

# Employment and Working Life in Estonia 2010–2011

Series of the Ministry of Social Affairs, No. 2/2012 eng





# Employment and Working Life in Estonia 2010–2011

Trends

**Further information:**

**Labour Policy Information and Analysis Department  
Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia  
Gonsiori 29, 15027 Tallinn  
info@sm.ee**

**Editor: Ülle Marksoo**

**Translator: OÜ Tõlkekunstnikud**

**Cover photo: Stock.XCHNG**

**Layout: AS Atlex**

**ISSN-L 1736-6127**

**ISSN 1736-6127 (online)**

**ISSN 1736-8707 (CD)**

**ISSN 1736-6119 (print)**

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# Contents

## Introduction 4

1. Development of the Estonian labour market in comparison with other countries of the European Union – Ülle Marksoo 5
2. Situation of the Estonian labour market in 2010 and 2011 – Ülle Marksoo 10
  - 2.1. General trends 10
  - 2.2. Movements between employment statuses 11
  - 2.3. Employment 12
  - 2.4. Unemployment 14
  - 2.5. Inactivity 17
3. Organisation of work and remuneration – Liina Malk 18
  - 3.1. Organisation of work 18
    - 3.1.1. Fixed-term work 18
    - 3.1.2. Part-time work 19
    - 3.1.3. Working time 20
      - 3.1.3.1. Amount of working time and overtime 21
      - 3.1.3.2. Timing of working time 22
    - 3.1.4. Remote work 23
  - 3.2. Remuneration 24
    - 3.2.1. Amount of remuneration 24
    - 3.2.2. Minimum wage 26
4. Risk groups on the labour market – Eva Põldis 27
  - 4.1. Long-term unemployed persons 27
  - 4.2. Young unemployed persons 30
  - 4.3. Older persons 33
  - 4.4. Non-Estonians 36
5. Registered unemployment and labour market policy – Eva Põldis 40
  - 5.1. Registered unemployment 40
  - 5.2. Risk groups 44
  - 5.3. Employment mediation and placement 45
  - 5.4. Labour market services 46
  - 5.5. Unemployment allowance, unemployment insurance benefit, insurance benefit upon lay-offs, benefit upon insolvency of the employer 47
  - 5.6. Expenditure on labour market policy 49
6. Working environment – Ester Rünkla 51
  - 6.1. Effect of work on health 51
  - 6.2. Occupational accidents 53
    - 6.2.1. Registered occupational accidents 53
    - 6.2.2 Occupational accidents on the basis of survey data 56
  - 6.3. Health disorders related to work 59
    - 6.3.1. Diseases caused by work 59
    - 6.3.2. Work related diseases on the basis of survey data 60

# Introduction

This collection of trends shall provide an overview of the developments on the Estonian labour market in 2010 and 2011. To better comprehend the scope of changes it shall also include data for first years of the economic crisis (2008–2009). The impact of global economic crisis on the Estonian labour market was especially serious as Estonia was among those EU member states where unemployment rates rose quickly. 2010 shall go into history as the year with the highest unemployment and lowest employment rate. At the beginning of 2010 the number of unemployed people in Estonia reached 137 000 for the first time, being 19.8% of workforce. The year 2011, however, can be seen as a time of recovery when the number of employed persons began to rise and unemployment rates decreased due to positive economic expansion. Over the next few years the increase in employment and decrease in unemployment shall be moderate as expansion has once again slowed down.

The collection includes six chapters. The first chapter provides a comparison of the labour market indicators of Estonia with the respective indicators of other Member States of the European Union in order to get an overview of the changes on the labour markets of different countries in 2010 and 2011. While in 2010 the labour market indicators of Estonia as well as other Baltic Countries were growing worse at a notably faster pace than in the majority of the other EU Member States, opposite trends could be perceived in 2011 – increase in employment and decrease in unemployment in Estonia were the fastest in the European Union.

The second chapter of the collection describes the changes in employment statuses of persons on the labour market. The chapter covers employment, changes in employment by sectors and occupations, unemployment and inactivity. The third chapter provides an analysis of the organisation of work and of remuneration. The chapter shall cover fixed-term work, part-time work, average working time, overtime, timing of working time and remote work. The Remuneration section covers minimum wage and amount of remuneration which has started to increase after recession.

The fourth chapter provides a detailed characterisation of the risk groups of the labour market whose entry to the labour market is difficult for several reasons. The chapter covers young unemployed persons, older persons, non-Estonians and long-term unemployed persons. It was revealed that the situation of all risk groups on the labour market improved in 2011 but the issue of long-term unemployment and especially very long-term unemployment should be addressed immediately.

The fifth chapter gives an overview of the registered unemployed persons, vacancies and placements, users of employment services, paid allowances and benefits and expenditure on the labour market policy based on the data of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Funds. It appears from that analysis that the dynamics of the number of registered unemployed persons has been similar with the general trends of unemployment but that the number of registered unemployment is smaller than general unemployment, being only ca 63% of the latter.

It is important to pay attention to the working environment of employees. The working environment must ensure the safety of employees and prevent any health disorders. The sixth chapter of the collection provides a more detailed analysis of the working environment and the impact of work on the health of employees. The chapter provides an overview of the statistics of occupational accidents and health disorders related to work based on registered data and data from surveys.

This collection uses data from labour force surveys and other surveys of Statistics Estonia as well as data from the European Working Conditions Survey, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, Eurostat, Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund and Labour Inspectorate. The target group of this collection of trends of employment includes, above all, persons who come across labour matters in their daily work as well as all persons who have a deeper interest in the developments in the field of labour. We hope that the abundant statistical material assists policymakers in making the right choices.

In the name of the authors, Ülle Marksoo,  
editor

# 1. Development of the Estonian labour market in comparison with other countries of the European Union

Ülle Marksoo

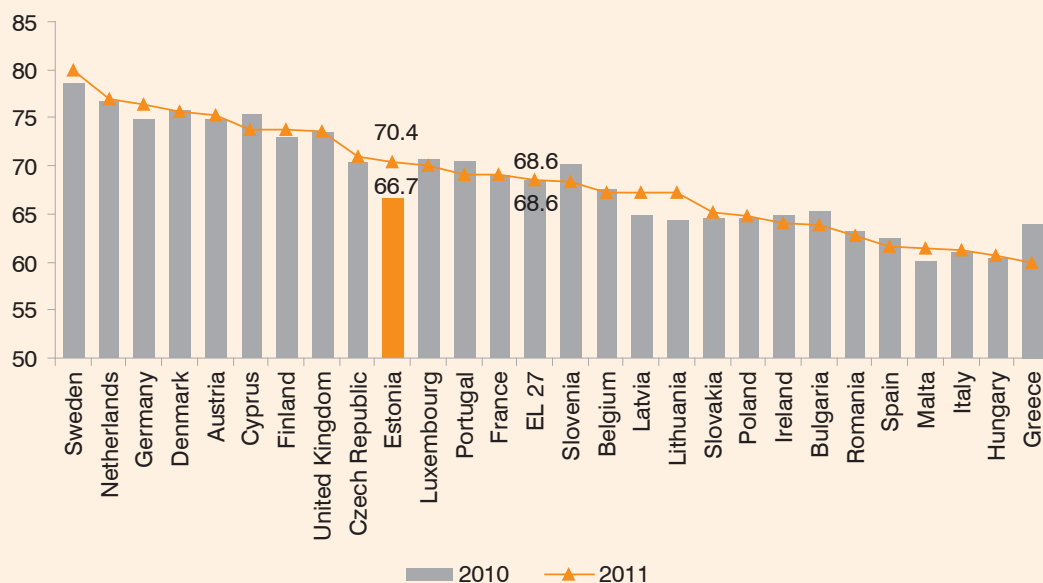
Global economic crisis continues to affect the labour markets of the Member States of the European Union (EU). The condition of the labour market improved in many Member States in 2010 but recovery from the crisis has slowed down since March 2011. Increase in employment has stopped and the number of unemployed persons is on the rise again. However, the situation is noticeably better in countries where employment rates decreased and unemployment rates increased significantly during the crisis.

Comparing the employment rates of 2010 and 2011 it is clear that increase in employment after the great decrease has been the fastest in Estonia (3.7 percentage points) and the employment rate (70.4%) exceeds even that of the EU (68.6%). Compared to the employment rates of the 27 coun-

tries in 2010, Estonia climbed from rank 16 to rank 10. The other two Baltic countries, Latvia and Lithuania, also saw a relatively quick increase but their employment indicators remain below the EU average. Sweden was the only country where the employment rate reached 80; the employment rate of the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Austria exceeded 75%. In absolute figures, the number of new jobs was the largest in Germany (560 000<sup>1</sup>). Employment rate was the lowest in Greece (59.9%) and Greece also saw the biggest drop in employment. In addition to Greece, the employment rate decreased significantly in Slovenia, Bulgaria and Cyprus. Changes in employment in EU Member States are shown on Figure 1.1.

Compared to 2010, the employment rate of men decreased by 0.1 percentage points in 2011 and the

Figure 1.1. **Employment rate<sup>2</sup> in 2010 and 2011 (%)**



Source: Eurostat<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> EU Employment and Social Situation, Social Europe I Quarterly Review, European Commission 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Employment rate - proportion of employed persons in the populations aged 20–64.

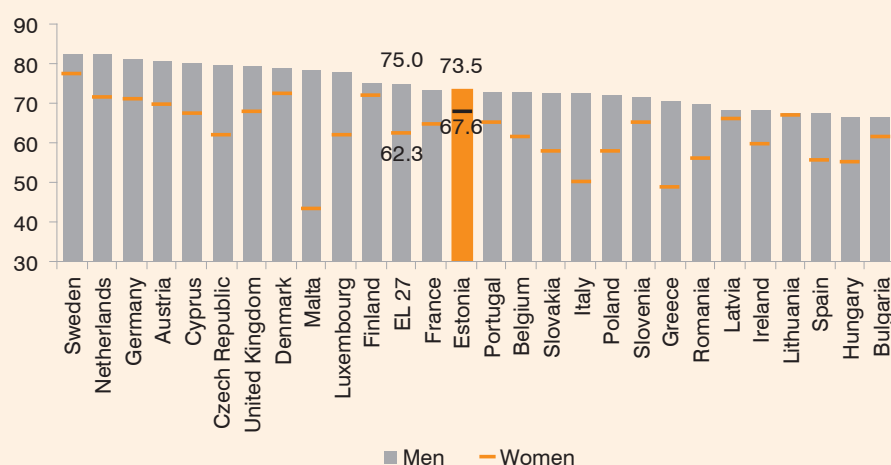
<sup>3</sup> Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Communities) data taken from the following public database: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment\\_unemployment\\_lfs/data/database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/data/database)

employment rate of women increased by 0.2 percentage points. Sweden has the highest employment rate for men and women (82.8% and 77.2% respectively). The employment rate of men exceeded 80% in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Cyprus and was the lowest in Bulgaria (66.6%).

Differences in the employment rate of women are much bigger, from 43.4% in Malta to 77.2% in Sweden. The employment rate exceeded 70% in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Finland. In addition to Malta, employment rate was lower

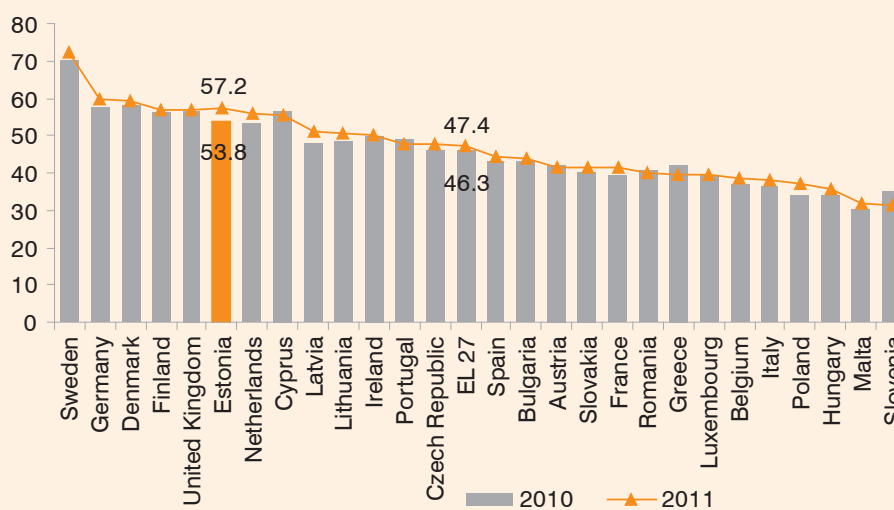
than 50% in Italy and Greece. Thus, the biggest differences in employment gap can be noticed in the Southern European countries. While in the EU the employment rate of women is 12.7 percentage points lower than that of men, the employment gap amounted to as much as 35.4 percentage points in Malta and over 22 percentage points in Italy and Greece. The employment gap is the smallest in the Baltic countries and Sweden. The employment rate for Estonian women has always been higher the EU average, even during economic crisis.

Figure 1.2. **Employment rate of men and women in 2011 (%)**



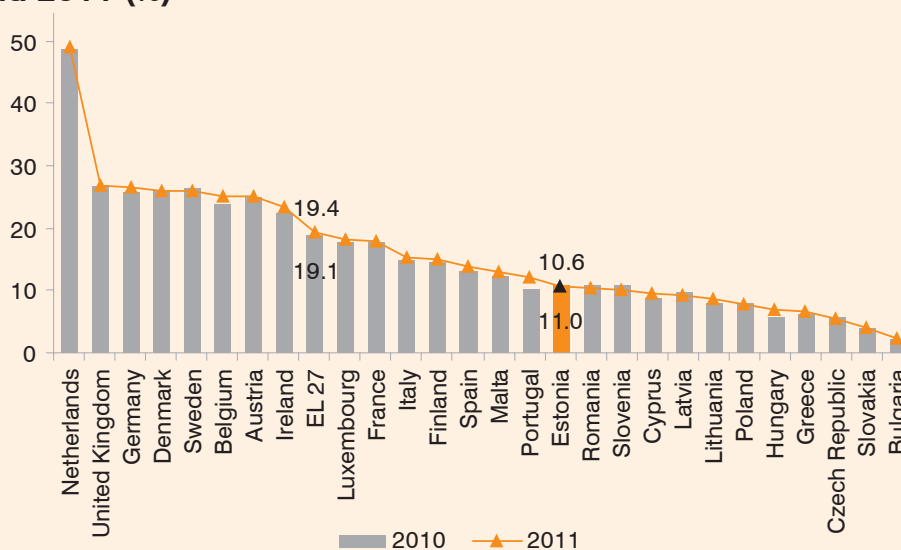
Source: Eurostat

Figure 1.3. **Employment rate of persons aged 55–64 in 2010 and 2011 (%)**



Source: Eurostat

Figure 1.4. **Proportion of part-time employed persons among employed persons in 2010 and 2011 (%)**



Source: Eurostat

Employment of persons aged 55–64 increased by 1.1 percentage points in 2011. While general increase in employment was observed in 14 countries, the employment of older persons increased in 18 countries (Figure 1.3). The biggest proportion of working older persons is in Sweden (72.3%); in the rest of the countries the employment of older persons is below 60% and even below 50% in most countries. Employment rate is the lowest in Slovenia (31.2%) and Malta (31.7%). Estonia was at rank 6 with the employment rate of 57.2% and, compared to the previous year, saw the fastest increase in employment.

