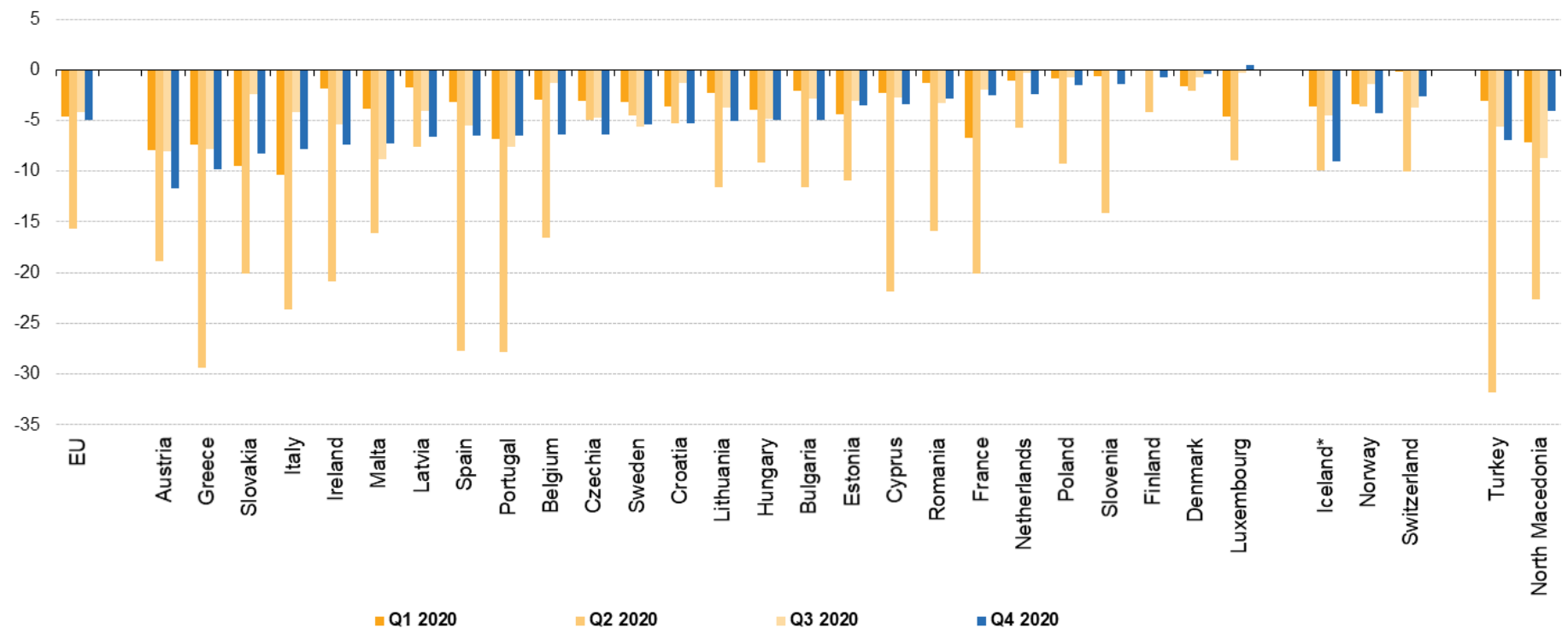
Q1: Italy (-10.4%), Slovakia (-9.5%), Austria (-7.9%), Greece (-7.4%)

Q2: Greece (-29.3%), Spain/Portugal (-27.8%), Italy (-23.6%), Cyprus (-21.9 %)

Q3: Malta (-8.8%), Austria (-8.0%), Greece (-7.9%), Portugal (-7.6 %)

Q4: Austria (-11.7%), Greece (-9.8%), Slovakia (-8.3%), Italy (-7.8%), Ireland (-7.4%) and Malta (-7.3%)

Quarterly change in total actual hours worked in the main job, by country,
Q1-Q4 2020 compared to Q4 2019
 (% , age group 20-64, seasonally adjusted)



Note: No data available for Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 2020 for Germany, Montenegro and Serbia.
 *Break in time series for Q4 for Iceland

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_ahw_q)

Change in volume of working hours for elementary occupations between 2019 and 2020

