



Agricultural Policy Forum 2022

Agriculture and Rural Development in the context of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans: Overcoming the Impact of the Global Challenges

Working Group 4: The role of youth in the rural development in the Western Balkans

NORTH MACEDONIA

Association of Agricultural Economists of North Macedonia

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18 - 20 October 2022

Tirana, Albania



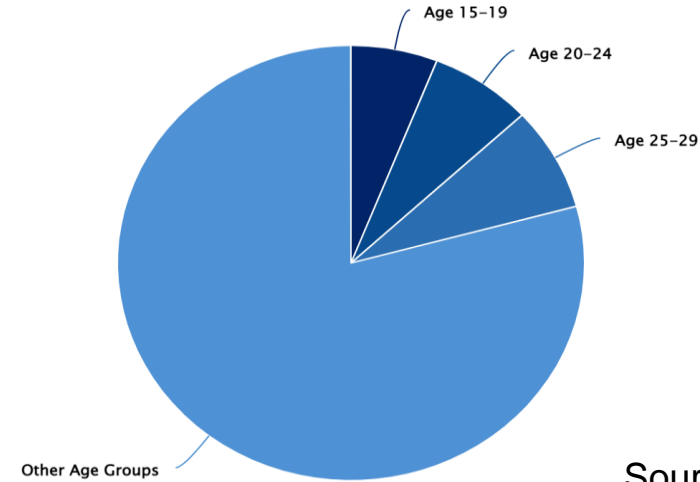
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COUNTRY OVERVIEW



- Small, landlocked country
 - total area of 25.713 km²,
 - total population 2.097.319 inhabitants (resident population 1.836.713) according to the data from the latest census in 2021 (SSO)
- 6th poorest country in Europe.
- About 450,000 of North Macedonia's population (21.5%) is suffering from poverty
- Approx. 600,000 citizens emigrated



Source: YouthWiki (europa.eu)

- 50,4 % of the population male and 49,6 % female.
- Largest group of the population (7%) falls in the 40-44 years, age category.
- The share of the population aged 0-14 and 65+ is 17% for each group.