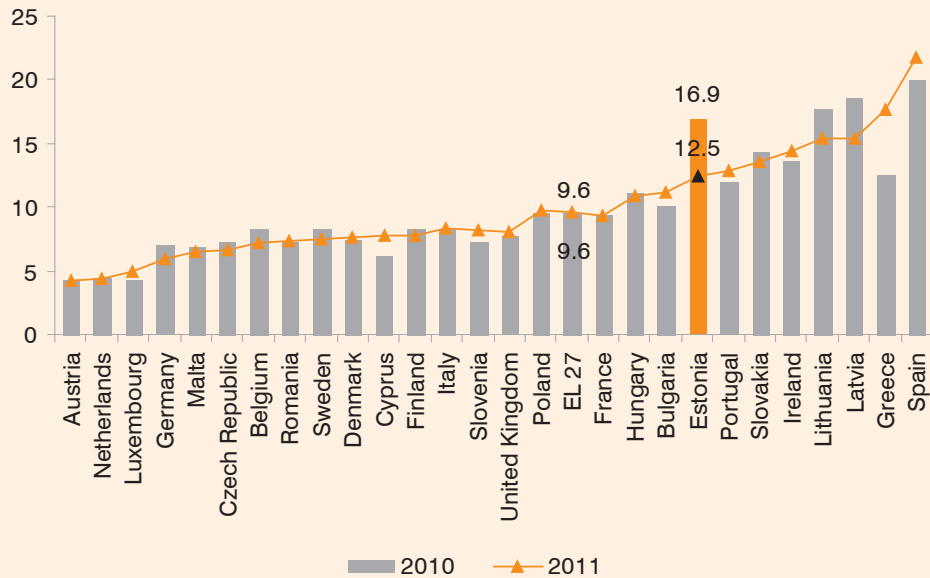
In Estonia the employment rate of older persons and unemployment rate (11.6%) are both high. This indicates that in Estonia older persons are very active on the labour market. By activity rate Estonia ranked second just after Sweden. While in the EU an average of 50.9% of older persons is employed or looking for work, the respective figure is 64.7% in Estonia and 75.9% in Sweden. Active participation of women in working life increases the activity of the older persons in Estonia. Here too Estonian women rank second after Sweden. The average activity rate of older women in the EU

is 42.8%; in Estonia exceeds it by more than 20 percentage points (62.9%). The activity rate of women exceeds 60% also in Finland.

Part-time working<sup>4</sup> in the EU Member States varies to a very large extent. The average of 8.9% of men and 32% of women are doing part-time work. Here the Netherlands hold the first place with nearly half of employed persons (49.1%) having part-time jobs. High numbers of persons employed part-time are due to the large proportion of women working part-time (76.6%). Likewise, the proportion of men working part-time is the highest and exceeds 25%. The number of persons employed part-time exceeds 25% in Denmark, United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany Austria and Belgium. Part-time work is less popular in Southern European countries and especially in Eastern Europe. In many countries the proportion of part-time employment increased during the years of economic crisis due to the decrease in demand on the labour market. In 2011, 19.4% of employed persons in the EU worked part-time, this figure is 0.3 percentage points higher than in the previous year. In Estonia the proportion of part-time employed persons was 10.6 % (15.4% of women, and 5.6% of men). The

<sup>4</sup> According to Eurostat definition full-time and part-time working shall be defined pursuant to a person's statement, except in the Netherlands where everyone working less than 35 hours a week are considered to be employed part-time.

Figure 1.5. Unemployment rate in 2010 and 2011 (%)



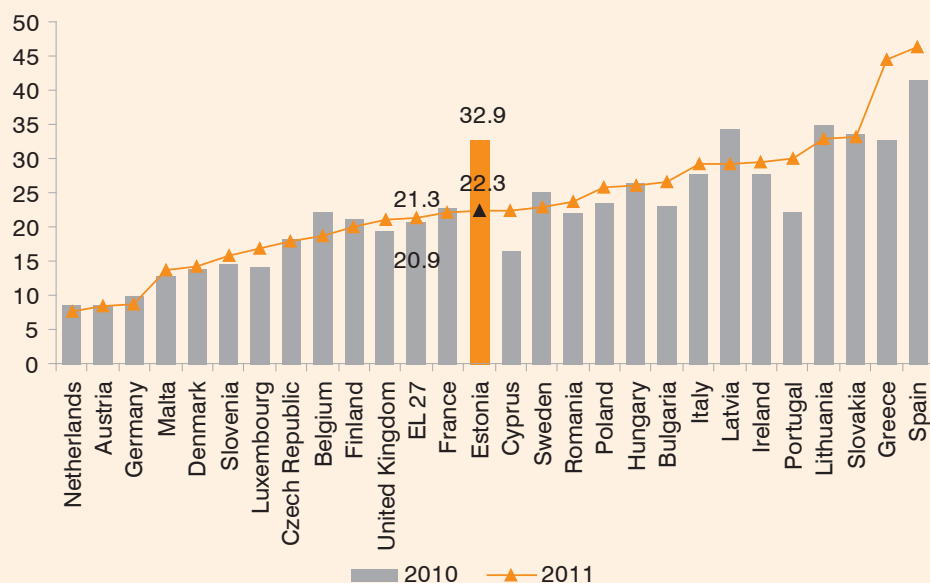
Source: Eurostat

proportion of part-time employed persons was the lowest in Bulgaria (2.3%) (See Figure 1.4).

High unemployment rate is still a problem in the EU countries. In the second half of 2010 there were signs of economic recovery and unemployment decreased in many countries. However, unemployment started to increase again as of the second quarter of 2011. At the beginning of 2011

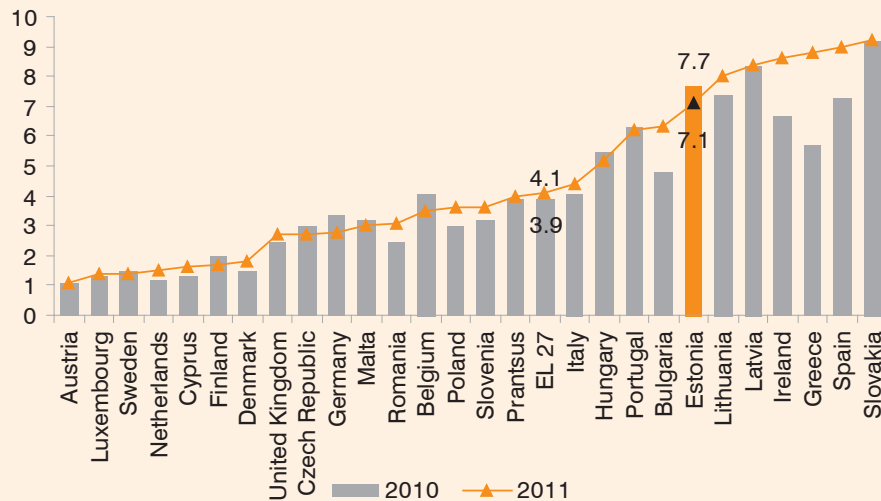
there were 22.7 million unemployed persons in the EU countries; by the end of the year the number was nearly 24 million. The average employment rate of the EU was 9.6% in both 2010 and 2011. In 2011 unemployment rate was the highest in Spain (21.7%) and Greece. Unemployment rate was the lowest in Austria, Netherlands and Luxembourg where less than 5% of labour force were unemployed. The biggest increase in the unemployment

Figure 1.6. Unemployment rate of persons aged 15–24 in 2010 and 2011 (%)



Source: Eurostat

Figure 1.7. Long-term unemployment rate in 2010 and 2011 (%)



Source: Eurostat

rate was in Greece (from 12.6% to 17.7%) and the biggest decrease in Estonia (from 16.9% to 12.5%) where only in 2010 the increase in the unemployment rate had been the fastest. Unemployment rates also decreased quickly in the other two Baltic countries which had also seen a big increase in unemployment in the previous year.

Increase in unemployment has brought along an increase in the unemployment of young persons, both among men and women. In 2011, the unemployment rate of young persons was 21.3% which is the highest in the last decade. In one year the unemployment rate of young persons increased by 0.4 percentage points (Figure 1.6). Just like general unemployment, the fastest increase in the unemployment rate of young persons was in Greece and the fastest decrease in Estonia. Unemployment rate varies from 7.6% in the Netherlands to 46.4% in Spain. Although in Estonia the unemployment of young persons decreased by a third in one year and dropped from rank 2 to rank 15, it still exceeds the EU average.

Increase in unemployment lengthened the duration of job-seeking and contributed to the increase in long-term unemployment. 4.1% of workforce have been looking for a job for a year or longer. Long-term unemployment rate is the lowest in Austria (1.1%) and the highest in Slovakia (9.2%). Increase in long-term unemployment was the fast-

est in Greece, Bulgaria, Ireland and Spain; decrease was the fastest in Estonia and Belgium. In Estonia long-term unemployment rate was 7.7% in 2010, ranking third after Slovakia and Latvia. A year later Estonia had fallen to rank 7 while long-term unemployment rate remained the same in Latvia and continued to increase in Lithuania, forming 8% of the workforce (Figure 1.7). However, in Estonia the proportion of long-term unemployed persons among all unemployed persons was one of the highest (56.8%) in 2011, with only Slovakia (67.8%) and Ireland (59.4%) having higher figures. Long-term unemployment among women was the highest in Greece (11.5%), Spain and Slovakia, and among men in Ireland (11.5%), Latvia and Slovakia.

In conclusion we saw that while in 2010 the decrease in the employment rate in Estonia was the biggest and increase in unemployment among the highest, in 2011 the labour market indicators of Estonia have improved significantly faster than those of the rest of the countries. In terms of Estonia we can talk about the biggest increase in employment in the EU, incl. the biggest increase in employment among men and older persons. In 2011 Greece saw the biggest deterioration of labour market indicators; unemployment rate was the highest in Spain.

## 2. Situation of the Estonian labour market in 2010 and 2011

Ülle Marksoo

### 2.1. General trends

2009 and 2010 were difficult years for the labour market of Estonia. Tens of thousands of people lost their jobs because of the global economic and financial crisis. Decrease in employment and increase in unemployment, which had began at the end of 2008, continued all through 2009 and in the first quarter of 2010 when the number of unemployed persons was the highest – 137 000. In two years (I quarter of 2008 vs. I quarter of 2010) the number of employed persons decreased by nearly 108 000 and the number of unemployed persons increased by 103 000. Employment started increasing and unemployment decreasing somewhat as of the second quarter of 2010; likewise, after quite a long time, this period saw positive economic growth. In spite of that the average employment rate of persons aged 20–64 was the lowest ever in 2010 (66.4%).

The positive changes in economy that were first observed in the second half of 2010 continued in 2011. Jobs lost during the crisis were recovered and employment increased faster than predicted. In one year the number of employed persons increased by ca 38 000 and the number of unemployed persons decreased by ca 29 000. According to the data provided by the Labour Force Survey of Statistics Estonia, in 2011 there were 609 100 employed persons, 86 800 unemployed persons and 333 800 inactive persons among the 15–74 age group in Estonia. The average employment rate of the year was 70.1% and unemployment rate 12.5%. Compared to 2010 the employment rate increased by 3.7 percentage points and the unemployment rate decreased by 4.4 percentage points. Employment and unemployment rates were more favourable also when compared to those of the year 2009.

**Table 2.1. Main indicators of the labour market and population by employment status, 2008–2011**

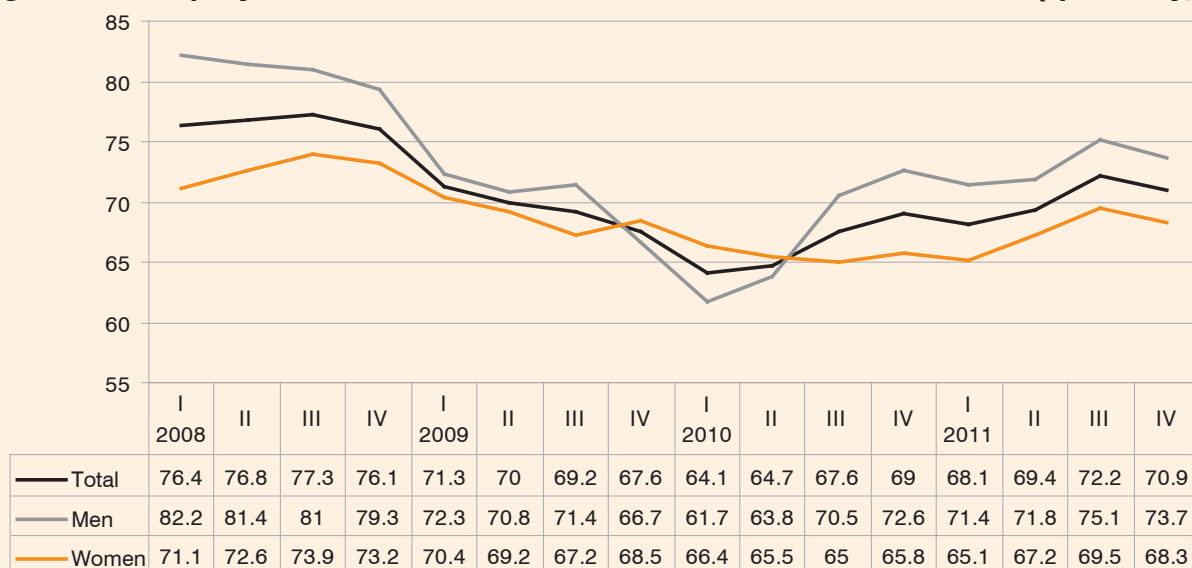
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Growth of GDP, %	-3.7	-14.3	2.3	7.6
Employment growth, %	0.2	-9.2	-4.2	6.7
Population aged 15–74, thousands	1042.8	1038.8	1034.8	1029.8
Employed persons, thousands	656.5	595.8	570.9	609.1
men	330.9	288.1	275.1	301.4
women	325.6	307.7	295.8	307.7
Unemployed persons, thousands	38.4	95.1	115.9	86.8
men	20.2	58.5	66.5	45.6
women	18.1	36.5	49.4	41.3
Inactive persons, thousands	347.9	348	348	333.8
men	136.7	139.7	143.1	136.1
women	211.2	208.3	204.8	197.8
Activity rate <sup>5</sup> (aged 15–64), %	73.6	73.6	73.4	74.4
Employment rate <sup>6</sup> (aged 20–64), %	76.6	69.5	66.4	70.1
Unemployment rate <sup>7</sup> (aged 15–74), %	5.5	13.8	16.9	12.5

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

<sup>5</sup> Activity rate – proportion of the labour force (employed and unemployed persons) in the population aged 15–64.

<sup>6</sup> Employment rate – proportion of employed persons in the population aged 20–64.

<sup>7</sup> Unemployment rate – proportion of unemployed persons in the labour force in the population aged 15–74.

Figure 2.1. **Employment rate of men and women from 2008 to 2011 (quarterly, %)**

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Proportion of persons active on the labour market increased as well, being the highest since 1992 (74.4%).

When we compare employment trends of men and women during economic crisis (Figure 2.1) we can see that the employment rate of men dropped very low very quickly (below 70% for the first time) and was even below the employment rate of women in three quarters (IV quarter of 2009 – II quarter of 2010). This was mainly due to the shrinking of sectors that employed mostly men (construction, manufacturing). When the economy started to recover these sectors where the first to see creation of new jobs. The number of employed persons increased in 2011 among both men and women but it was especially noticeable among men who formed over ⅔ of employment increase. Thus it

can be said that the employment of men changed more than that of women during the crisis. The average employment rate for men in 2011 was 73% which exceeded that of 2009. Employment rate of women increased to 67.5% but did not exceed the rate of 2009.

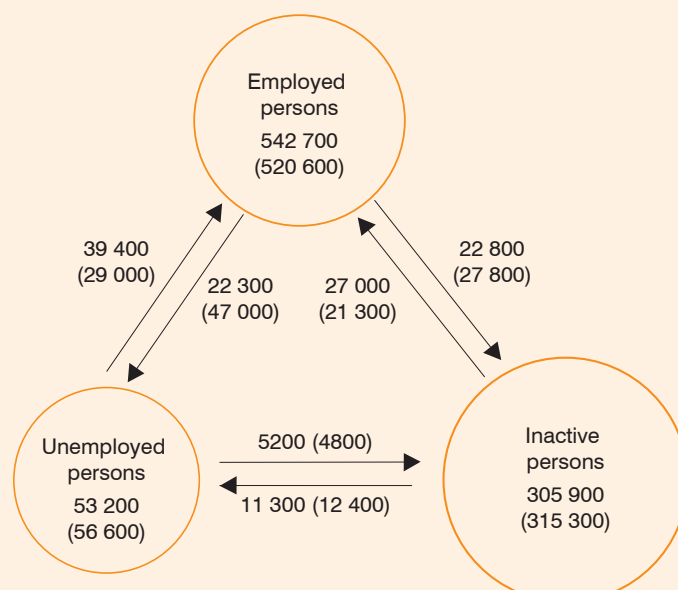
Changes in employment have been very different in different regions. In 2008–2011 the employment rate decreased in all counties while Hiiu County saw the biggest drop (from 86.7% to 71.8%). In 2011 the employment rate was the highest in Harju County (75%), Viljandi County (72.8%) and Lääne County (71.3%). Compared to 2010, employment decreased only in Järva County and Valga County. Valga County was the only county with employment rate below 60% (58.6%).