EU level: -6.9% Q1, -25.3% Q2, -8.4% Q3, -11.0% Q4

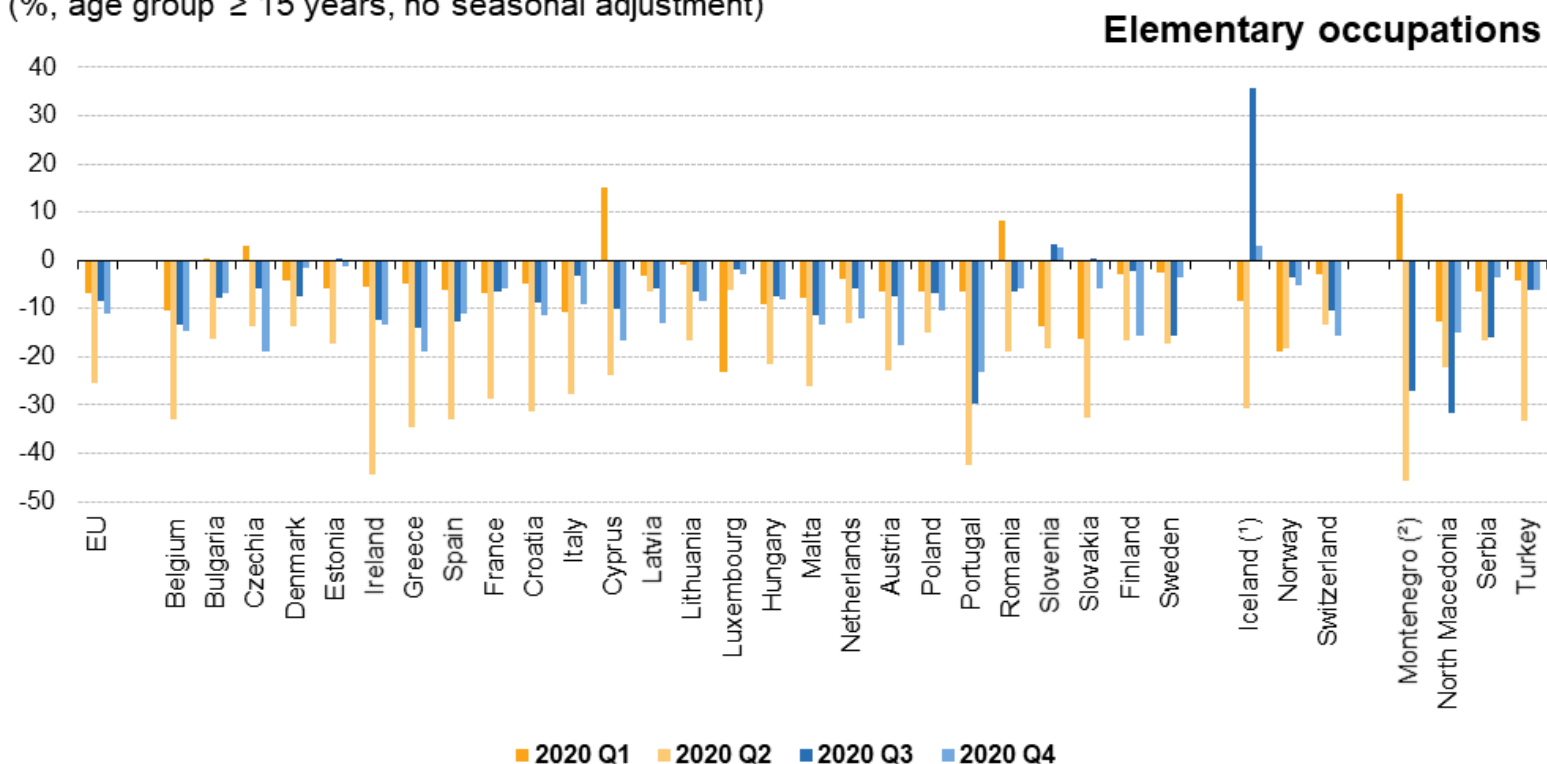
Portugal: -6.5% Q1, -42.5% Q2, -29.6% Q3, -23.2% Q4

Cyprus: +15.3% Q1, -23.9% Q2, -10.0% Q3, -16.6% Q4

Slovenia: -13.8% Q1, -18.2% Q2, +3.3% Q3, +2.8% Q4

Percentage change in average number of actual weekly hours of work in main job, by country and occupation, Q1-Q4 2020 compared to Q1-Q4 2019

(%, age group ≥ 15 years, no seasonal adjustment)



Notes: No data available in Q1-Q4 2020 for Germany.

(¹) Beak in time series since Q4 2020.

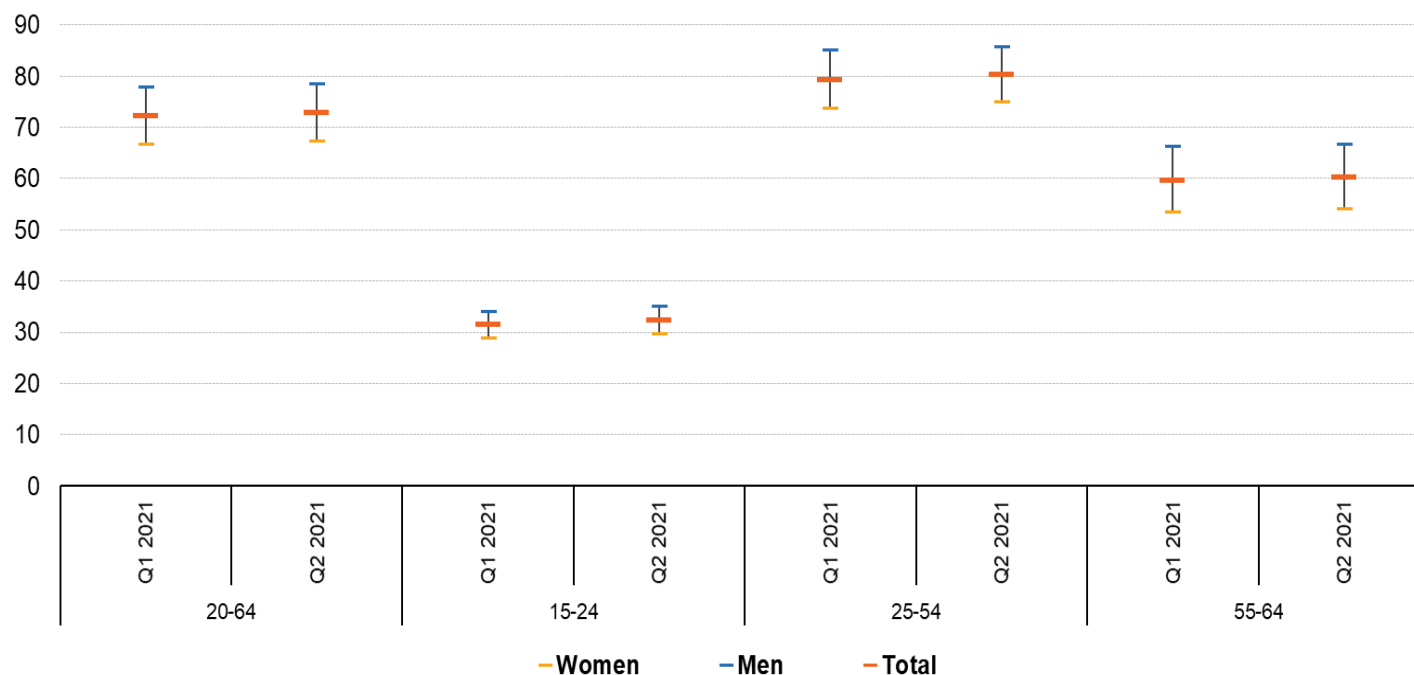
(²) No data available in Q4 2020 for Montenegro.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsq_ewhais)