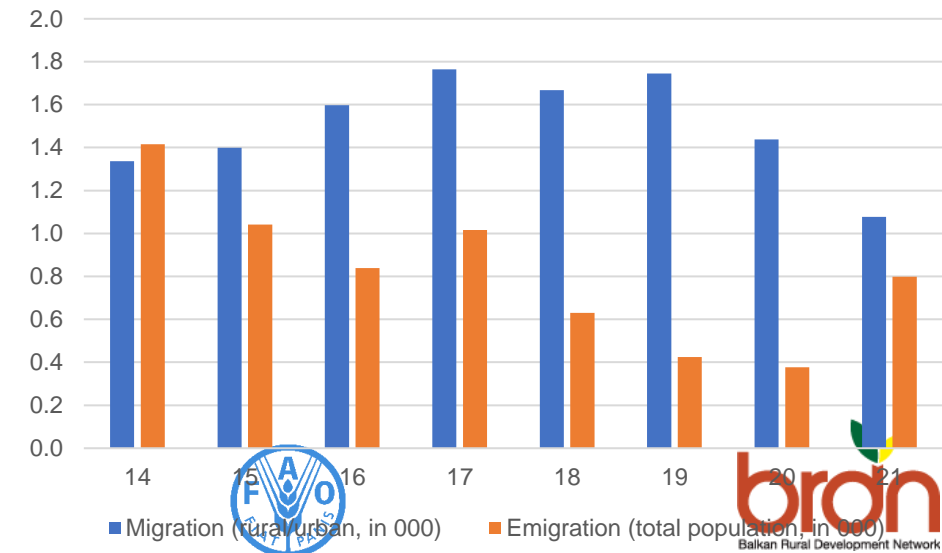
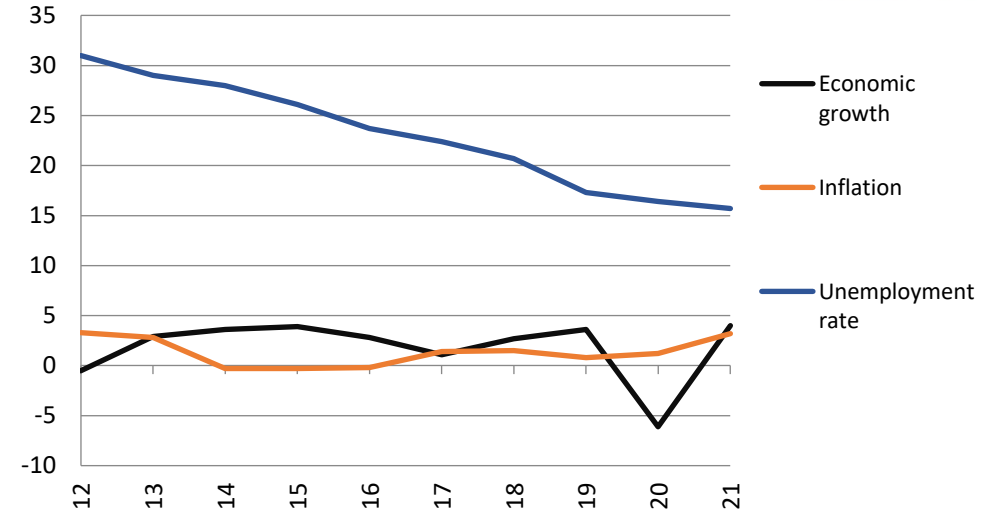
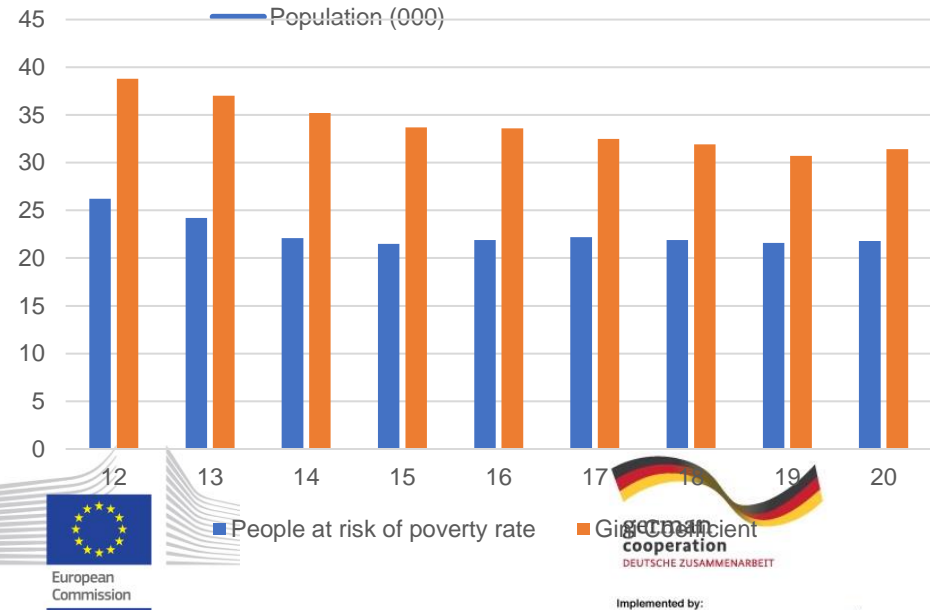
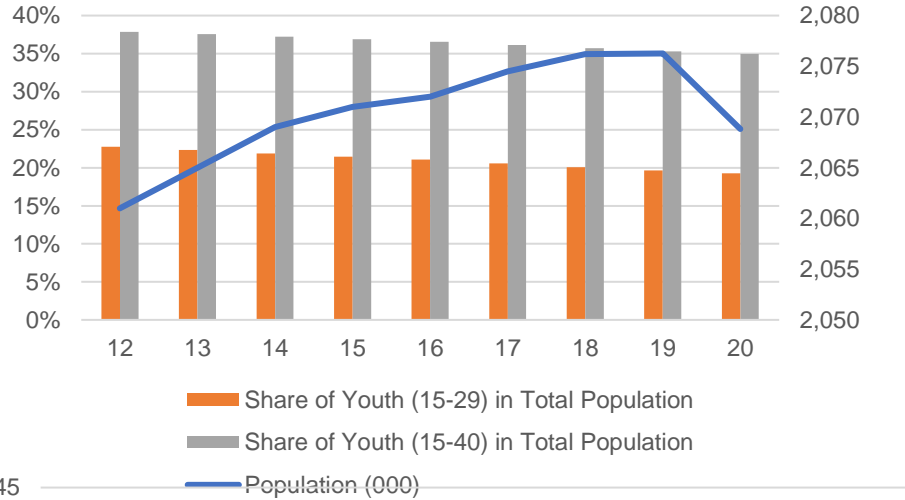


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MACRO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