## 2.2. Movements between employment statuses

Here we shall analyse the movement of persons of working age (aged 15-74) between three employment statuses – employment, unemployment and inactivity. In order to receive data about the number of movements, the employment statuses of persons will be compared in the Labour Force Sur-

vey as of the moment of the survey and with the status in the same month last year.<sup>8</sup> Generally, during a period of economic growth, movement from employment to employment is more common and movement from employment to unemployment is less common. During recession, however, move-

<sup>8</sup> Movement is defined as a change of status compared to the same month of the previous year. Average movement per year = sum (January-January, February-February, ...)/12

Figure 2.2. **Movements between employment statuses, 2009–2010 and 2010–2011**

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

ment to unemployment increases. The analysis of changes of statuses indicates that current economic crisis has strongly affected the mobility of labour force. Figure 2.2 shows the changes in employment statuses in 2009–2010 (numbers in brackets) and in 2010–2011.

The figure indicates that about 543,000 persons stayed employed in 2010–2011. 40,600 of them had changed jobs. While in 2009–2010 movement from employment to unemployment exceeded movement from unemployment to employment by ca 25,000, the situation had changed by 2010–2011: movement to employment was bigger than movement from employment. The number of per-

sons moving from employment to unemployment was more than two times smaller than in the previous year which clearly indicates that the situation of the labour market is improving. In one year 39,400 persons came to employment from among the unemployed and 27,000 persons from among the inactive. All in all, the number of persons moving to employment exceeded that of persons leaving employment by more than 21,000. Movement from unemployment to inactivity increased somewhat, this is also indicated by the increase in the number of discouraged persons, but in general the number of unemployed and inactive persons decreased in 2011 and the number of employed persons increased.

## 2.3. Employment

### Economic activities

Impact of economic crisis on the structure of economic activities is shown in Tables 2.2 and 2.3. The number of employed persons decreased by 85,600 in 2008–2010, mostly in construction (33,100), manufacturing (26,600) and trade (12,500). In 2011 the number of employed persons increased by 38,200 due to better economic conditions whereas over 60% of the increase in employment

was formed by manufacturing and construction, i.e. activities where the number of employees was reduced most during the crisis. Increase in foreign demand and export growth ensured creation of new jobs and recovery of employment. In addition to the abovementioned activities the number of employed persons increased by 4000–5000 in transportation and storage as well as in informa-

Table 2.2. Proportion of employed persons by economic sectors, 2008–2011 (%)

	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100
Primary sector	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.4
Secondary sector	35.4	31.7	30.5	32.5
Tertiary sector	60.7	64.3	65.3	63.0

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Table 2.3. Employed persons by economic activities, 2008–2011 (thousands)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change 2008/ 2010	Change 2010/ 2011
<b>Total</b>	656.5	595.8	570.9	609.1	-85.6	38.2
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	25.3	24	24.1	26.9	-1.2	2.8
Mining	6	6.4	6.9	6.1	0.9	-0.8
Manufacturing	135	113.8	108.4	121	-26.6	12.6
Electricity, gas, steam, conditioned air supply	8.2	7.7	8.7	8.2	0.5	-0.5
Water supply; sewerage; waste and pollution management	2.3	2.4	2.3	3.9	0	1.6
Construction	81	58.3	47.9	59	-33.1	11.1
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	92.5	83.2	80	81.3	-12.5	1.3
Transportation and storage	49.9	49.7	43.6	48.3	-6.3	4.7
Accommodation and food service activities	23.6	20.1	19.4	19.2	-4.2	-0.2
Information and communication	15.3	14.3	12.4	16.7	-2.9	4.3
Financial and insurance activities	10.4	11.4	9.4	10.2	-1.0	0.8
Real estate activities	10.2	9.2	10.1	10.4	-0.1	0.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	20.5	20.5	21.2	23.3	0.7	2.1
Administrative and supportive activities	17.3	16.8	18.9	17.1	1.6	-1.8
Public administration and defence; compulsory social insurance	38.4	36.7	40.4	40.3	2.0	-0.1
Education	59.9	62.5	56.1	57.2	-3.8	1.1
Human health and social work activities	31.1	33	34.6	35.5	3.5	0.9
Arts, entertainment and recreation	14.8	14.2	14.7	14.3	-0.1	-0.4
Other activities	14.8	11.5	11.9	10.3	-2.9	-1.6

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

tion and communication. Increase and decrease in the rest of the activities were significantly smaller and did not exceed two thousand.

All in all, in 2008–2011 the proportion of primary sector increased by 0.5 percentage points and that of tertiary sector by 2.3 percentage points. The proportion of secondary sector had decreased by 2.9 percentage points.

## Occupations

In terms of occupations the number of white-collar jobs<sup>9</sup> has started to increase among employed persons. In 2011 the percentage of persons in white-collar jobs was 47% and blue-collar jobs<sup>10</sup> 53%. The number of women at white-collar occupations is bigger than that of men (56% and 38% respectively). In 2008–2010 the number of skilled work-

<sup>9</sup> White-collar occupations: legislators, higher officials and managers; professionals; associate professionals and technicians; clerks.

<sup>10</sup> Blue-collar occupations: service workers and shop and market sales workers; skilled workers in agriculture and fishing; craft and related trade workers; plant and machine operators and assemblers; elementary occupations; armed forces.

Table 2.4. Employed persons by group of occupation, 2008–2011 (thousands)

	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Major groups of occupations, total</b>	656.5	595.8	570.9	609.1
Managers	69.7	64.1	61.2	54.9
Professionals	89.9	96.5	114.1	118.9
Technicians and associate professionals	89.1	83.6	62	78.3
Clerks	31.1	29.1	29.9	33.1
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	92.7	85.7	82.1	80.7
Skilled workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing	12.2	9.1	10.5	12.1
Skilled workers and craft workers	114.2	88.9	81.1	94.2
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	92.0	82.1	73.9	79.4
Elementary occupations	62.2	53.8	52.8	55.4
Armed forces	3.4	2.9	3.3	2.1

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

ers and craft workers (-33,100) as well as plant and machine operators (-18,100) decreased the most (Table 2.4). Increase in the number of jobs in 2011 had a positive effect mostly on the number of technicians and associate professionals (increased by 16,300) which had dropped very low in 2010, and on the number of skilled workers and craft workers

(increased by ca 13,000). Decrease was the smallest in the number of managers (-6300). The only major group of occupation where employment has continued to increase over the last four years is the group of professionals (+29,000). The number of clerks has also increased in comparison to 2008.

## 2.4. Unemployment

Following the recession the number of unemployed persons in Estonia increased by nearly three times in 2008–2010 (Table 2.1). Unemployment remained high in 2011 but, compared to 2010, decreased by 25%, i.e. from 115,900 to 86,800. Rapid decrease in unemployment was due to improved economic conditions accompanied by greater demand for labour force and creation of jobs. Another aspect that helped decrease unemployment was working abroad whereas more than half of those employed abroad work in Finland. According to the data from the Labour Force Survey, the number of persons living in Estonia and working abroad in 2011 was 21,600.

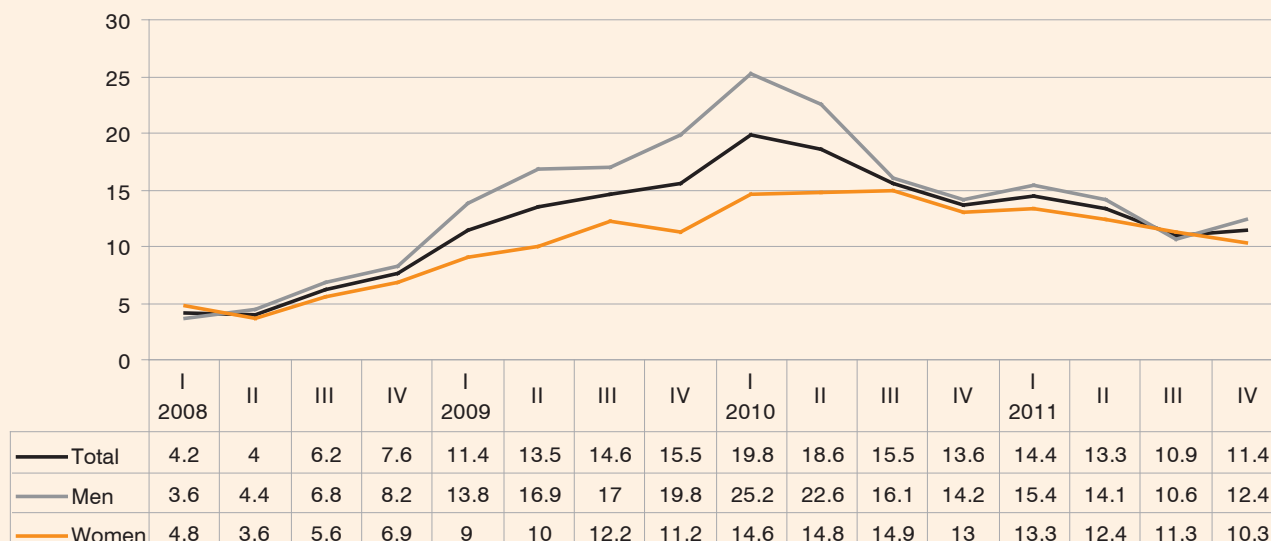
As construction and manufacturing were the areas that saw a rapid increase in jobs, unemployment of men decreased faster than that of women. Unemployment of men reached the peak level in the first quarter of 2010 (unemployment rate 25.2%) and for women the same happened in the third quarter of 2010 (14.9%). Unemployment started to decrease

rapidly as of the second half of 2010. By the end of 2011 unemployment of men had decreased by half and that of women by nearly a third (Figure 2.3).

In terms of age groups the biggest number of unemployed persons in both 2010 and 2011 belonged to the 20–24 and 25–29 age group as well as 45–49 age group. The same age groups have seen the biggest number of unemployed persons in the past. Unemployment of young persons has always been higher than that of other age groups but the last economic crisis was especially hard on them (Figure 2.4).

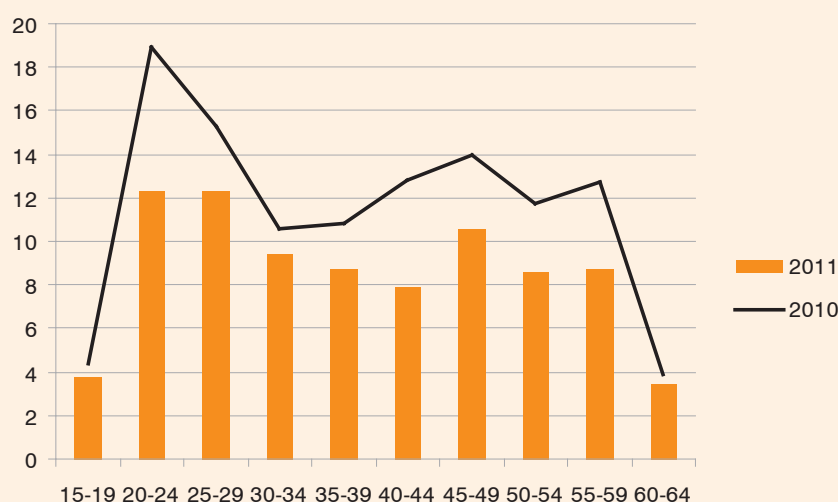
According to the 2011 data, 87% of unemployed persons had been employed before becoming unemployed and 13% had not been previously employed (mostly graduates or non-working pupils/students). The main reason for becoming unemployed was the loss of work, either due to lay-off, bankruptcy of company or redundancy (60%). 19% of unemployed persons left employment on their own initiative. Most unemployed persons

Figure 2.3. Unemployment rate of men and women, 2008–2011 (quarterly, %)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Figure 2.4. Number of unemployed persons by age groups, 2010–2011 (thousands)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

(72%) used to have blue-collar jobs (skilled workers and craft workers, machine operators, elementary occupations) while employed persons held 53% of said jobs. Thus it can be said that blue-collar workers were more affected by redundancies during recession than white-collar workers.

As the number of persons with lower positions is significantly bigger among unemployed persons, the overall level of education of unemployed persons is below the average. At the same time, insuffi-

cient education is one of the main factors to hinder finding employment. For persons with low level of education finding a job is several times less likely than it is for persons with higher education; however, during recession the number of unemployed persons with higher education has increased as well. The higher the person's level of education, the more active he or she is in working life. Impact of the level of education on employment and unemployment rates of persons of working age is illustrated in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5. **Activity rate, employment rate and unemployment rate by ISCED levels of education<sup>11</sup>, 2010–2011 (aged 16 to retirement, %)**

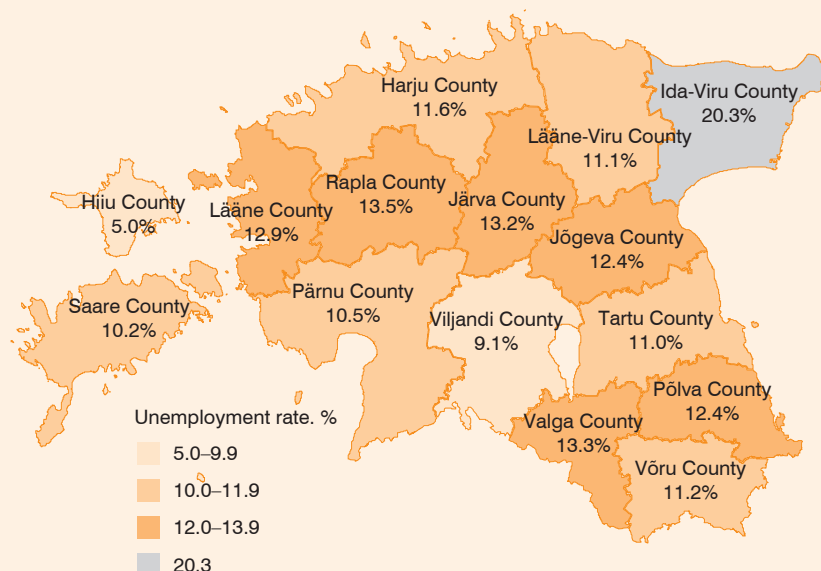
	Activity rate		Employment rate		Unemployment rate	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>	76.1	76.9	62.7	67.0	17.6	12.9
I level	42.5	46.5	28.5	33.6	32.8	27.8
II level	80.3	80.4	64.3	69.9	19.9	13.1
III level	88.3	87.7	79.9	80.4	9.5	8.3

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Regional differences in unemployment rate in Estonia are huge. Differences between the unemployment rates of counties had decreased as recession deepened but in 2010 the differences started to increase again and in 2011 there was a fourfold difference between the biggest and the smallest unemployment rate. Over the years the unemployment rate has been the highest in Ida-Viru County and it was the only county where unemployment exceeded 20% in 2011. Unemployment rate was also high in Rapla County, Järva County and Valga County, where the respective indicator was over 13%. Unemployment rate was the lowest (5%) in Hiiu County. Compared to 2010 unemployment decreased in nearly all counties with the exception

of Saare County. Decrease in unemployment was the biggest in Lääne County where the unemployment rate decreased from 22.3% to 12.9% in one year. In Jõgeva County, which has so far been a county with a very high unemployment rate, next to Ida-Viru County, unemployment decreased by more than a third.