FOCUS on 2021 and the rebound

MAIN RESULTS Q1 / Q2 2021

Employment rate by gender and age group in the EU, Q1 and Q2 2021
(in % of the total population, seasonally adjusted data)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_emp_q)

eurostat 

Employment rate from Q1 to Q2:

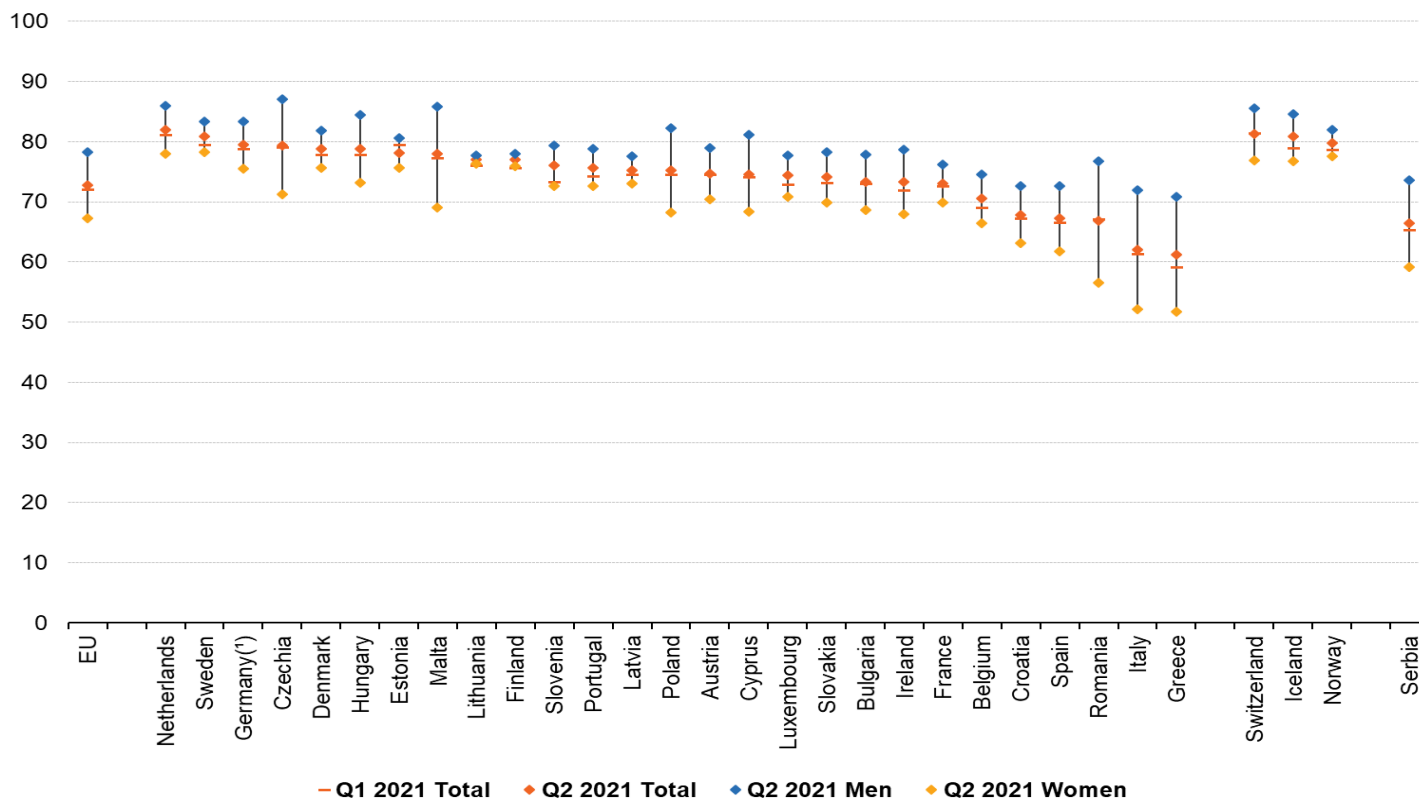
Total: +0.7 → Men +0.6 / Women +0.7

15-24: +0.9 / 55-64: +0.6

Women 25-54: +1.2 (highest increase)