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South Eastern Europe
SWG
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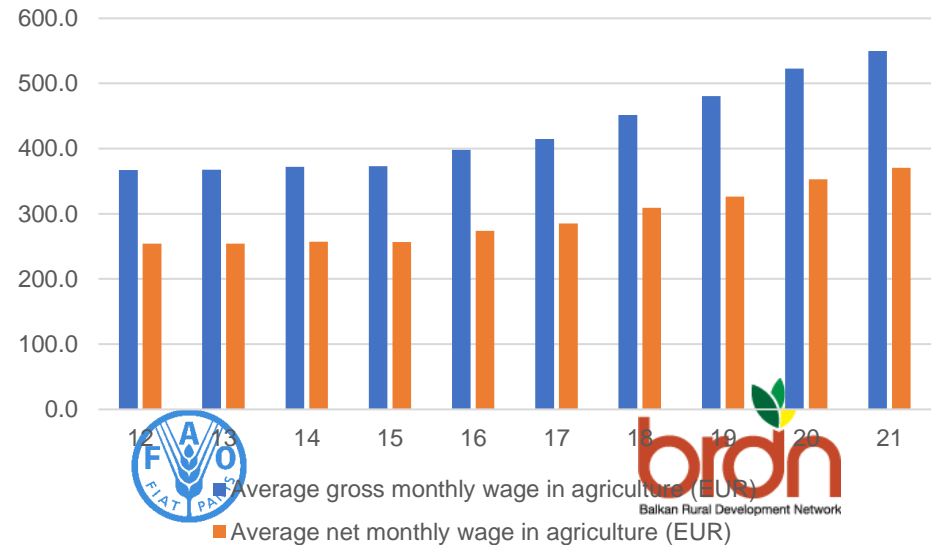
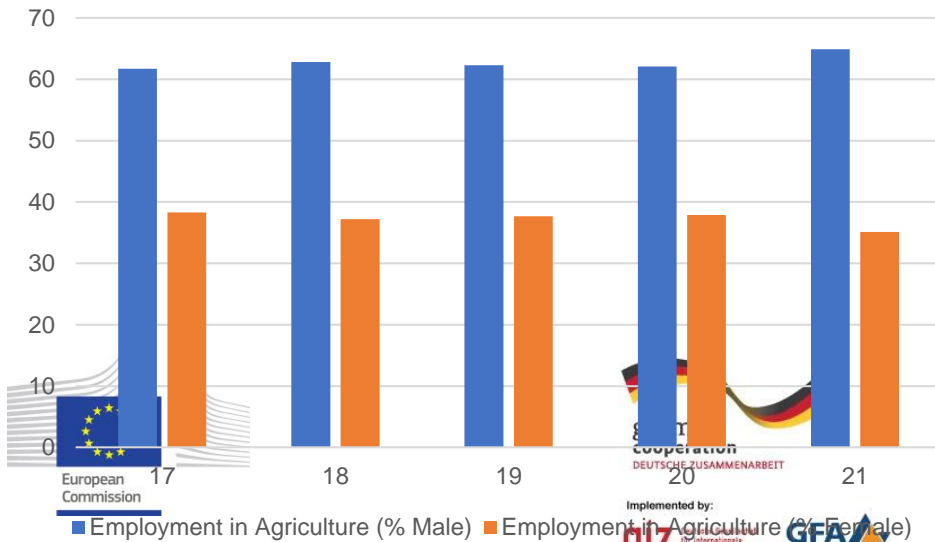
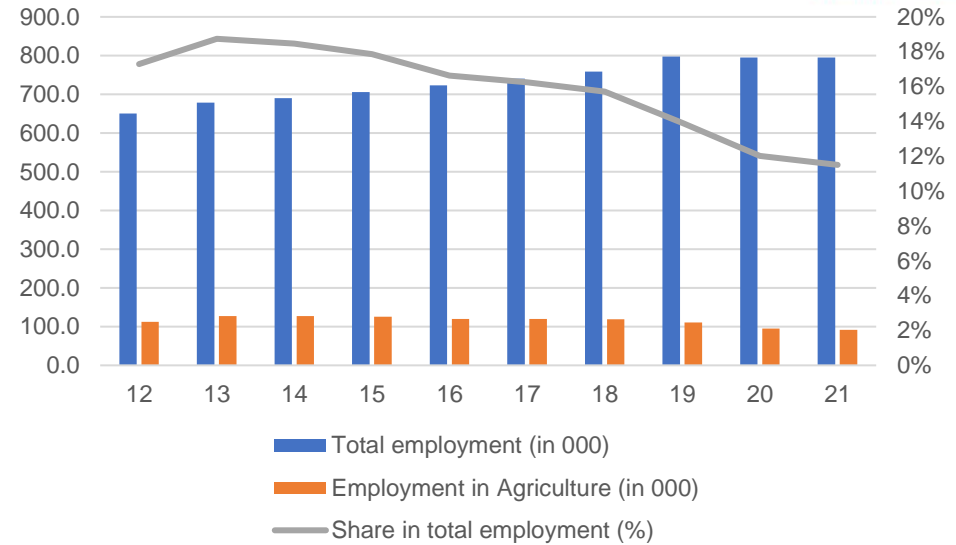
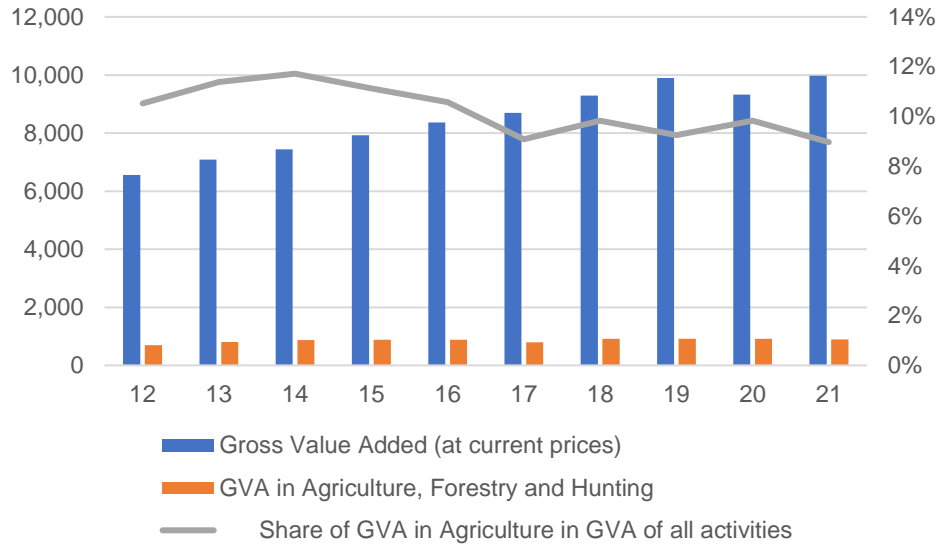