Increase in long-term unemployment is a negative side effect of an economic crisis. Over the last few years duration of job-seeking has significantly lengthened and in 2011 more than half of unemployed persons (57%) had been looking for a job for a year or longer. As it is easier to find a job for those who have been looking for a job for a shorter

Figure 2.5. **Unemployment rate by counties in 2011 (%)**

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

<sup>11</sup> ISCED levels of education: I level – primary education, basic education, vocational education for young persons without basic education; II level – secondary education, vocational education on the basis of basic education, secondary specialised education on the basis of basic education, vocational education on the basis of basic education, vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education; III level – secondary specialised education on the basis of secondary education, academic education, professional higher education, doctor.

period than for persons who have been absent from the labour market for a longer period of time, the number of unemployed persons who find it difficult to return to the labour market is increas-

ing. Situation of long-term unemployed persons and other risk groups on the labour market (young persons, older persons, non-Estonians) is analysed in detail in Chapter 4.

## 2.5. Inactivity

Inactive persons are persons who are neither employed nor looking for a job for some reason. In 2011, there were ca 197,000 inactive persons in the age group from 16 years to retirement age, which is 6700 less than in 2010. The decrease was mostly due to the decrease by ca 8000 of the 15–24 age group. The number of pupils decreased for the same reason.

The reasons for not being employed mainly depend on the sex and age of a person. Studies, health and parental leave are the dominant reasons among persons of working age. Discouragement is distinguished as a separate reason. Discouraged persons are persons who would like to work but have given up looking for a job. The number of discouraged persons has increased somewhat but is still over two times smaller than the indicator in 2001 following the previous crisis.

The main reason for inactivity of persons of working age (16 years to retirement age) is studies (46%). 87% of persons of 15–24 of age are inactive because

of studies. The number of students over 25 of age has increased and this indicates that upon not finding work unemployed persons have decided to carry on with their studies. The main reason for inactivity among persons aged 25–49 is pregnancy, maternity or parental leave (43%). Persons over 50 years of age are inactive mostly because of an illness. Approximately 41,000 persons (21% of inactive persons) were not in the labour market due to an illness, injury or disability.

In conclusion we saw that the most difficult period of the global economic crisis was at the beginning of 2010. In the middle of 2010, as the economic conditions improved, demand for labour force started to increase and this brought along a rapid increase in employment and decrease in unemployment. The same trends were observed throughout 2011. The Ministry of Finance predicts that employment shall continue to increase and unemployment decrease<sup>12</sup> in 2012 and 2013 but it will happen more slowly from now on.

Table 2.6. Reasons for inactivity by age groups, 2010–2011 (thousands)

	15–24		25–49		50–74		16 years to retirement age	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>	117.2	108.2	54.5	53.3	176.3	172.4	203.6	196.9
Studies	103.1	94.1	2.5	4.9	...*	...	94.5	89.7
Illness or injury	1.7	1.7	16.1	14.9	32.8	33.7	43.7	41.3
Pregnancy, maternity or parental leave	6.2	4.9	22.9	22.8	...	...	29.2	27.7
Need to care for children or other family members	1.4	1.4	6.3	4.7	3.4	3.5	9.6	8.4
Retirement age	...	...	...	...	133.3	125.1	10.1	10.6
Discouraged persons (lost hope for finding a job)	1.4	1.6	4.4	3.8	3	4.6	8.2	8.8
Other reasons	3.4	4.5	2.3	2.2	3.1	4.9	8.2	10.4

\* Assessments based on a sample of less than 20 persons are not reliable to be published.

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

<sup>12</sup> Spring 2012 Macroeconomic Forecast of the Ministry of Finance of Estonia.

# 3. Organisation of work and remuneration

Liina Malk

## 3.1. Organisation of work

Organisation of work describes how work is organised, i.e. the diversity of work formats and what kind of work is done by employees. This section provides an overview of various work formats and organisation of working time in the organisations of Estonia. Both fixed-term and part-time work is described. Attention is paid to the various aspects of the organisation of working time – average working time, overtime and timing of working time. To describe the spatial organisation of work we shall analyse the use of remote work formats in organisations.

To describe the organisation of work we shall observe the principal job of employees, i.e. in the case of many jobs the one where the worker works for most hours. Employees are persons who are employed by an enterprise, institution or other employer full-time or part-time for which they receive payment in money or in kind. It is not relevant whether this job has been officially registered. According to the Labour Force Survey of Statistics Estonia, in 2011 91.6% of employed persons, i.e. 557,700 workers, were employees.

### 3.1.1. Fixed-term work

Agreement for work between the employee and employer may be concluded without a term or for a fixed term. In the case of a fixed-term agreement a specific term or another condition shall be agreed upon so as to determine the end of employment. The term of work may be fixed in an employment contract, by an oral agreement or determined in another manner (e.g. seasonal work, replacement of employee when he or she is absent or in case of a selected position). Pursuant to the Employment Contracts Act (See §9 of the Employment Contracts Act, RT I 2009, 5, 35), fixed-term employment contract may be concluded for a term of up to five years if it is justified by good reasons arising from the temporary fixed-term characteristics of work, e.g. temporary duties, participation in a fixed-term project, seasonal nature of work, temporary increase in work volume, replacement of an absent worker. Temporary agreements may also be made for specific work in the case of an employment contract under the Law of Obligations.

According to Statistics Estonia, in 2011 4.5% of all employees considered their work to be fixed-term work. Table 3.1 below illustrates the trend of fixed-term employment in 2008–2011. It is clear

that fixed-term employment has become more common over the last few years. On the one hand, this could be due to the economic crisis which decreased the confidence of employers and their wish to manage economic risks related to the conclusion of long-term employment contracts. On the other hand, this increase could be attributed to the entry into force of a new Employment Contracts Act on 1 July 2009. While the old legislation laid down six underlying reasons for concluding a fixed-term employment contract, the new Act abandoned this formally exclusive list and thus improved opportunities for reaching agreements upon the conclusion of fixed-term employment contracts. When analysing the proportion of fixed-term employment in terms of gender, it becomes clear that it is more common among men.

**Table 3.1. Proportion of fixed-term work among employees, 2008–2011 (%)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>	2.4	2.5	3.7	4.5
Men	3.4	3	4.7	5.4
Women	1.4	2	2.8	3.6

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

When characterising fixed-term work it is relevant to observe which party to the employment relationship has chosen this work format for the employee to work in this manner. According to the evaluations of the employees with the fixed-term contract in 2011 58% of respondents said they do not consider it important whether the employment relationship is concluded without a specific term or for a fixed term, both are satisfactory. 11% prefers fixed-term employment and 31% would like to conclude an employment contract without a specific term but have not been successful. Compared to 2008, the proportion of persons who are happy with both fixed-term employment and employment without a term has increased and the number of persons preferring fixed-term employment

has decreased. The number of employees who preferred employment without a term increased in 2009 but started decreasing after that and had returned to the level of 2008 by 2011.

Compared to the other countries of the European Union, fixed-term employment is not very common in Estonia. 14.1% of the employees of the 27 Member States of the European Union were in fixed-term employment in 2011 (Eurostat data). Neither is fixed-term employment common in the neighbour countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – proportion of employees with a fixed-term contract in 2011 was 6.5% and 2.8%, respectively. In Finland, however, the percentage of fixed-term employees is 15.6%.

### 3.1.2. Part-time work

Part-time work is a shorter working time than the standard for working time imposed by the employer that will be implemented on the agreement of the employed person and the employer (also see § 43 of the Employment Contracts Act). Employers wish to use the format of part-time work when the volume of certain work duties is not big enough to require a full-time job and worker to perform them. Employed persons wish to use part-time work to ensure better reconciliation of work and private life activities (studies, family-related obligations).

Although it is nationally stipulated that the duration of part-time work is less than 40 hours per seven days, the following description adheres to the definition of labour force survey, developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), according to which part-time workers are workers whose regular working time is less than 35 hours per week. Thus, to provide a description of part-time work, it is relevant to determine the proportion of employees who claim to work less than 35 hours a week.

Table 3.2 shows that approximately one tenth of employees are working part-time. Among women, young persons and older persons the proportion of part-time workers is higher; this can be explained

by their wish to bring together working, family and private life. Looking at the trend of part-time work it can be seen that there was an increase in 2009 and from there on the indicator has remained in more or less the same level. This could be related to the recession which started to influence the labour market in 2009. The recession reduced demand for the production and undertakings were trying to find ways to cut expenses in order to get through the difficult times, this was done, among other things, by reducing working time.

**Table 3.2. Proportion of part-time workers among employees, 2008–2011 (%)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>	6.6	9.9	10.2	9.8
Men	3.3	6.1	6.2	4.3
Women	9.7	13.1	13.8	14.8
People aged 15–24	12.4	17	21	16.2
People aged 25–49	4.1	7.1	6.5	6.3
People aged 50–74	9.4	12.9	14.5	14.6

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

According to the 2011 Labour Force Survey, 19.9% part-time workers are working part-time because of studies, 5.1% because of health problems or disability, 5.5% because of the need of taking care of children or family members, and 20.4% do not wish

to work full-time. Approximately 57% of part-time workers name personal or family-related reasons for using this work format. The rest, i.e. 43% of part-time workers mention the economic activities of the employer and organisation of work, such as lack of jobs or lack of full-time jobs. Looking at the reasons given for part-time work, it can be clearly seen that increase in part-time employment is related to recession. For example, in 2008, 14% of employed persons mentioned lack of jobs and economic difficulties of the employer as reasons for part-time work; by 2010, however, the same indicator was 26% and in 2011, the abovementioned reason formed 22.5% of all reasons given for part-time work.

Employer's choices upon the organisation of work are often related to the economic activity and the work of employees. Below we shall give an overview of the proportion of part-time work by the occupation of employees (Table 3.3) and by the economic activity of the enterprise or institution (Table 3.4) in 2011.

The number of part-time workers is significantly bigger among elementary occupations, clerks and professionals. In terms of sectors of activity, part-time work is more common in real estate activities, administrative and supportive activities, and in arts, entertainment and recreation. Thus it can be said that part-time work is most common in tertiary sector.

Eurostat relies on definition by the workers themselves whether the work being performed on their principal job is part-time or full-time work when assessing the proportion of part-time employees by country since legislation concerning the standard of working time differs from country to country. According to Eurostat, the proportion of part-time workers among employed persons in Estonia was 10.6% in 2011, and 19.4% in the 27 Member States of the European Union. In Latvia and Lithuania, the proportion of part-time workers was 9.2% and

8.6%, respectively, and in Finland 14.9%. Compared to the average of the rest of the Europe, part-time work is less common in Estonia.

**Table 3.3. Proportion of part-time workers among employees by occupation, 2011**

Occupation	%
Professionals	14.0
Technicians and associate professionals	11.8
Clerks	14.6
Service workers and sales workers	12.7
Skilled workers and craft workers	2.9
Elementary occupations	22.0
Other occupations	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

**Table 3.4. Proportion of part-time workers among employees by economic activities, 2011**

Economic activity	%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	8.9
Manufacturing	3.1
Construction	2.3
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	9.0
Transportation and storage	4.2
Accommodation and food service activities	18.1
Information and communication	11.5
Real estate activities	45.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	16.9
Administrative and supportive activities	23.8
Public administration and defence; compulsory social insurance	3.7
Education	20.1
Human health and social work activities	17.5
Arts, entertainment and recreation	19.8
Other activities	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

### 3.1.3. Working time

Organisation of work is also characterised by the fact how much time is spent on working and when the work is carried out, i.e. timing of work. In the next

two sections we shall address the amount of working time, including overtime, and timing of work.

### 3.1.3.1. Amount of working time and overtime

Organisation of working time is characterised by the amount of working hours. To determine the amount of working hours at a person's principal job, his or her average working time per week is observed (see Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5. Average working time of employees, 2008–2011 (hours per week)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total employees</b>	39.4	38.7	38.7	38.7
Part-time employees	20.7	21.6	21.3	21.0
Full-time employees	40.8	40.6	40.7	40.6
Men	40.6	39.9	40.0	40.1
Women	38.2	37.6	37.6	37.5
Estonians	39.3	38.8	38.7	38.7
Non-Estonians	39.7	38.5	38.8	38.9
People aged 15–24	38.7	37.4	36.4	37.2
People aged 25–49	39.9	39.4	39.5	39.5
People aged 50–74	38.8	37.8	37.7	37.7

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

It appears from Table 3.5 that the amount of working hours of employees has been relatively stable over the last four years. On the average, part-time workers work for 21 hours a week and full-time workers 40.6 hours a week.

The amount of working time differs somewhat by gender and age. While men work an average of 40.1 hours a week, the average working time of women is 37.5 hours. This can be explained by a bigger proportion of women among part-time workers. For the same reason, the amount of working hours per week is less than the average for younger persons and older persons.

Compared to the European countries it can be seen that in 2011 the weekly working time of Estonian employees was similar to that of our neighbour states of Latvia and Lithuania where the number of working hours per week was 38.8 hours and 38.2 hours, respectively. However, in Finland the average working time per week was 36.5 hours and in

the 27 Member States of the European Union 36.4 hours. Thus it is clear that in Estonia the working week is somewhat longer than the European Union average.

In terms of working time it is also important to address overtime, i.e. working more than the standard agreed on by the employer and the employee. There is need for overtime if in addition to the working hours agreed on in the contract a certain amount of additional work has to be performed. Proportion of persons working overtime among employees is shown in Table 3.6 below.

**Table 3.6. Proportion of overtime work among employees, 2008–2011 (%)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>	6.9	8.9	10.5	10.1
Men	6.4	8.3	11.1	10.2
Women	7.3	9.4	10	10.0
People aged 15–24	7.6	10.6	15.6	11.9
People aged 25–49	6.2	8.4	9.6	10.5
People aged 50–74	7.9	9.2	10.7	8.7
Estonians	6.2	8.6	10.3	8.5
Non-Estonians	8.3	9.5	10.8	13.4

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

It can be seen from Table 3.6 that recession brought along an increase in the proportion of persons performing overtime. While in 2008–2009 the majority of persons performing overtime were female workers, then in 2010 the male workers were in majority and in 2011 there were no substantial differences in comparison in terms of gender. In terms of age the proportion of overtime has always been bigger among young persons. In comparison nationalities, the share of workers doing overtime is higher among non-Estonians and although in 2009–2010 the gap between Estonians and non-Estonians decreased, it started increasing again in 2011 and reached almost 5 percentage points.

In comparison of positions, the biggest proportion of persons performing overtime were among service workers and sales workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and clerks and elementary workers (see Table 3.7). In comparison of activities the proportion of overtime is signifi-

cantly bigger in accommodation and food service activities, human health and social work activities, and transportation and storage (see Table 3.8).

**Table 3.7. Proportion of overtime work among employees by occupation, 2011 (%)**

Occupation	Proportion of salaried workers, %
Managers	6.1
Professionals	4.3
Technicians and associate professionals	8.0
Clerks	11.6
Service workers and sales workers	22.1
Skilled workers and craft workers	7.7
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	11.9
Elementary occupations	11.6
Other occupations	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.1</b>

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

**Table 3.8. Proportion of overtime work among employees by economic activities, 2011 (%)**

Economic activity	Proportion of salaried workers, %
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	14.3
Manufacturing	9.2
Construction	6.7
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	13.8
Transportation and storage	15.4
Accommodation and food service activities	19.5
Public administration and defence; compulsory social insurance	7.5
Human health and social work activities	17.4
Other activities	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.1</b>

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

In conclusion it can be said that although regular working time per week did not change much during recession, performing overtime is an increasing trend. This could be due to the fact that employers had to reduce the number of employees in order to cut expenses on workforce, and the distribution of

duties of the employees who left could have contributed to the need for temporary overtime for the remaining workers.

### 3.1.3.2. Timing of working time

In order to characterise the organisation of working time, we will also observe the timing of working time, i.e. at what time the workers are working. In terms of employment relationships, it is important to analyse working on unusual working hours - that is in the evening, at night and on weekends. Table 3.9 below shows the proportion of employees who, in four consecutive weeks, have worked at least once in the evening, at night, on Saturday or Sunday.