Employment rate by gender and country, Q2 2021

(in % of the total population, seasonally adjusted data)



Note: (*) Low data reliability and provisional data in Q1 and Q2 2021

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_emp_q)

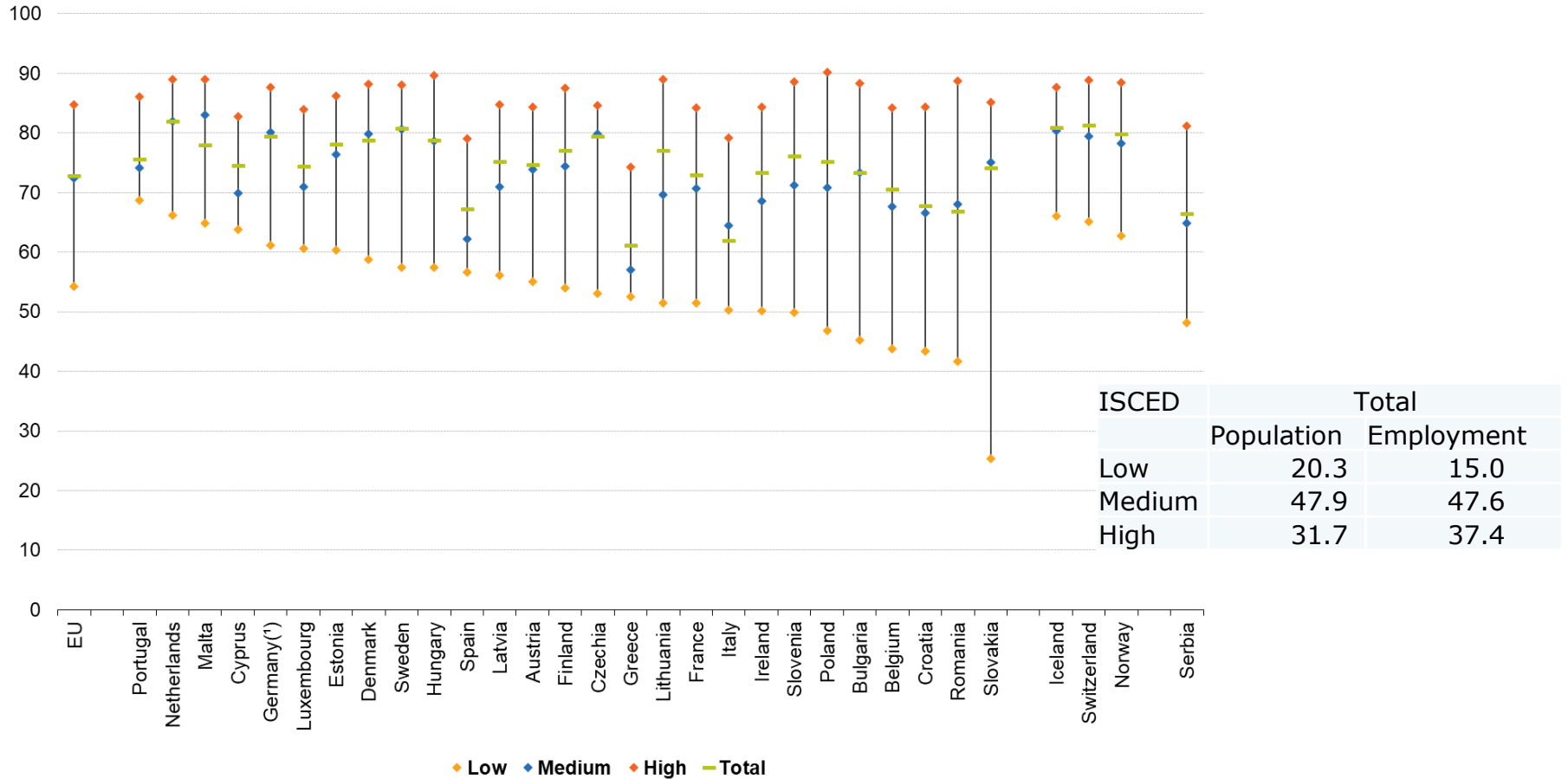
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Highest increases: reported in Slovenia (+2.8 p.p.), Greece (+2.1 p.p.), Belgium and Luxembourg (both +1.5 p.p.)