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MACRO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS - Agriculture -

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LABOUR MARKET

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- Serious disruption during the COVID-19 crisis - unemployment rate still recorded a decrease (17.4% in 2019 to 16.6% in 2020 and 16% in 2021)
- Very high rates of inactivity (43 % in an average for the period 2012-2021),
 - in particular for women (55%), and
 - still high rate of youth unemployment (37% in an average for 2017-2021 for the age group 15-29 and 26% for age 30-40) persisted, implying structural problems such as undeclared work and misalignment between education outcomes and labour market needs.
- Around 80% of unemployed are long-term unemployed, largely reflecting the skills mismatch.
- The share of informal employment in the total employees remained high, 14% in 2019, according to government data, even though declining persistently since 2015.





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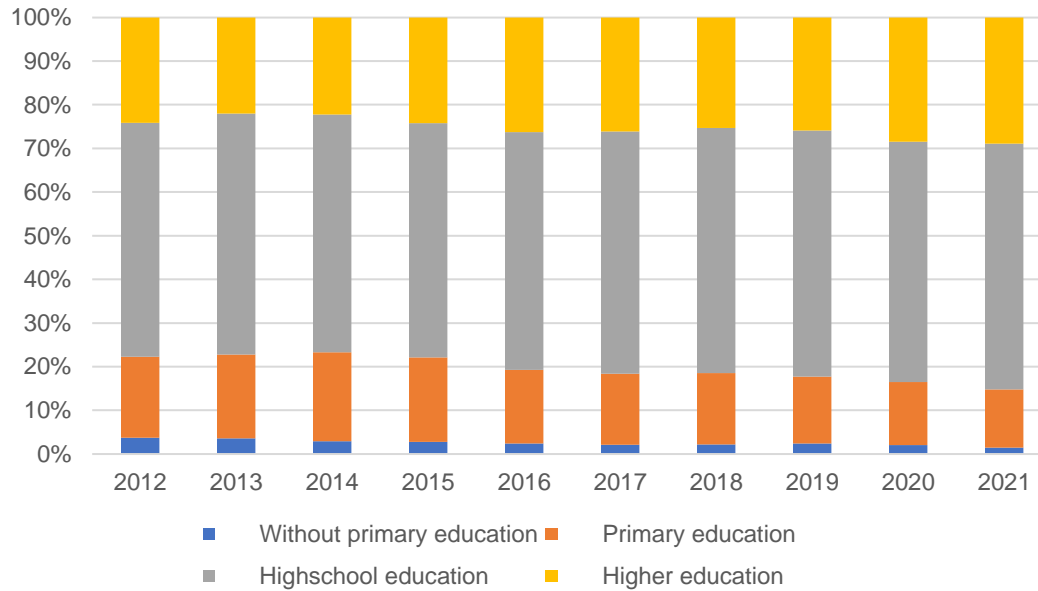
LABOUR MARKET