Working on unusual working hours has become more common in Estonia in the last few years. The biggest increase has been in working in the evenings. While in 2008 35.6% of employees worked in the evenings, in 2011 the respective number was 38.8%. One of the reasons behind this can be the Employment Contracts Act, entered into force in the middle of 2009, which no longer distinguished working in the evenings and additional remuneration for it, which in turn may have motivated employers to increase the use of working time in the evenings. Additional remuneration paid to night workers increased, however, and this may have motivated employees to work at night, which contributed to the proportion of working at night. In comparison by gender, the number of employees working in the evenings and at night was bigger among men; in terms of age the proportion was bigger among younger persons.

When compared to the average of the 27 Member States of the European Union, Estonia differs from the rest in terms of both working in the evenings and at night. In 2010, 39.2% of employees in Estonia worked in the evenings while in the European Union the respective indicator was 35%, in Latvia and Lithuania even less – 32.3% and 28.7%, respectively. In Finland, the proportion of persons working in the evenings is as high as 42.4%. Compared to the rest of the Member States of the European Union, the number of night workers is smaller in Estonia. In 2010, 13.4% of employees in Estonia worked at night while in the European Union the average indi-

cator was 15.1%, in Finland 14.1% and in Latvia and Lithuania 13.6% and 11.9%, respectively.

According to data from 2010, the proportion of employees working on Saturdays is 35.4% in Estonia while more than 41.6% of employees in the Member States of the European Union have worked on Saturdays. In Latvia the proportion of employees working on Saturdays is 35.8%, in Lithuania 36.5% and in Finland 30.6%. In 2010, 24.4% of the employees in the Member States of the Euro-

pean Union worked on Sundays while in Estonia the respective indicator was higher – 25.9%. In Latvia, Lithuania and Finland, the proportions of employees working on Sundays are 24.3%, 23.8% and 23.1%, respectively. Thus, compared to the Member States of the European Union, the number of persons working in the evenings and on Sundays is somewhat bigger in Estonia while the number of persons working at night and on Saturdays is somewhat smaller.

**Table 3.9. Proportion of working on unusual working hours among employees, 2008–2011 (%)**

		2008	2009	2010	2011
Working in the evening (from 18:00 to 24:00)	<b>Total</b>	35.6	36.0	39.2	38.8
	Men	37.2	39.0	41.1	39.7
	Women	34.1	33.4	37.6	38.0
	People aged 15-24	44.9	45.5	49.2	51.6
	People aged 25-49	34.8	35.1	38.3	38.1
	People aged 50-74	33.6	34.8	38.1	36.1
Working at night (after 00:00 at night)	<b>Total</b>	11.7	13.7	13.4	13.5
	Men	13.3	17.1	16.6	17.1
	Women	10.1	10.8	10.7	10.3
	People aged 15-24	14.2	16.8	16.7	16.5
	People aged 25-49	11.3	13.0	12.5	13.2
	People aged 50-74	11.3	14.1	14.5	13.3
Working on Saturdays	<b>Total</b>	34.2	33.9	35.4	34.5
	Men	33.2	34.2	36.4	34.5
	Women	35.1	33.6	34.5	34.5
	People aged 15-24	44.0	47.5	49.4	44.2
	People aged 25-49	32.8	32.0	33.2	33.9
	People aged 50-74	33.0	32.9	35.8	32.6
Working on Sundays	<b>Total</b>	23.1	25.0	25.9	25.1
	Men	21.0	24.1	25.6	24.2
	Women	25.0	25.8	26.1	25.8
	People aged 15-24	31.6	33.9	39.0	36.3
	People aged 25-49	21.3	22.8	23.6	23.9
	People aged 50-74	23.1	26.2	26.5	23.7

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

### 3.1.4. Remote work

While it is common to perform work on the premises of the enterprise or institution, work can often be organised as remote work, i.e. the employee carries out work outside the regular premises of the employer. For example, remote work may be done

at home or remote office while in contact with the employer via modern information technology and telecommunications equipment. Remote office is a subordinate unit of the undertaking, located in another area, and in contact with the undertaking

via means of information technology and telecommunications. For example, an employee working in the remote office may use a computer to access the undertaking's databases, Intranet, etc. Remote work may be mobile, i.e. the employee is working as he or she moves around while in contact with the enterprise via mobile means of communication and information technology.

Table 3.10 shows the proportion of employees who have used the option of remote work.

**Table 3.10. Proportion of remote work among employees, 2008–2011 (%)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total</b>	4.4	5.8	6.8	6.1
Men	4.6	6.6	8.0	6.4
Women	4.1	5.1	5.8	5.7
People aged 15–24	1.8	4.9	3.9	3.9
People aged 25–49	5.2	7.2	8.4	7.2
People aged 50–74	3.7	3.4	4.4	4.6

Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

It appears that although the proportion of remote work has increased somewhat over the last years, it is still not a very common work format. 6.1% of employed persons used this format in 2011. This format is somewhat more common among male workers and in terms of age, among persons aged 25–49.

Use of the different formats of organisation of work is related to the sector of activity and the occupation of the employed person. The option of remote work is more common among managers (18.9%), professionals (12.7%), and technicians and associate professionals (7.5%). In terms of activities, information and communication, and professional, scientific and technical activities stand out, where the proportions of remote workers are 24.5% and 21.1%, respectively.

Remote work can be full-time or part-time. In the case of full-time remote work the employed person works individually at home or at a remote office without having an actual workplace in the enterprise. In the case of part-time remote work the employed person works individually at home or at a remote office only for a certain amount of time and spends the rest of his or her working time working at the workplace in the enterprise. Thus, in terms of remote work, attention should be paid to the fact how much time salaried workers usually spend on remote work. According to the 2011 Labour Force Survey, nearly half of the employed persons who have used the option of remote work spend less than a quarter of working time on remote work, 20% of employees spend a quarter of their working time on remote work, 8% spend half and 15% three quarters of their working time, and 7% of remote workers perform full-time remote work.

## 3.2. Remuneration

Remuneration is one of the most important conditions of work agreed on by the employee and the employer upon the conclusion of an employment contract. Remuneration is wages paid by the

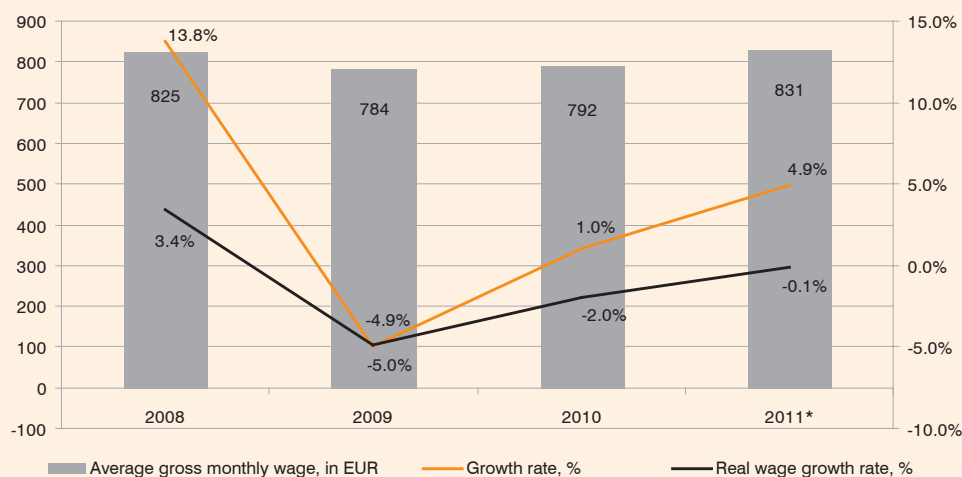
employer to the employee for the performed work according to the contract concluded between the parties of the employment relationship, collective agreement or legislation.

### 3.2.1. Amount of remuneration

In order to characterise the amount of remuneration of employees and the change in it, we shall observe the average gross monthly wages. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the amount of and increase in the average gross monthly wages and of the change in real wages, i.e. wages corrected by consumer price index or the purchasing power of wages.

Average gross wages increased with the growth of economy up until 2008; the economic crisis, however, brought along a decrease in remuneration in 2009. Thus the average gross wages in 2009 were 5% smaller than in 2008; real wages decreased at the same rate. In 2010, remuneration started increasing with the recovery of the economy and in 2011

Figure 3.1. **Average gross monthly wages in 2008–2011**



\* Instead of a yearly average, in 2011 the average of four quarters was used.

Source: Statistics Estonia

Table 3.11. **Average gross monthly wages in 2010 and 2011 by economic activities**

	2010		2011	
	Average gross monthly wages, in EUR	Growth rate compared to the previous period, %	Average gross monthly wages, in EUR	Growth rate compared to the previous period, %
<b>Average of activities</b>	792	1.1	831	4.9
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	668	5.4	695	4
Mining	984	11.6	1083	10
Manufacturing	754	5.2	796	5.6
Electricity, gas, steam, conditioned air supply	1 112	5.1	1188	6.8
Water supply; sewerage; waste and pollution management	807	-1.4	832	3.1
Construction	797	3	834	4.7
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	721	-1.9	790	9.5
Transportation and storage	826	3	830	0.5
Accommodation and food service activities	505	-1.9	514	1.7
Information and communication	1 298	1.3	1332	2.6
Financial and insurance activities	1 319	-9.8	1377	4.4
Real estate activities	541	-14.4	599	10.7
Professional, scientific and technical activities	987	7.9	1024	3.7
Administrative and supportive activities	723	1.3	750	3.7
Public administration and defence; compulsory social insurance	955	-2.6	988	3.5
Education	699	-0.9	712	1.9
Human health and social work activities	799	-3.4	842	5.4
Arts, entertainment and recreation	633	3.2	667	5.3
Other service activities	491	-11.4	464	-5.5

Source: Statistics Estonia

the average gross wages were already 4.9% higher than in 2010. However, as the value of consumer price index was 5% in 2011, real wages continued to show a slight decrease, i.e. -0.1% compared to 2010.

As the economic activity is just as important in terms of remuneration formation as labour productivity and occupation, Table 3.11 shows the average gross monthly wages by economic activities.

Traditionally, wages are the highest in financial intermediation where the average wages reach EUR 1377, and in information and communications with EUR 1332. Wages are the lowest in accommodation and food service activities, EUR 514, and in other service activities, EUR 464. Table 3.11 shows that, recovering from the crisis, increase has been the fastest in the wages in wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, real estate activities and mining.

### 3.2.2. Minimum wage

Pursuant to the Employment Contracts Act, the Government of the Republic shall establish, by a regulation, the minimum wage corresponding to a specific unit of time (hour, month) and wages falling below said minimum wage may not be paid to employees. The objective of established minimum wages is to prevent unfair remuneration of employees and influence the formation of the amount of wages so that it would ensure an income from professional activity required for coping.

Table 3.12 below shall indicate the changes in minimum wages by year. It shows that compared to 2007, minimum wages have increased by EUR 60, i.e. 26%. The majority of this increase (EUR 48), however, is due to the increase in minimum wages in 2008 and an increase of minimum wages

by EUR 12 was established for 2012. In the rest of the years no changes were made to minimum wages because of the economic crisis.

To assess the amount of minimum wages, the minimum wages of Estonia shall be compared to that of our neighbouring countries. In 2012, the minimum wages in Estonia are EUR 290, in Latvia the respective indicator is EUR 286 and in Lithuania, EUR 232. However, if we take a look at the countries that are the destination of the professional migration of Estonians, it is clear that the minimum wages are several times higher over there, e.g. EUR 1462 in Ireland and EUR 1202 in Great Britain in 2012. Of the Member States of the European Union the minimum wages are the lowest in Bulgaria – EUR 138.

**Table 3.12. Minimum wages in 2007–2012**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Minimum wages per hour, in EUR	1.37	1.73	1.73	1.73	1.73	1.80
Minimum wages per month, in EUR	230.08	278.02	278.02	278.02	278.02	290.00
Proportion of minimum monthly wages of average gross monthly wages	31.7%	33.7%	35.5%	35.1%	33.5%	

Source: Regulations of the Government of the Republic „Establishing minimum wages“; Statistics Estonia

## 4. Risk groups on the labour market

Eva Põldis

This chapter will provide an overview of the risk groups whose entry to the labour market is difficult for various reasons and who are more likely to remain unemployed. Four risk groups will be observed – long-term unemployed persons who have been looking for a job for a year or longer; young persons aged 15–24 who are starting an

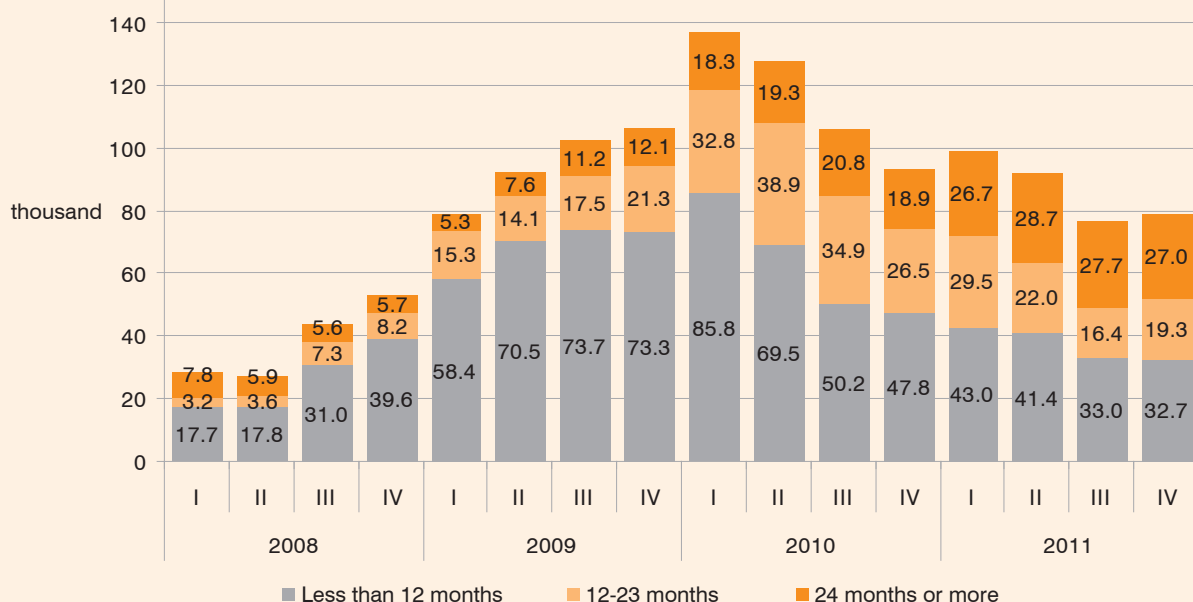
active labour life; older persons aged 55–64; and non-Estonians for whom their insufficient skill in the Estonian language is often the reason of being unemployed.<sup>13</sup> All these groups have several problems upon entering the labour market which is why it is important for employment services to attempt to reduce risk factors and prevent their deepening.

### 4.1. Long-term unemployed persons

Long-term unemployment<sup>14</sup>, increased significantly during the economic crisis as it was difficult for the unemployed persons to return to the labour market due to the lack of jobs. Very long-term unemployment<sup>15</sup>, is about to become a serious problem and this in turn may lead to discouragement<sup>16</sup>. The longer a person is away from the labour market, the harder it is for them to find a job as they lose their work habit and their know-

ledge and skills become out of date. Also, long-term unemployment is often accompanied by several social problems such as low self-esteem and difficulties in coping which in turn increase the likelihood of poverty. Thus, long-term unemployment has a negative effect on both individuals and the society as a whole which is why it is relevant for policy measures to prevent long-term unemployment and alleviate its consequences.