Gender gaps exceeding 15 p.p. in Romania, Italy, Greece, Malta and Czechia

Employment rate by education level and country, Q2 2021

(in % of the total population aged 20-64, seasonally adjusted data)



Note:(*) Low data reliability and provisional data

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_educ_q)

eurostat

For low level: Portugal (68.7 %), the Netherlands (66.2 %), Malta (64.8 %) vs Slovakia (25.3 %), Romania (41.7 %), Croatia (43.4 %) and Belgium (43.8 %)

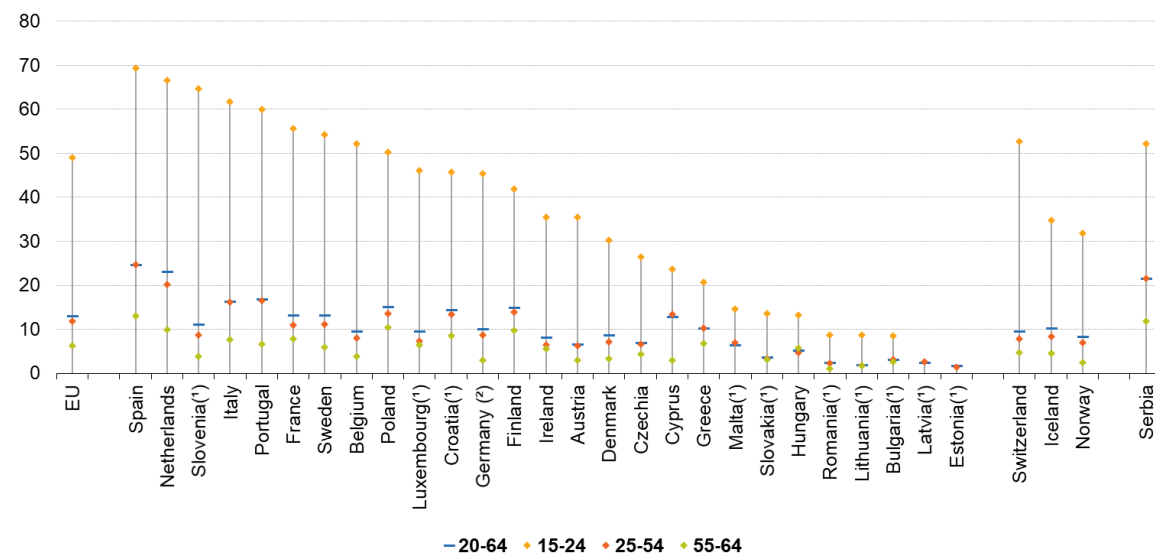
+largest differences in Slovakia (59.8 p.p.), Romania (47.0 p.p.), Poland (43.4 p.p.)



- 1 in 4 employees **20-64** with temporary contracts in Spain (24.7 %) and the Netherlands (23.1 %)
- 1 in 2 employees aged **15 to 24** (49.0 %); 25 to 54: 11.9 % / 55 to 64: 6.3 %.
- **15-24**: Spain 69.4 %, the Netherlands (66.6 %), Slovenia (64.7 %), Italy (61.7 %) and Portugal (60.0 %)

Share of employees with temporary contract by age group and country, Q2 2021

(in % of total employees, seasonally adjusted data)

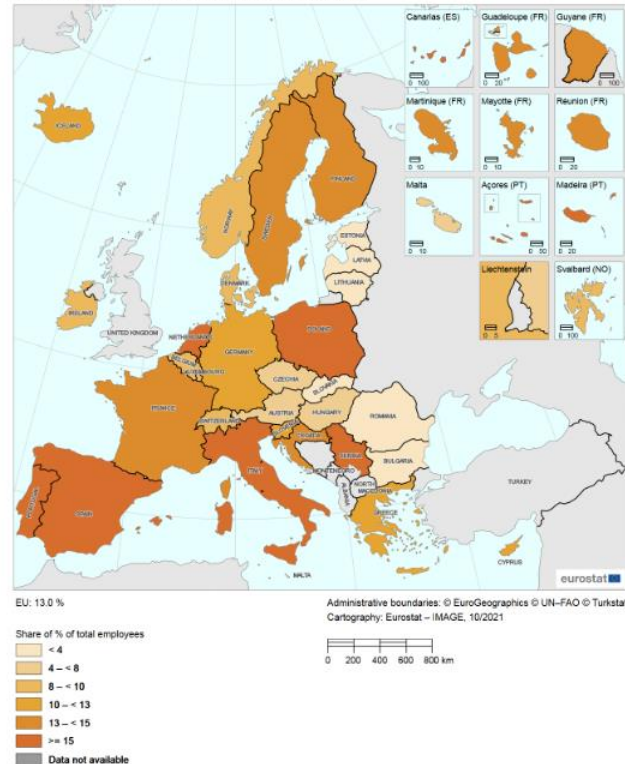


Note: (*) Low data reliability for 55-64, also in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovakia for 15-24 and in Estonia for 25-54; (°) provisional data and low data reliability