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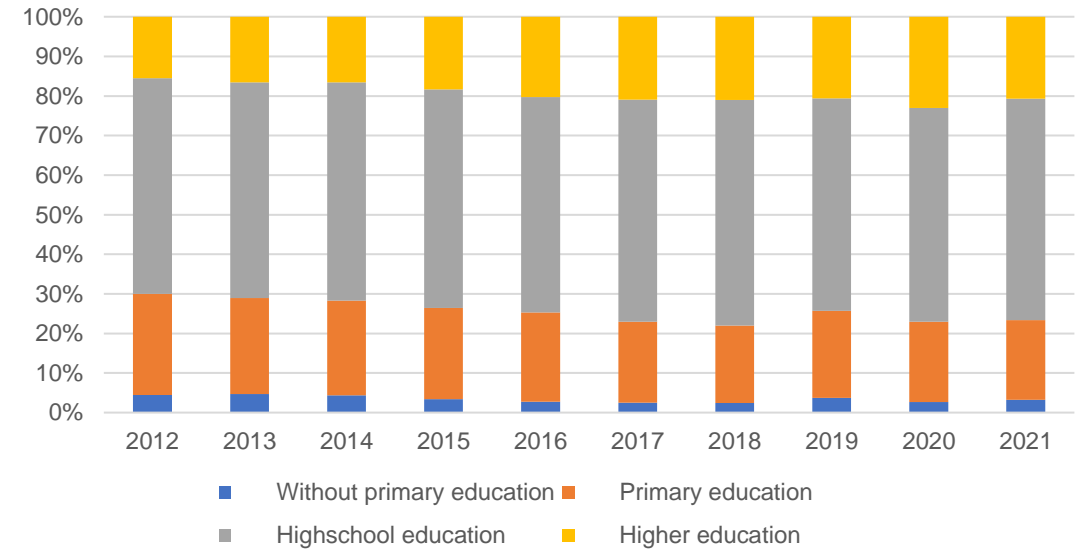
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Employed population



Unemployed population





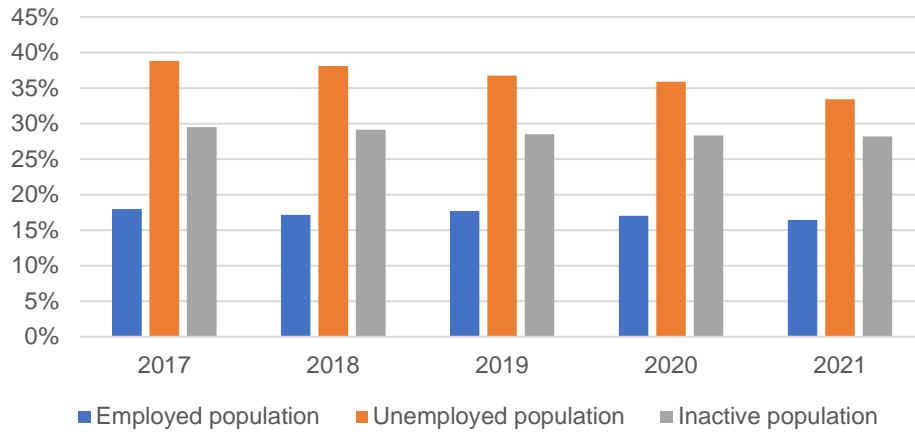
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LABOUR MARKET (YOUTH)