**Figure 4.1. Number of unemployed persons by the duration of unemployment, 2008–2011 (quarterly, thousands)**



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

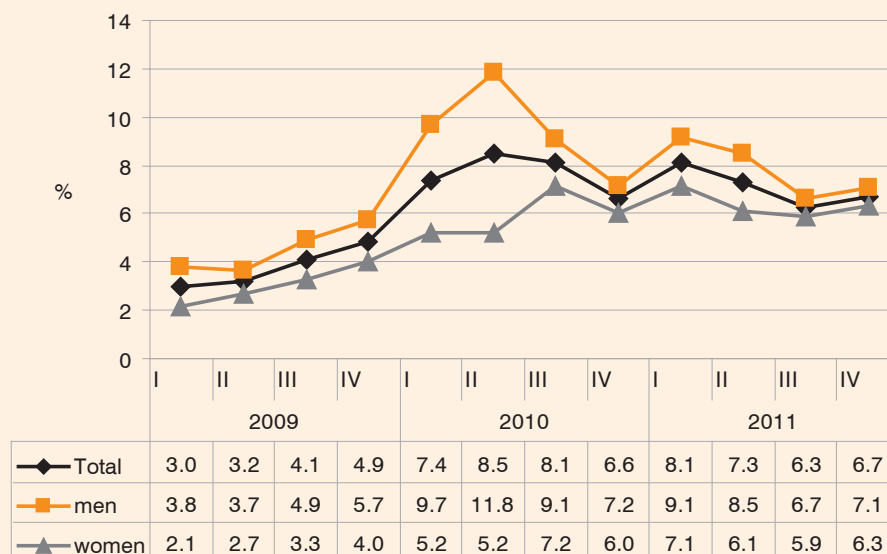
<sup>13</sup> Detailed overview of the risk groups of the labour market can be found on the topic pages of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Series of the Ministry of Social Affairs No. 4–6/2010 and 4/2011) <http://www.sm.ee/meie/valjaanded/toimetised.html>

<sup>14</sup> Long-term unemployment – being unemployed for over a year.

<sup>15</sup> Very long-term unemployment – being unemployed for over two years.

<sup>16</sup> Discouraged person – person who has given up looking for a job.

Figure 4.2. Dynamics of the long-term unemployment rate by gender, 2009–2011 (%)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Figure 4.3. Number of short-term and long-term unemployed persons by age group, 2008–2011 (thousands)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

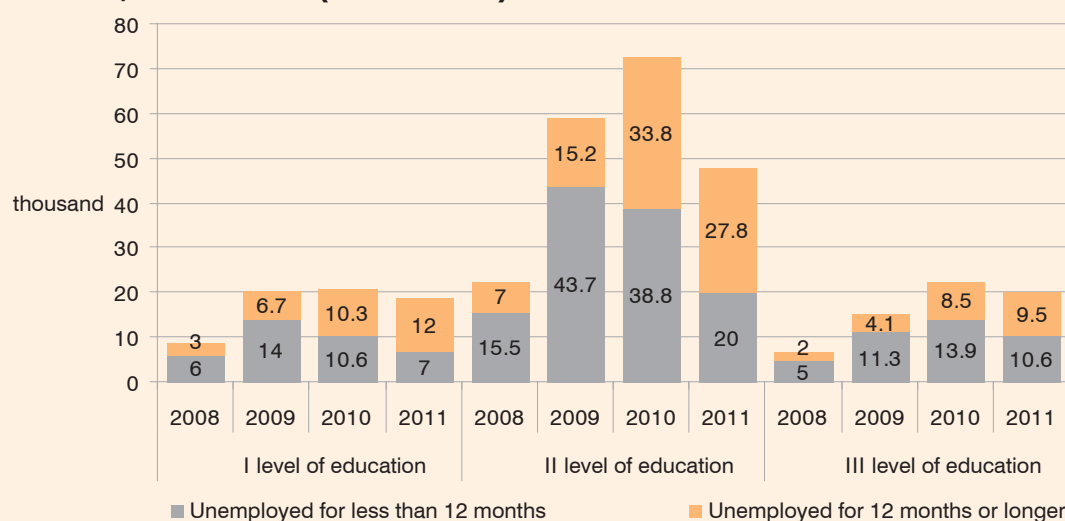
The number of long-term unemployed persons started increasing significantly with the general increase in unemployment. In 2010, the number of long-term unemployed persons was ca 52,600, i.e. 45.4% of all unemployed persons. In 2011, however, the respective figure dropped to 49,300 and the proportion of long-term unemployed persons of all unemployed persons increased to 56.8%. Increase in the proportion of long-term unemployed persons of all unemployed persons is due to the fact that persons who have been unemployed

for a shorter period are more likely to find a new job. The proportion of unemployed persons who have been looking for a job for over two years continues to increase. In 2011, the proportion of very long-term unemployed persons of all unemployed persons was 31.7% which is 15 percentage points more than in the previous year.

The indicator describing long-term unemployment is the long-term unemployment rate<sup>17</sup>, which reached its peak in the second quarter of 2010

<sup>17</sup> Long-term unemployment rate – proportion of long-term unemployed persons in the labour force.

Figure 4.4. **Short-term and long-term unemployed persons by ISCED levels of education, 2008–2011 (thousands)**



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

(8.5%), whereas the long-term unemployment rate for men was 11.8%, i.e. 6.6 percentage points more than the respective indicator for women. By the fourth quarter of 2011, long-term unemployment rate had dropped to 6.7%. Likewise, the difference between the long-term unemployment rates for men and for women decreased to 0.8 percentage points. The average long-term unemployment rate for 2011 was 7.1% which is 0.6 percentage points less than in 2010.

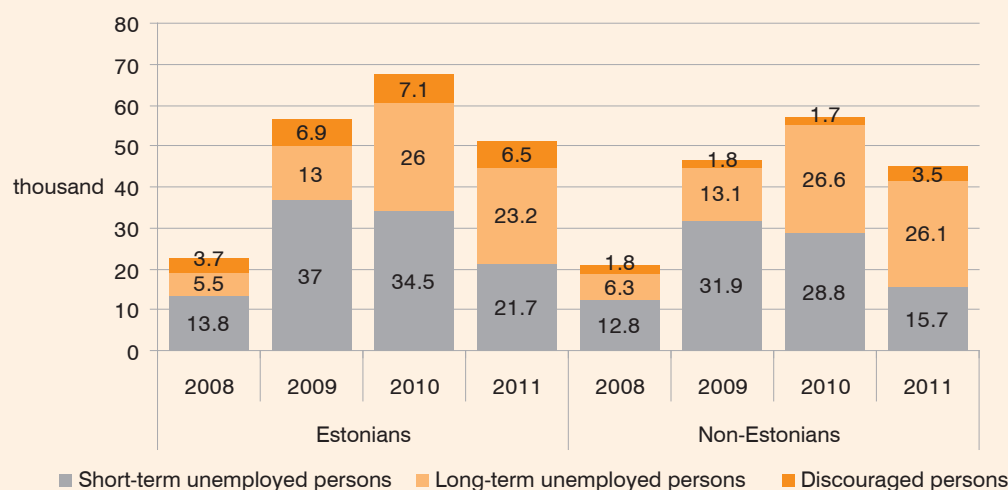
Over the last years, the proportion of long-term unemployed persons among all unemployed persons has increased in all age groups. The age group of young persons aged 15–24 is the only age group where the proportion of long-term unemployed persons of all unemployed persons is less than a half. In 2011, the proportion of long-term unemployed persons of young unemployed persons was ca 39% which is two percentage points more than in 2010. Although unemployment is more common among young persons and their unemployment rate is significantly higher than that of other age groups, they are generally unemployed for a shorter period of time and thus the proportion of long-term unemployed persons is smaller here than in other age groups.

In 2011, the number of long-term unemployed persons in the 50–74 age group increased to 14,600 which is 6.6% more than in 2010; in other age groups, however, the number of long-term unemployed persons decreased. Having become unemployed, finding a new job is more difficult for older persons than for younger persons as their education, obtained decades ago, does not often meet the requirements of the labour market and thus, there is a greater risk of being unemployed for a long time. In the 50–74 age group long-term unemployed persons formed 67% of all unemployed persons in 2011, i.e. 20 percentage points more than in 2010.

An important factor that affects the duration of unemployment is the level of education. The lower the level of education, the greater the likelihood of being unemployed. Generally, unemployment period is longer among persons with a lower level of education as it is more difficult for them to find a job due to their low level of education. Over the last few years, both high unemployment rate and lack of jobs have contributed to the increasing unemployment of persons with a higher education. In 2009–2010, the number of long-term unemployed persons with secondary education<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> ISCED levels of education: I level – primary education, basic education, vocational education for young persons without basic education; II level – secondary education, vocational education on the basis of basic education, secondary specialised education on the basis of basic education, vocational education on the basis of basic education, vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education; III level – secondary specialised education on the basis of secondary education, academic education, professional higher education, doctor.

**Figure 4.5. Number of short-term and long-term unemployed and discouraged persons by nationality, 2008–2011 (thousands)**



Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

increased the most (2.2 times). In 2011, this number decreased by 17.8%. The number of long-term unemployed persons with first and third level of education increased 16.5% and 11.8%, respectively, when compared with the previous year.

The proportion of long-term unemployed persons of unemployed persons with the first level of education is more than a half (63%) whereas the respective indicator among the unemployed persons with a third level of education is 47.3%, i.e. 15.7 percentage points less. The lower the level of education, the higher the long-term unemployment rate. In 2011, long-term unemployment rate for the first level of education was 16.6%, for the second and third level of education, however, 7.5% and 3.8%, respectively. Compared to 2010, long-term unemployment rate decreased both for the second and the third level of education in one year while it continued to increase for the first level of education.

Long-term unemployment rate among non-Estonians is more than two times that of Estonians, in 2011 11.3% and 5%, respectively. Likewise, the proportion of long-term unemployed persons of all unemployed persons is bigger among non-Estonians than among Estonians. There were 62% of long-term unemployed persons among non-Estonians and 52% among Estonians in 2011. Compared to the indicator a year before, the share had increased by 14 and 9 percentage points respectively.

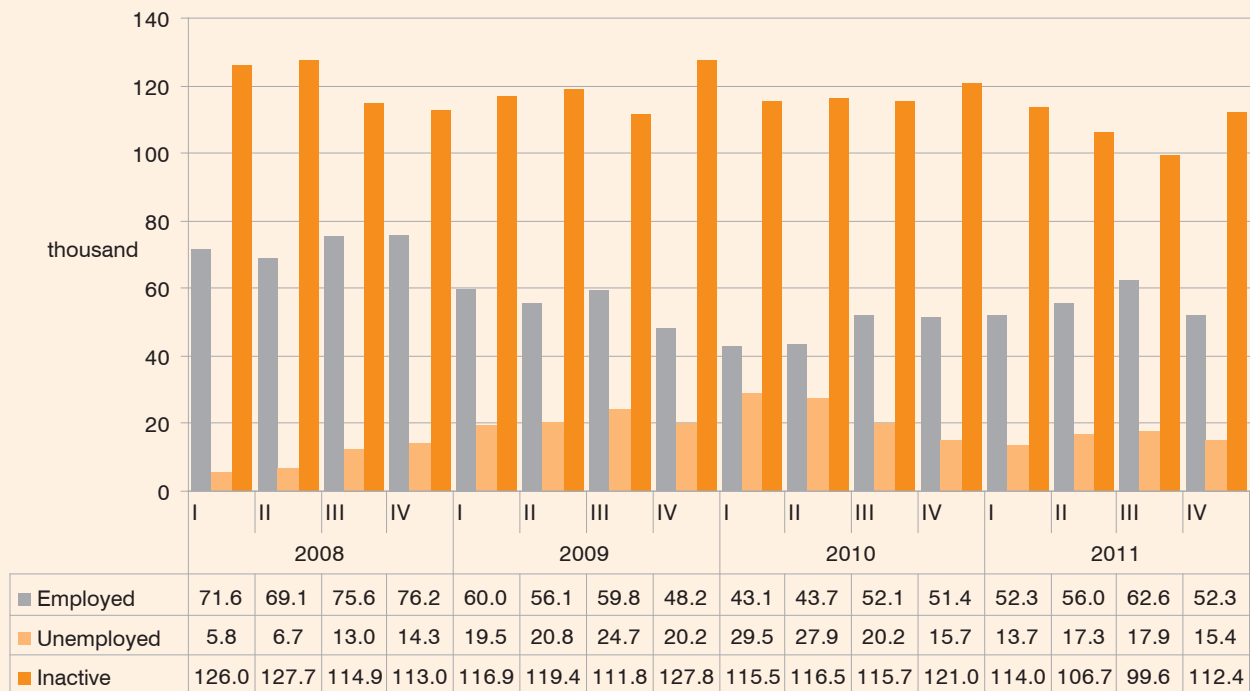
A significant difference between Estonians and non-Estonians can be observed in the number of discouraged persons. Although unemployment is a bigger problem among non-Estonians, they do not give up looking for a job as easily as Estonians and this is illustrated by a smaller number of discouraged persons. In 2010, the number of discouraged persons among Estonians was 7100, and among non-Estonians, 1700. In 2011, there are 3000 more discouraged persons among Estonians than among non-Estonians (see Figure 4.5).

## 4.2. Young unemployed persons

Young persons who are beginning their working life are in a weaker position on the labour market as they lack work experience and work habit. Employers often prefer workers with experience to young persons who have only just graduated and this makes it difficult for young persons to enter

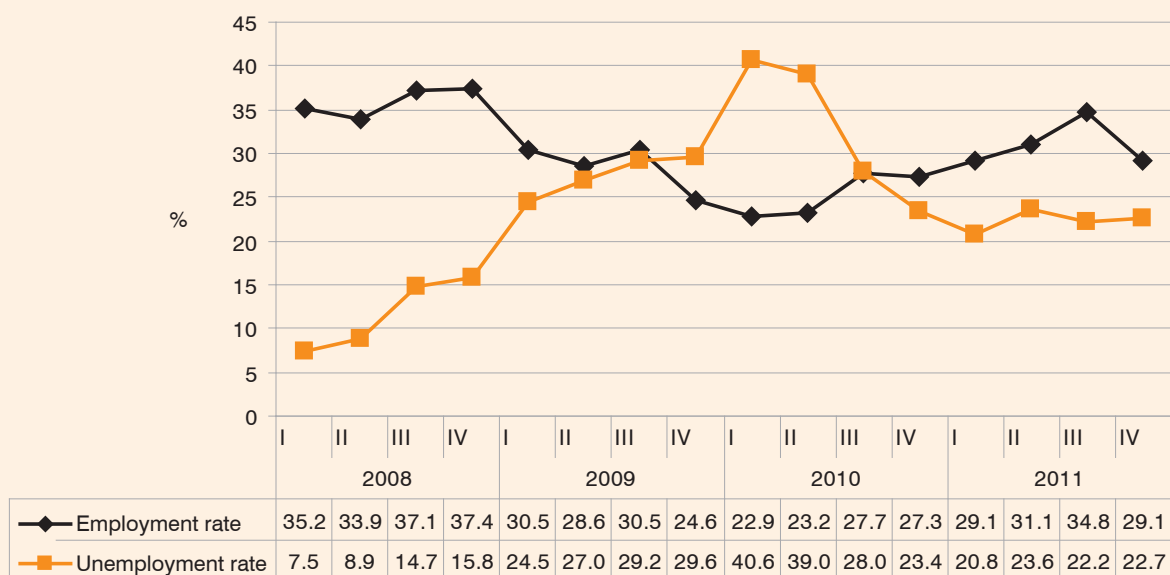
to the labour market. The situation is particularly difficult for young persons with lower level of education and without professional experience who are not competitive on the labour market and for whom, therefore, the risk of becoming unemployed is greater. As being unemployed as a young

Figure 4.6. **Employment statuses of persons aged 15–24, 2008–2011 (quarterly, thousands)**



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Figure 4.7. **Dynamics of the employment and unemployment rates of persons aged 15–24, 2008–2011 (%)**

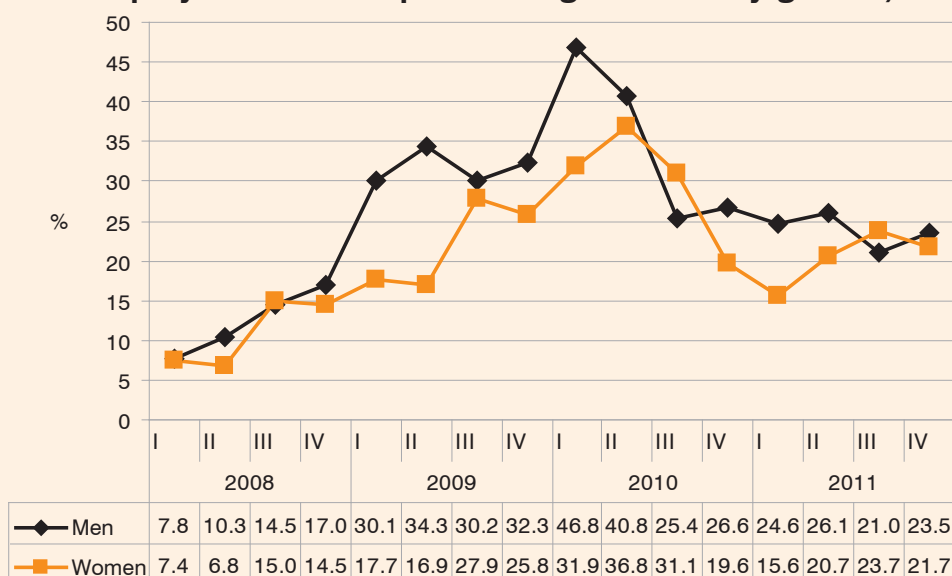


Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

person increases the risk of unemployment further on in life and has a negative effect on the society as a whole, attention must be paid to the prevention of unemployment of young persons.