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_pt_q)

eurostat

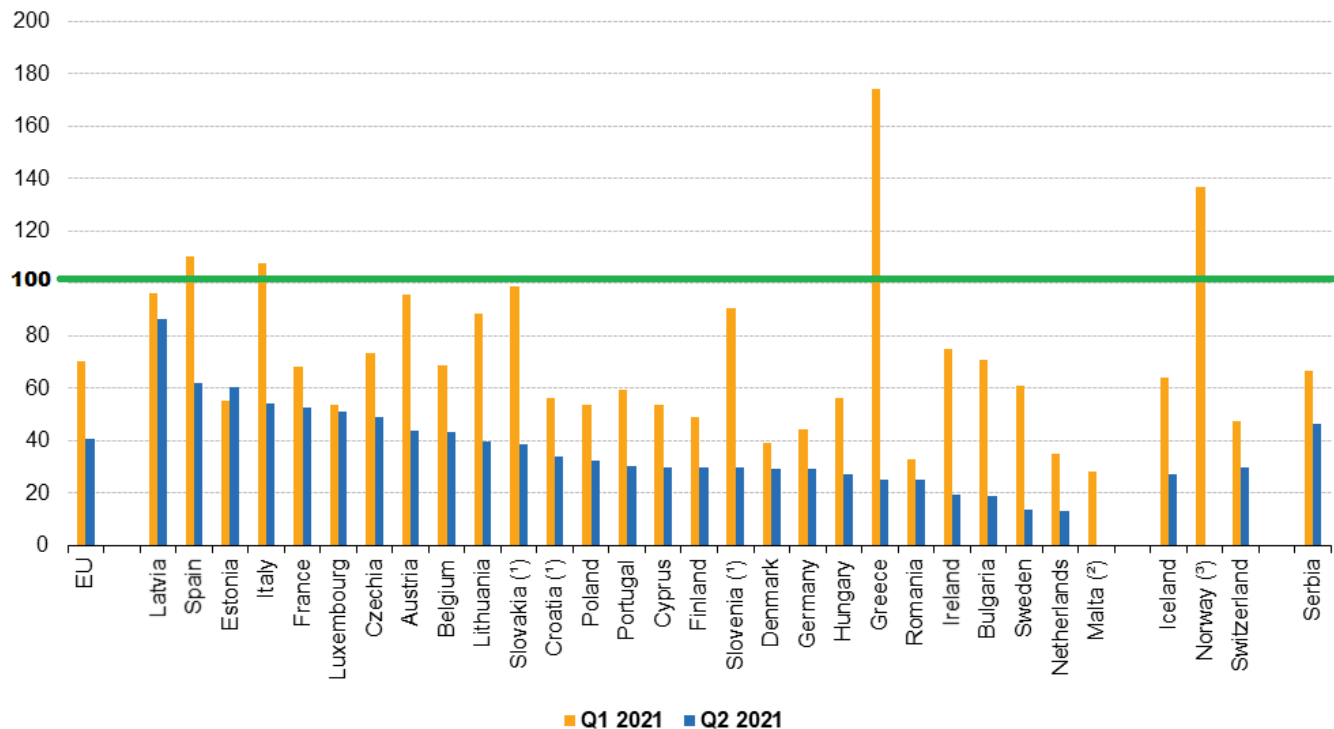
Temporary contracts by country, Q2 2021
(in % of total employees aged 20-64, seasonally adjusted data)



Job leavers to starters ratio in 2021

Ratio of recent job leavers to recent job starters, Q1-Q2 2021

(in %, age group 20-64, non-seasonally adjusted data)



More leavers than starters:
 Q1 2021: 3 MS
 Q2 2021: 0 MS

(*) Data with low reliability: recent job leavers in Q2 2021.

(**) Data not available due to very low reliability: recent job leavers in Q2 2021.

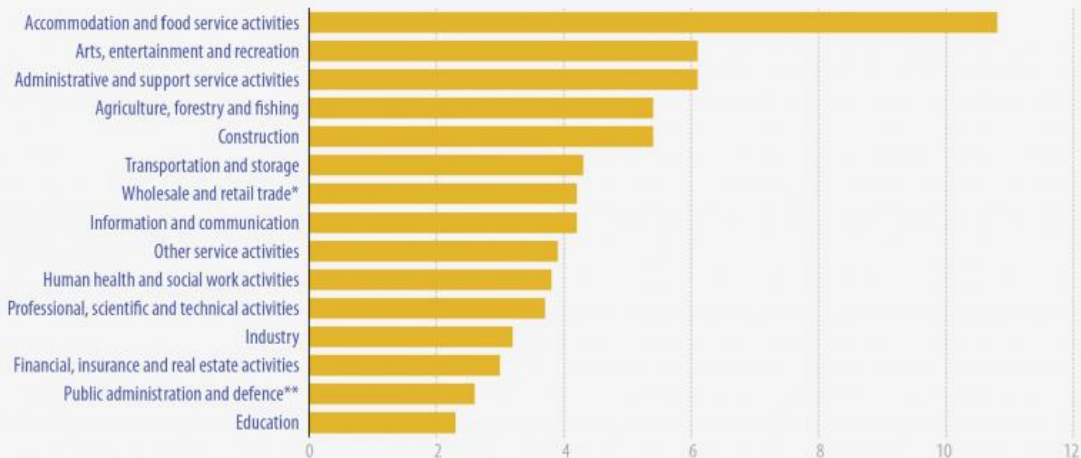
(*) Data on recent job starter in Q2 2021 not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_sta_q, lfsi_lea_q)

Which sectors attracted most job starters in Q2 2021?