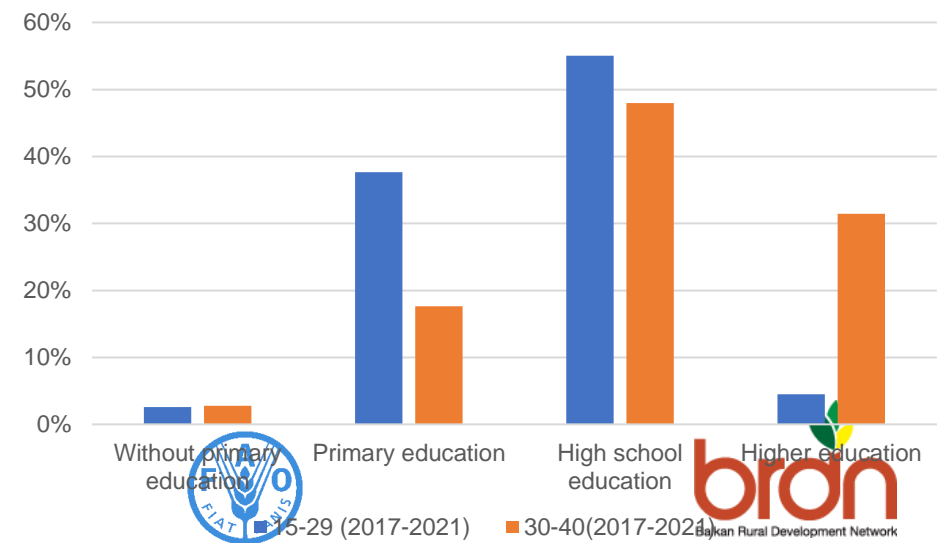
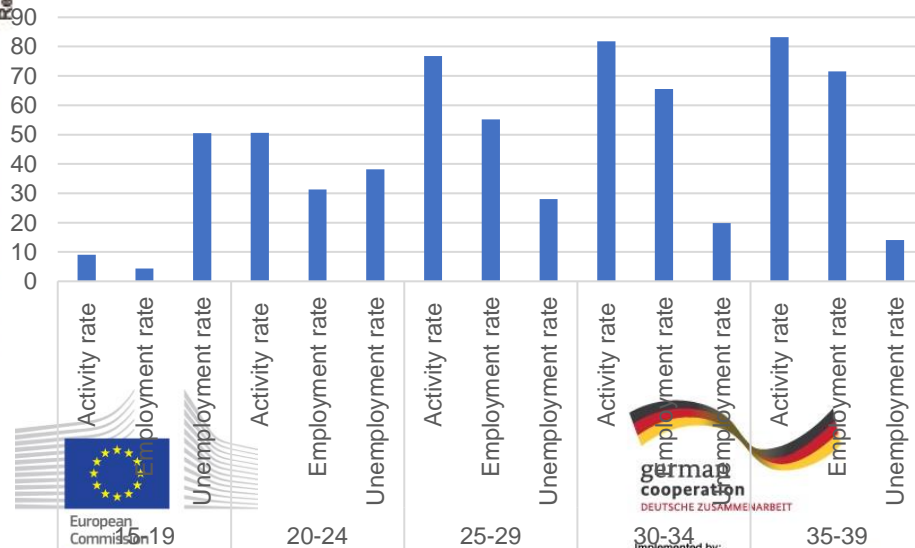
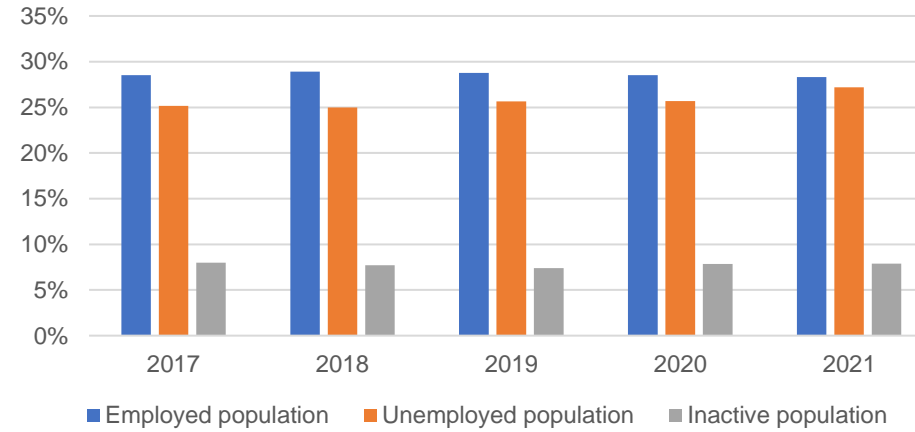
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Youth Age Category
15-29



Youth Age Category
30-40



Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group





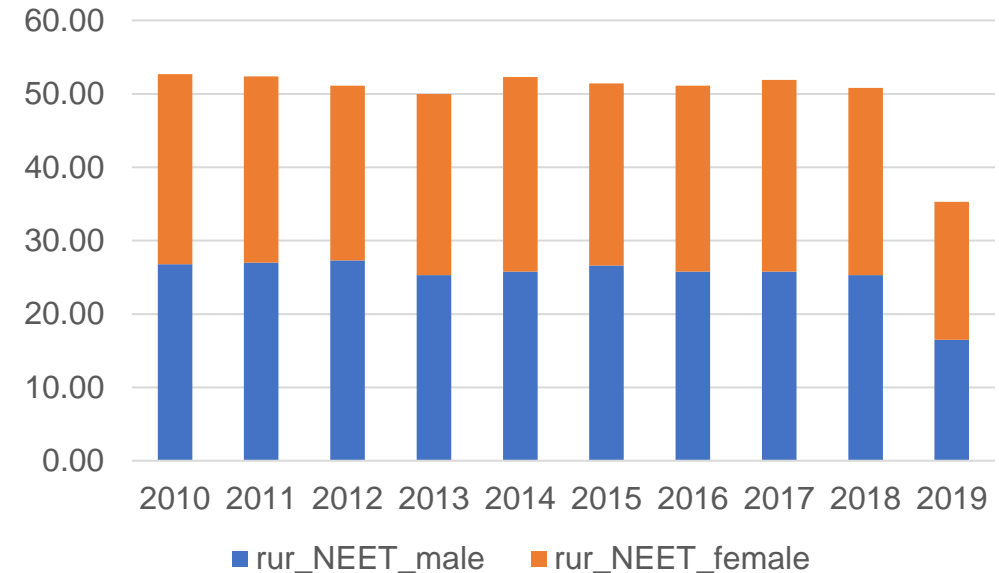
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NEET RATES (15-24)