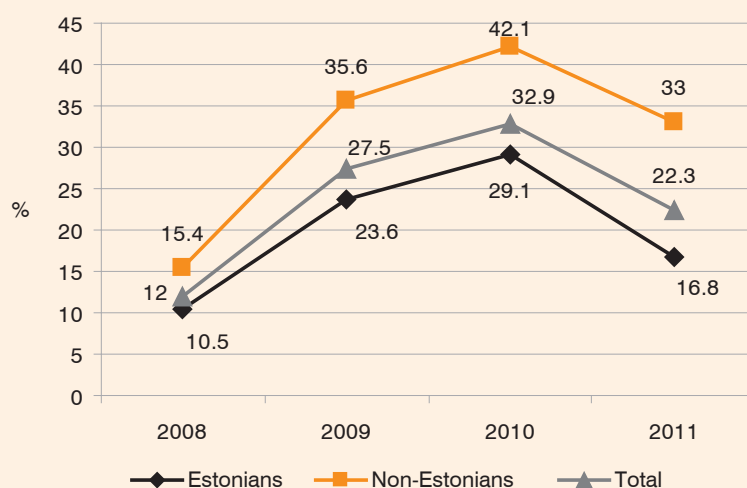
In 2011, the number of young persons aged 15–24 was 180,000, more than half of whom (60%) were inactive. According to the 2011 labour force survey, the main reason for the inactivity of young persons is studies (87%), followed by pregnancy, maternity

Figure 4.8. Unemployment rate of persons aged 15–24 by gender, 2008–2011 (%)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Figure 4.9. Unemployment rate of persons aged 15–24 by nationality, 2008–2011 (%)



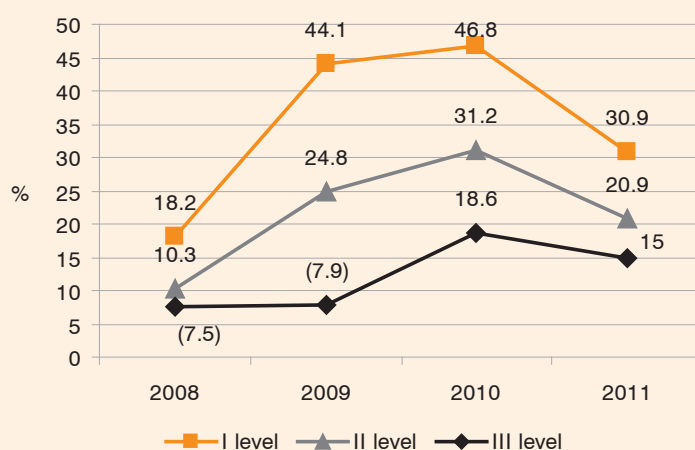
Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

and parental leave (4.5%) and compulsory military service (2.2%). The option of extending their studies helps young persons improve their competitiveness on the labour market and thus reduce the risk of unemployment. In 2011, the number of employed young persons was 55,800, i.e. 31%, and the number of unemployed young persons was 16,100, i.e. 9% of all young persons, which is 31% less than in 2010.

Employment of young persons dropped to 22.9% in the first quarter of 2010 because of the economic crisis but started to increase slowly from there on.

The average employment rate for 2011 was 31%, i.e. increased by 5.7 percentage points compared to the previous year. More drastic changes were observed in the unemployment rate of young persons which increased in two years from 7.5% in the first quarter of 2008 to 40.6%, i.e. increased by more than five times. As the economy recovered the situation of young persons on the labour market began to improve faster than expected; this is illustrated by a decrease in the unemployment of young persons to 22.7% by the fourth quarter of 2011. The average unemployment rate for 2011 was 22.3%, i.e. decreased by 10.6 percentage points

Figure 4.10. Unemployment rate of persons aged 15–24 by ISCED levels of education, 2008–2011 (%)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

compared to the previous year. Although the situation of young persons on the labour market has improved greatly, employment is still lower and unemployment several times higher than before the economic crisis.

When observing the unemployment rate of young persons by gender it can be stated that the unemployment is a little higher among young men than among young women. However, the differences in the unemployment rates between men and women have significantly decreased when compared to the beginning of 2010 when unemployment was at its peak. During the crisis the difference between the unemployment rates of men and women increased as recession mostly had an effect on the construction sector which employed many young men. When their jobs were lost many young men became unemployed and their unemployment rate increased significantly.

The difference between the unemployment rate of young Estonian and young non-Estonian per-

sons in 2011 was nearly double, i.e. 16.8% and 33%, respectively. Compared to 2010, unemployment has decreased faster among Estonian young persons and it can be said that the situation of young non-Estonian persons on the labour market is more difficult than that of young Estonians. Although during the economic crisis the unemployment rate of both Estonian and non-Estonian young persons increased at the same pace, the situation of young Estonians on the labour market has improved faster as the economy recovers.

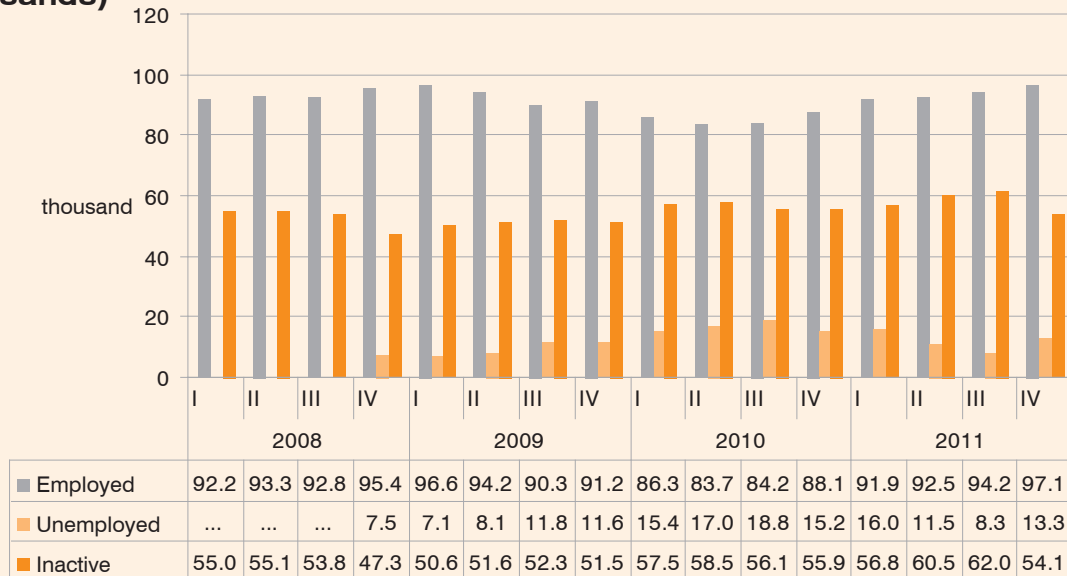
One of the main reasons contributing to the risk of unemployment is the level of education. In 2011, unemployment rate among young persons with low level of education was nearly twice as high as the unemployment rate of young persons with a higher education, i.e. 30.9% and 15%, respectively. Although after the economic crisis unemployment increased among young persons with a higher education, their opportunity to find a job is significantly better and their periods of unemployment are probably shorter.

### 4.3. Older persons

Considering the demographic developments in Estonia and related decrease in working-age population, it is very important to keep older persons on the labour market for as long as possible. Compared to most of the other European Union Member States, older persons are more active in Estonia –

they leave the labour market at a later age and continue looking for a job if they lose one. Once they are unemployed it is very difficult for older persons to find a new job and for this reason they are considered to be one of the risk groups on the labour market. To keep older persons on the labour mar-

Figure 4.11. **Employment statuses of persons aged 55–64, 2008–2011 (quarterly, thousands)**



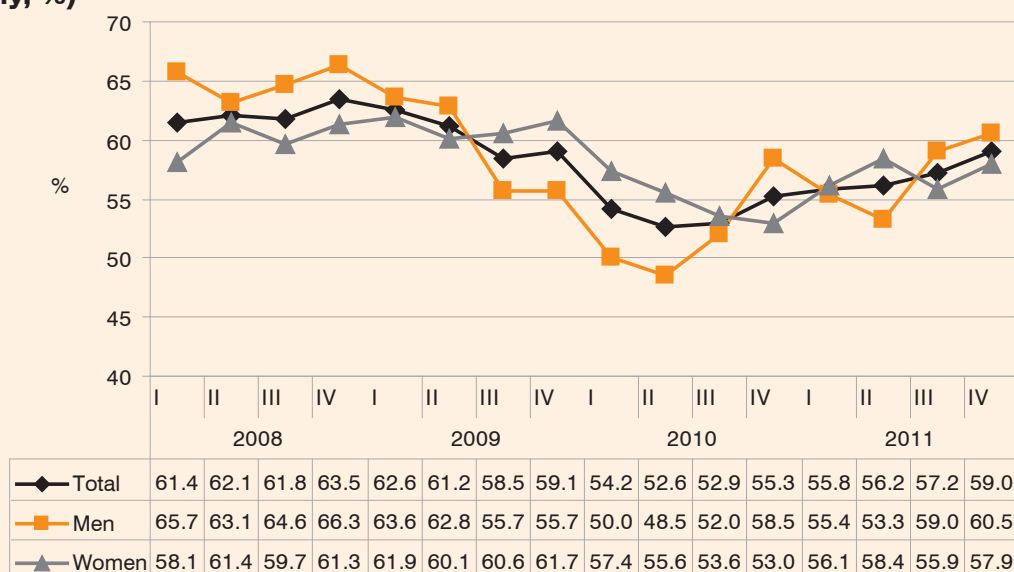
Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

ket for as long as possible, attention must be paid to maintaining the employability of older persons.

Figure 4.11 will provide an overview of the dynamics of the employment statuses of older persons. In 2011, there were a total of 164,600 older persons in the age group of 55–64 in Estonia. In the last few years the total number of older persons has increased significantly, compared to 2008, the number of older persons has increased by 14,400.

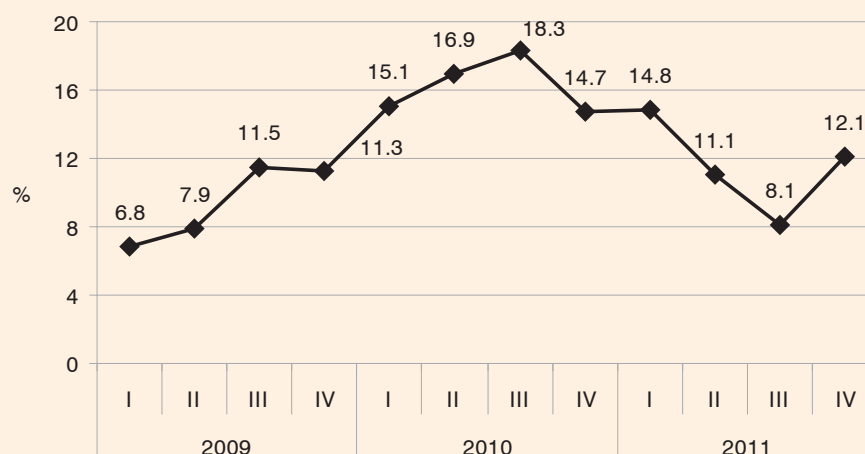
In 2011, the number of employed persons was 93,900, i.e. 57% of all older persons. Compared to the previous year the number of employed persons has increased by 9.7%. At the same time, the number of unemployed persons was 12,300, i.e. 7.5% of older persons. Compared to 2010, the number of unemployed persons has decreased by 25.9%. In 2011, the number of inactive persons among older persons was 58,300, i.e. 35% of all older persons. According to the 2011 Labour Force Survey,

Figure 4.12. **Employment rate of persons aged 55–64 by gender, 2008–2011 (quarterly, %)**



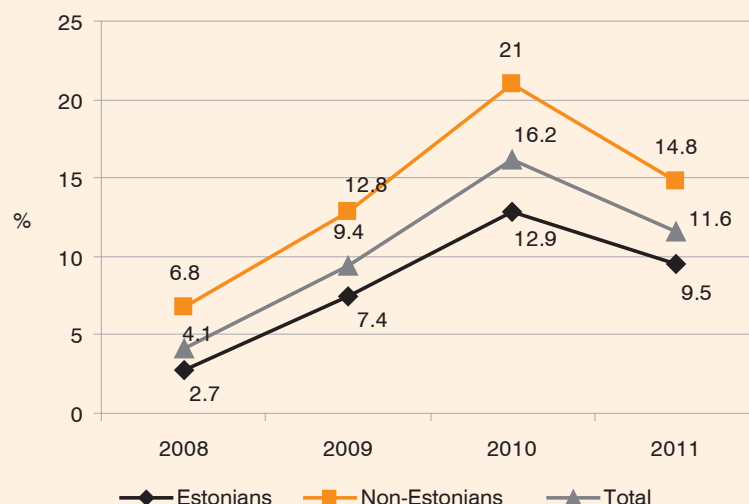
Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Figure 4.13. Unemployment rate of persons aged 55–64, 2009–2011 (quarterly, %)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Figure 4.14. Unemployment rate of persons aged 55–64 by nationality, 2008–2011 (%)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

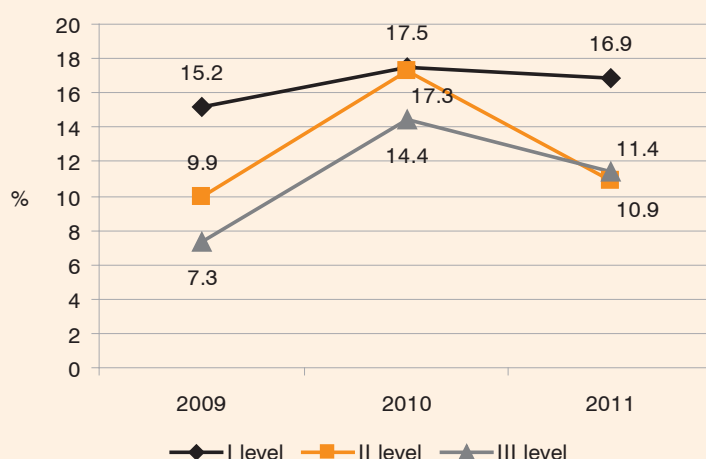
main reasons for the inactivity of older persons are retirement age (52%) and illness or injury (34%) which prevent them from participating in the labour market.