Recent job starters by economic activity in the EU, Q2 2021

(in % of employment, age group 15-64)



*Including repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles

**Including compulsory social security

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsq_egdn2)

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accommodation and food services (10.8 % of total employment in the sector)

arts, entertainment and recreation and **administrative and support services** (both 6.1 %)

agriculture, forestry and fishing and **construction** (both with 5.4 %)

accommodation and food services ranked as the sector with the highest share of recent job starters in the majority of EU countries, with highest shares found in Greece (17.8 %), Cyprus (17.3 %) and in Sweden (17.0 %)

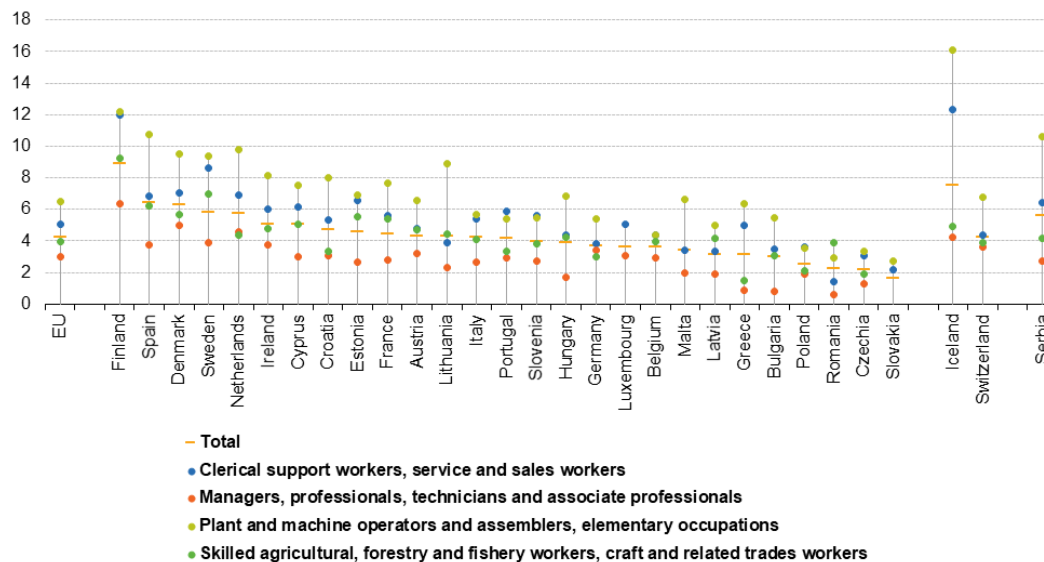
Highest shares (**total economy**): Finland (8.9 %), Spain (6.4 %), Denmark (6.3 %), Sweden and the Netherlands (both 5.8 %) and Ireland (5.1 %)

What about the occupational groups?

plant and machine operators and assemblers and workers with elementary occupations: highest share in most countries, ranging from Finland (12.2 %) and Spain (10.8 %) to Romania (2.9 %) and Slovakia (2.7 %)

Recent job starters by occupational group (ISCO-08) in Q2 2021

(in % of employment, age group 15-64)



Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia and Slovakia: some of the data by groups of occupations are with low reliability or not available due to very low reliability; for further detail visit the attached to the article Excel file.

Source: Eurostat (ad hoc extraction)