- A decline from 25.5% in 2010 to 18.1% in 2019
- rate is still very high making young people vulnerable and at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

MKD	Rur_NEET (%)	TC_NEET rate (%)
2010	26.4	25.5
2011	26.2	25.2
2012	25.6	24.8
2013	25	24.2
2014	26.1	25.2
2015	25.7	24.7
2016	25.6	24.3
2017	25.9	24.9
2018	25.4	24.1
2019	17.6	18.1



European Commission

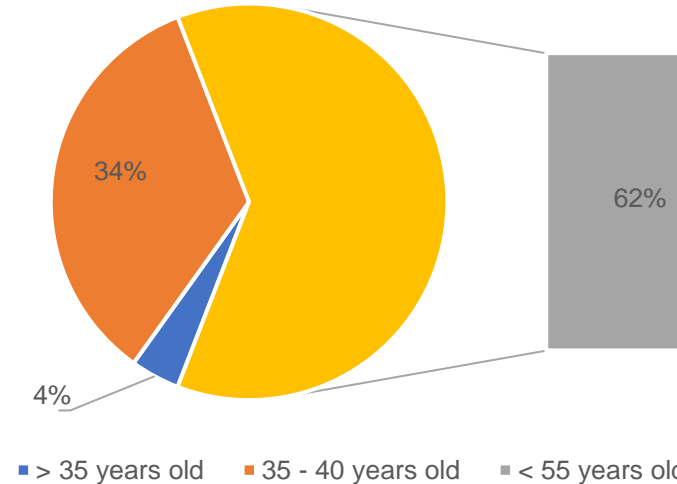


RURAL YOUTH

UNDERSTANDING RURAL YOUTH CONTEXT

- Rural areas cover about 88.7% of the territory, where 47.5% of the total population is situated.
- The percentage of the unemployed rural youth population in North Macedonia is relatively high - 32.94% in 2019.
- About 50% of the rural population is active in the rural labor markets, with higher employment rates (70%) observed for the rural male population.