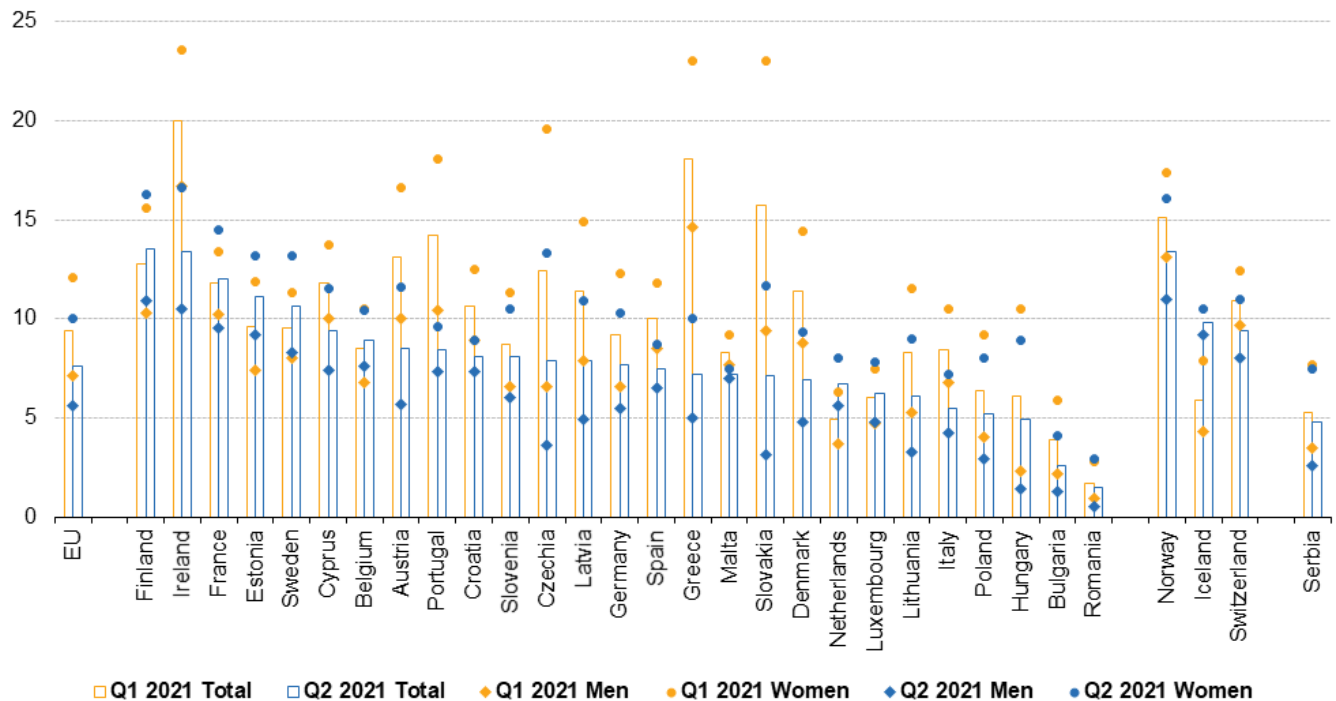
eurostat

managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals: lowest share in most countries, ranging from Finland (6.4 %), Denmark (5.0 %) and the Netherlands (4.6 %) to Greece, Bulgaria and Romania (less than 1 % in all three)

Absences (total) in 2021

Absences from work by gender

(in % of employment, age group 20-64, non-seasonally adjusted)



Shares for women always higher

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsi_abt_q)



Between Q1 and Q2 2021 (Total): Portugal (-5.8 p.p.), Ireland (-6.6 p.p.), Slovakia (-8.6 p.p.) and Greece (-10.9 p.p.) ... the Netherlands (+1.8 p.p.), Estonia (+1.5 p.p.) and Sweden (+1.1 p.p.)

In Q2 2021 (Total): Finland (13.5 %), Ireland (13.4 %), France (12.0 %), Estonia (11.1 %) and Sweden (10.6 %) ... Hungary (4.9 %), Bulgaria (2.6 %) and Romania (1.5 %)

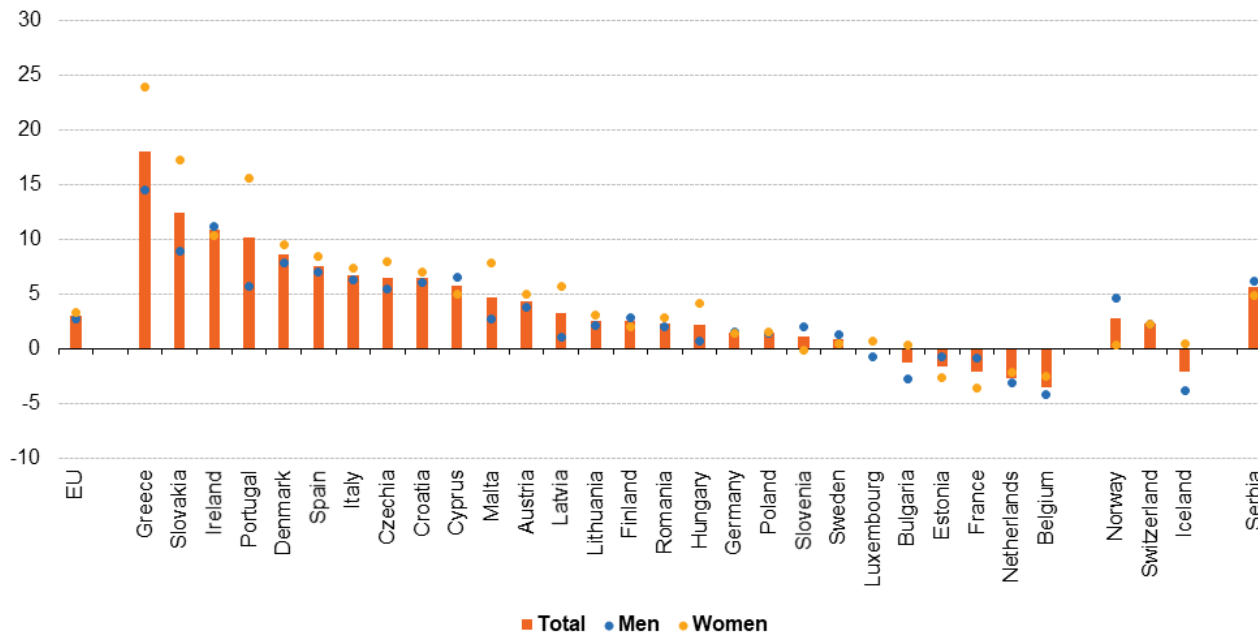


Total volume of hours of work in upward trend in most countries between Q1 and Q2 2021

Greece (+18.0 %), Slovakia (+12.4 %), Ireland (+10.8 %) and Portugal (+10.2 %)

Quarterly change in the volume of actual hours worked in the main job by gender

(%, Q2 2021 compared with Q1 2021, age group 20-64, not seasonally adjusted)



Source: Ad hoc extraction from Labour Force Survey

eurostat 

Estonia (-1.7 %), France (-2.2 %), the Netherlands (-2.8 %) and Belgium (-3.6 %)

Thank you for your attention !



For more information:

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Labour market in the light of the COVID 19 pandemic - quarterly statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Labour_market_in_the_light_of_the_COVID_19_pandemic_-_quarterly_statistics)