Number of holders of agricultural holdings by age

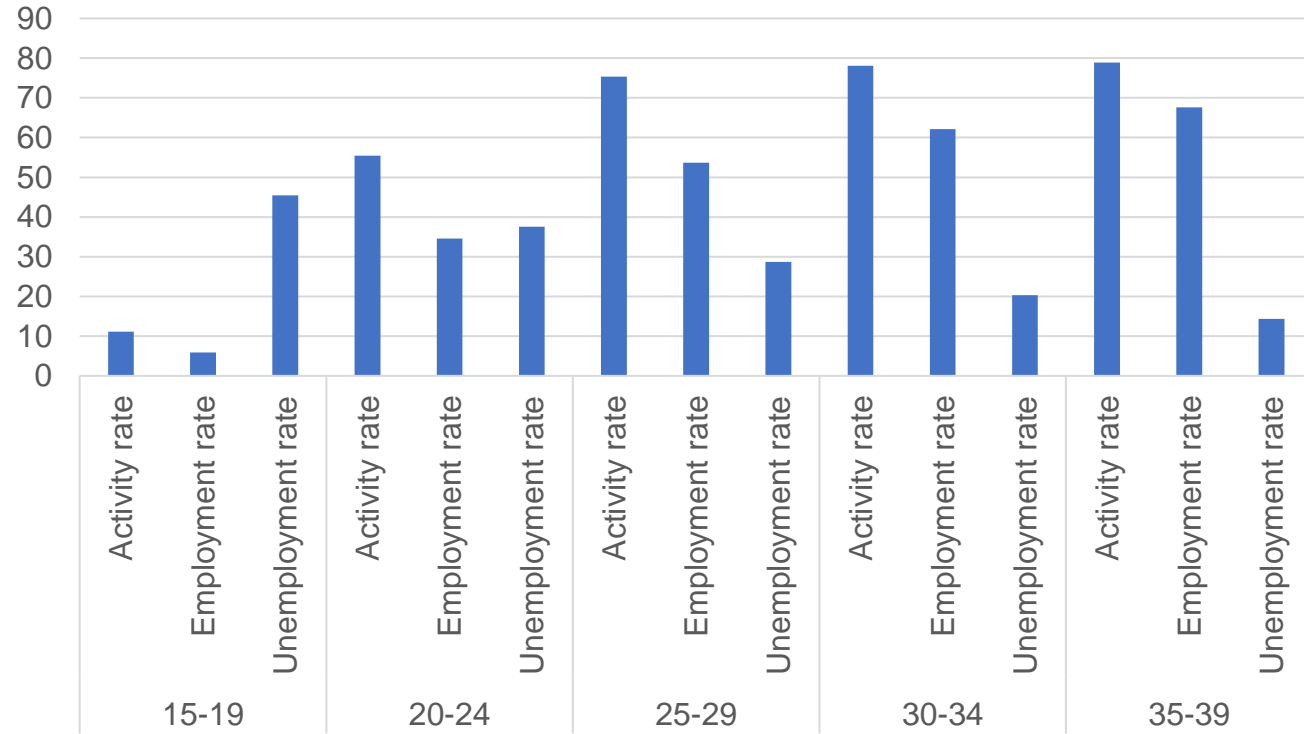


Strong emigration - trend in rural areas is which; particularly evident in recent years.

Activity rate (total)	55.5
Male	71.1
Female	39.6
Employment rate (total)	42.4
Male	54.3
Female	30.2
Unemployment rate (total)	23.6
Male	23.6
Female	23.8

RURAL YOUTH

Youth employment by age categories



NMK still doesn't have Law on Youth!

National youth strategy

(Responsible authority – Government and Agency of Youth and Sport)

Targeting nine thematic areas:

- 1) **youth participation;**
- 2) **youth information;**
- 3) **local youth work;**
- 4) **education;**
- 5) **employment and pre-employment support;**
- 6) **culture; sports;**
- 7) **health;**
- 8) **quality of life.**

✓ Particular attention to vulnerable categories of young people (unemployed, NEET, low level of education, young people with geographical and financial obstacles).

The purpose of the law is to provide:

- 1) **creating and implementing youth policy at all levels** through a multi-sectoral approach, starting from the needs and interests of young people;
- 2) **strengthening the participation** of young people in the processes of creating policies for young people, active information, promotion and protection of the interests of young people, as well as strengthening the awareness of the importance of young people and their social role;
- 3) **promoting intergenerational partnerships** to support youth participation in the decision-making and policy-making process;
- 4) support and promotion of **youth organization;**
- 5) encouraging **structural dialogue** at national and local level;
- 6) **encouraging volunteering, youth activism and youth work**
- 7) **encouraging personal, professional and social development** of young people.



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Legal acts targeting youth

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- Law on **Secondary Education**,
 - Law on **Higher Education**,
 - Law on **Student Standard**,
 - partially with **Law on Sports in Macedonia**,
 - Law on **Child Protection** (includes age of 15-18),
 - Law on **Juvenile Justice** (includes the age of 15-18),
 - Law for **Justice for Children** (includes the age of 15-18),
 - Law on **Volunteerism**, and **different youth strategies on local, and municipality levels.**
- Up until now, there is **no universal or comprehensive way of coordinating the work of all institutions** that create and implement youth policies (*National Advisory Body for Youth Policy has not been established yet*).
- At the local level, the **Local Self-Government** is responsible for decision-making.
- The decision-making is based on the existence of **Local Youth Strategies** (where adopted).
 - Most of the Local Self-Governments integrated Local Youth Councils as advisory bodies within the municipalities.



Strategic and programming documents targeting rural youth

Key legal, strategic and programming document

Key goal and objectives

National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2021-2027

- Ensuring sustainable development of rural areas (Strategic Goal 7. Attracting young farmers and facilitating the development of businesses in rural areas)

Law on agriculture and rural development

- ✓ *Defines young farmer as the holder of an agricultural holding between the ages of 18 and 40*

- **protection of interests and roles of young agricultural producers, or women agricultural producers;**
- **Policies for increasing competitiveness** of agricultural production - promoting knowledge and advancing human potential in rural areas through supporting young farmers to start agricultural activities,
- **Grants for young farmers** who engage in agricultural activity for the first time by taking over an existing agricultural holding or by establishing a new agricultural holding;

IPARD 2021-2027

Attracting young farmers to start an agricultural activity will be stimulated through a package of benefits offered through several policies, such as: *additional direct payments, grant for investments to start an agricultural business with an increased amount, facilitated access to agricultural land and mandatory training and advisory support in the area of their activities*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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