Following the economic crisis, the unemployment of older persons dropped to its lowest, 52.6%, by the second quarter of 2010, which is 8.6 percentage points lower than in the previous year. Changes were more drastic in the employment rate of men which dropped to 48.5%, being 7.1 percentage points less than the employment rate of women. Employment rate has continued to increase since the third quarter and reached 59% by the fourth quarter of 2011. The average employment rate for

2011 was 57.1%, i.e. it increased by 3.3 percentage points compared to the previous year.

Because of the economic crisis the unemployment rate of older persons increased to 18.3% by the third quarter of 2010, which is more than 2.5 times higher than the respective indicator at the beginning of 2009. Unemployment rate was 12.1% in the fourth quarter of 2011. The average unemployment rate of the year was 11.6% whereas the unemployment rate of men exceeds that of women by 5.3 percentage points, being 14.5% and 9.5%, respectively. Compared to 2010, the unemployment rate of men has dropped by 4.5 percentage points and that of women by 4.9 percentage points.

**Figure 4.15. Unemployment rate of persons aged 55-64 by ISCED levels of education, 2009-2011 (%)**



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Over the years the unemployment rate of non-Estonians has been higher than that of Estonians; however, the dynamics of unemployment rate is similar among older Estonians and older non-Estonians. In 2011, the unemployment rate of Estonians and non-Estonians was 9.5% and 14.8%, respectively. Compared to 2010, the unemployment rate of Estonians has dropped by 3.4 percentage points and that of non-Estonians by 6.2 percentage points.

Figure 4.15 provides an overview of the unemployment rate of older persons by their level of education. It can be seen that unemployment is a

bigger problem among older persons with lower level of education. An interesting aspect can be observed in 2011 when the unemployment rate of older persons with the second level of education decreased the fastest, and reached 10.9%, being 0.5 percentage points lower than the unemployment rate of older persons with a higher education. High unemployment rate of older persons with a higher education indicates that their education, obtained decades ago, does not meet the requirements of the changed labour market and this makes it more difficult for them to find a new job. Unemployment rate is the highest among older persons with the lowest level of education (16.9%).

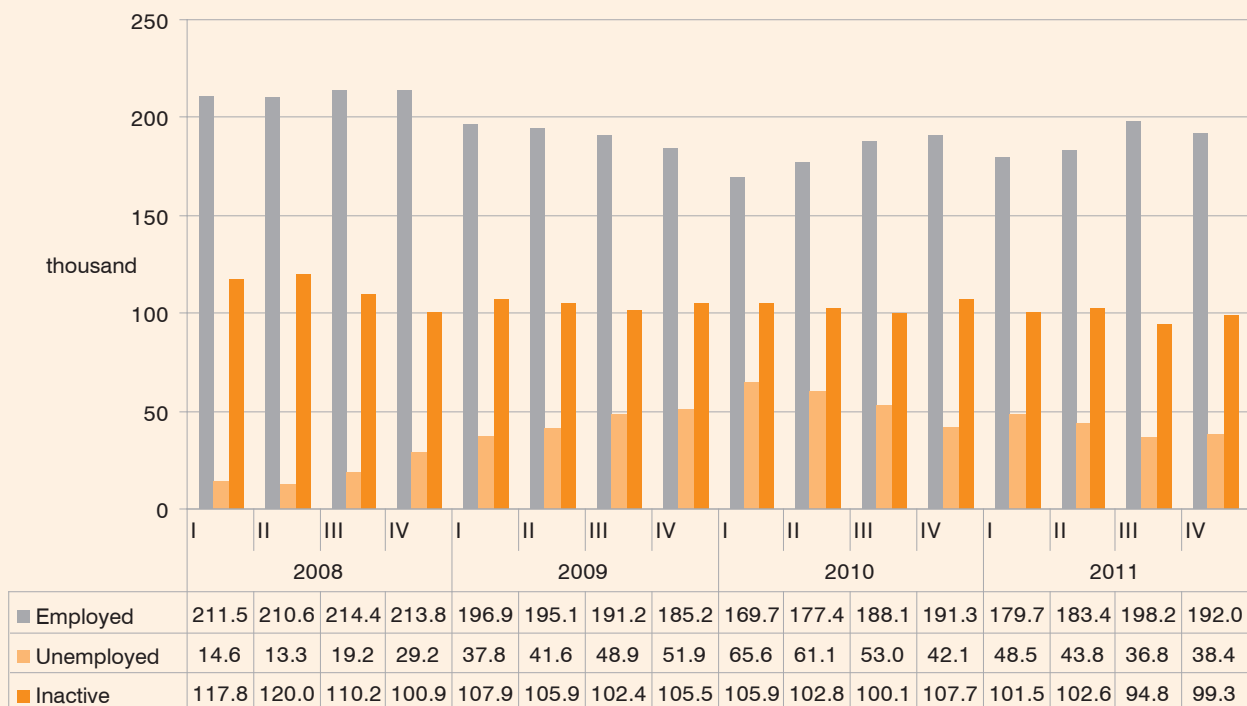
## 4.4. Non-Estonians

Non-Estonians constitute a significant part of the population of working age in Estonia (ca 32%), which is why it is important to pay attention to their situation on the labour market. Compared to Estonians, the situation of non-Estonians is more difficult on the labour market since the main hindrance of getting a job for them is their lack of skill in the Estonian language. Prejudices as well as various attitudes and relationships between nationality groups may additionally affect their situation on the labour market.

Figure 4.16 will provide an overview of the employment statuses of non-Estonians. In 2011,

there were a total of 329,700 of non-Estonians aged 15-74, 188,300 or 57.1% of whom were employed. The number of unemployed persons was 41,900, i.e. 13% of all non-Estonians. Non-Estonians are more active on the labour market than Estonians; this was especially noticeable during the economic crisis. In 2010, the difference in the activity rates of non-Estonians and Estonians was 4.7 percentage points; in 2011, the respective indicator was 3.3. Non-Estonians do not give up looking for a job so easily and even though unemployment is high, the proportion of inactive persons has decreased. In 2011, there were a total of 99,500 inactive persons, i.e. 30% of all non-Estonians.

Figure 4.16. **Employment statuses of non-Estonians aged 15-74, 2008-2011 (thousands)**

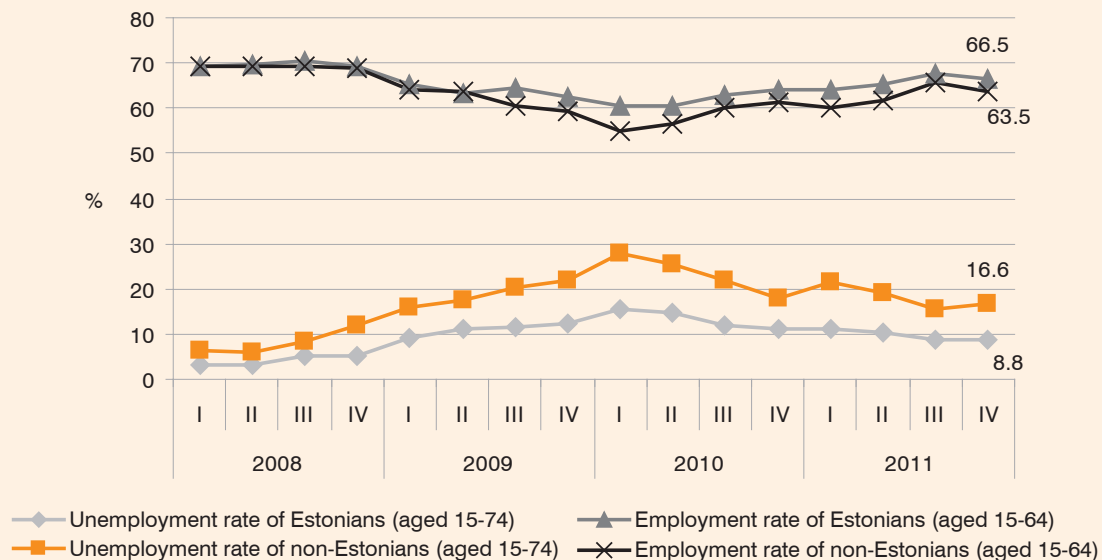


Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Up to the second quarter of 2009, the employment of Estonians and non-Estonians was relatively equal; from there on, however, the employment rate of non-Estonians decreased faster and the gap in employment between Estonians and non-Estonians grew bigger. By the first quarter of 2010, the employment rate of non-Estonians dropped to

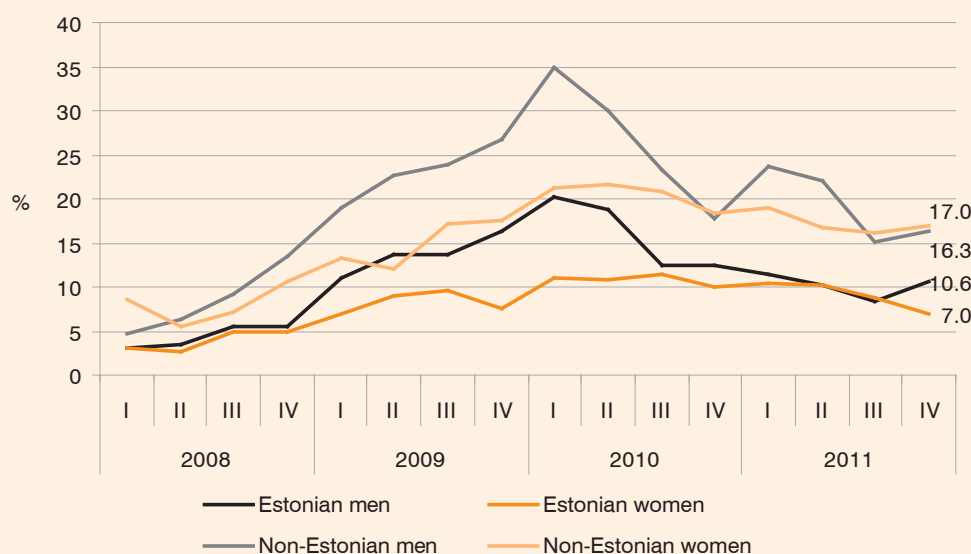
54.8% and the gap in employment between Estonians and non-Estonians increased to 5.7 percentage points. The first signs of economic expansion were observed on the labour market in the second quarter of 2010 when the employment rates of both Estonians and non-Estonians started to increase. Likewise, the gap in employment began

Figure 4.17. **Employment rate and unemployment rate by nationality, 2008-2011 (quarterly, %)**



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

Figure 4.18. Unemployment rate by nationality and gender, 2008-2011 (quarterly, %)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

to decrease. In 2011, the employment rates of Estonians and non-Estonians were 65.9% and 62.8%, respectively, and the gap in employment was 3.1 percentage points.

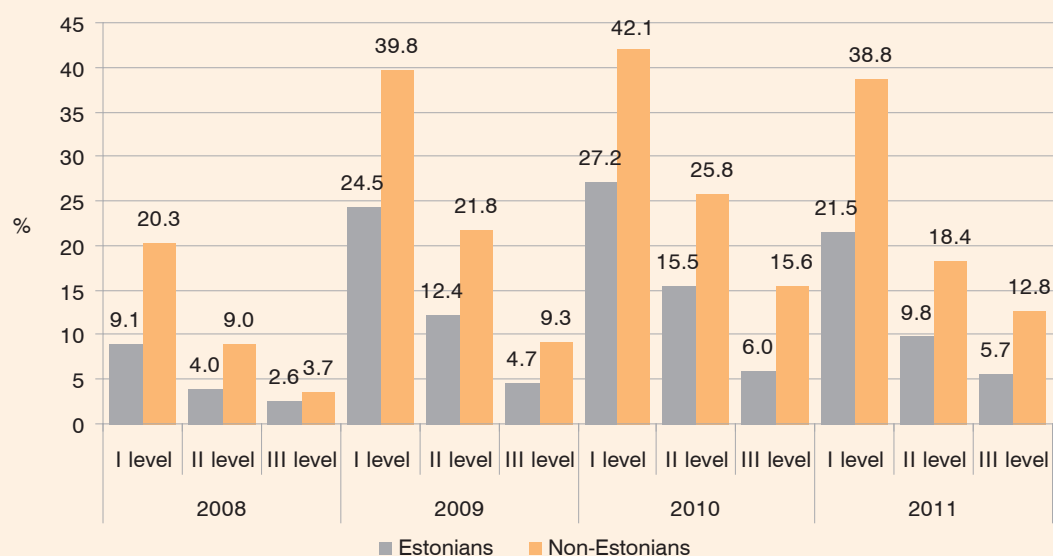
The situation on the labour market is illustrated by the division of employed persons by economic activity and occupations. In terms of activities, non-Estonians are mostly employed in manufacturing (25.9%), followed by wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (13.6%) and transport and storage (10.5%). Compared to the Estonians, the proportion of primary sector is very small in the employment of non-Estonians (0.9%); the proportion of the secondary sector, however, is 7.5 percentage points higher than that of Estonians. In terms of occupations, the proportion of skilled workers and craftsmen is the highest among non-Estonian employed persons (20.2%). These are followed by plant and machine operators (16.6%) and service workers and shop and market sales workers (14.3%). The number of skilled workers in the sector of agriculture is only 0.6% and the proportion of managers is 4.4% of the employed persons. Nearly 52% of Estonians are working in the so-called white collar jobs while for non-Estonians, the respective indicator is 35.3%.

Over the years, the unemployment rate of non-Estonians has been nearly twice as high as that of Estonians. Just as the employment rate was the lowest in the first quarter of 2010, unemployment rate reached its peak at the same time. The unemployment rates of Estonians and non-Estonians were 15.7% and 27.9%, respectively. By the fourth quarter of 2011, the unemployment rates had decreased to 8.8% and 16.6%, respectively. The average unemployment rate of the year was 9.7% and 18.2%, respectively.

When observing the unemployment rate of non-Estonians by gender (see Figure 4.18), it is clear that non-Estonian men whose unemployment rate increased to 34.9% by the first quarter of 2010, were in a particularly difficult situation on the labour market as a result of the economic crisis. It is 14.6 percentage points higher than the unemployment rate of Estonian men. However, by the fourth quarter of 2011, the unemployment rate was the highest among non-Estonian women, i.e. 17%.

As mentioned above, unemployment is a much greater problem among non-Estonians than among Estonians. Figure 4.19 provides an overview of the unemployment rate by level of education and nationality. It becomes clear that the lower the level

Figure 4.19. Unemployment rate by nationality and ISCED levels of education, 2008-2011 (%)



Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

of education of both Estonians and non-Estonians, the higher their unemployment rate. Compared to Estonians, the proportion of unemployed persons with a higher education among non-Estonian unemployed persons is higher and the proportion of unemployed persons with lower level of education is smaller. In 2011, the proportion of unemployed persons with the first level of education was 18% and with the third level of education was 25% among non-Estonian unemployed persons, the respective indicators for Estonians were 25% and 22%. In 2011, the biggest differences in the unemployment rates of Estonians and non-Estonians were in terms of a higher education, with a 2.2-fold difference in unemployment rates. Although a higher level of education provides a person with significantly better chances for coping on the labour market, the economic crisis that started in 2008 showed that even higher education might not provide protection against unemployment.

It can be concluded that although the situation of young persons, older persons and non-Estonians on the labour market has significantly improved by 2011, unemployment and employment indicators have not returned to the same level as before the crisis. At the same time, long-term unemployment is still a serious problem. Thus it is important to continue to pay attention to improving the situation of risk groups on the labour market, with special focus on reducing long-term unemployment.

## 5. Registered unemployment and labour market policy

Eva Põldis

In Estonia the implementing body of labour market policy is the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund<sup>19</sup>, whose duty it is to help unemployed persons find jobs as quickly as possible. To this end, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund offers to unemployed persons several employment services and pays unemployment allowance and unemployment insurance benefit so as to ensure an income for unemployed persons and to support their search for work. Likewise, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund pays insurance

benefit upon lay-offs and benefit upon insolvency of the employer.

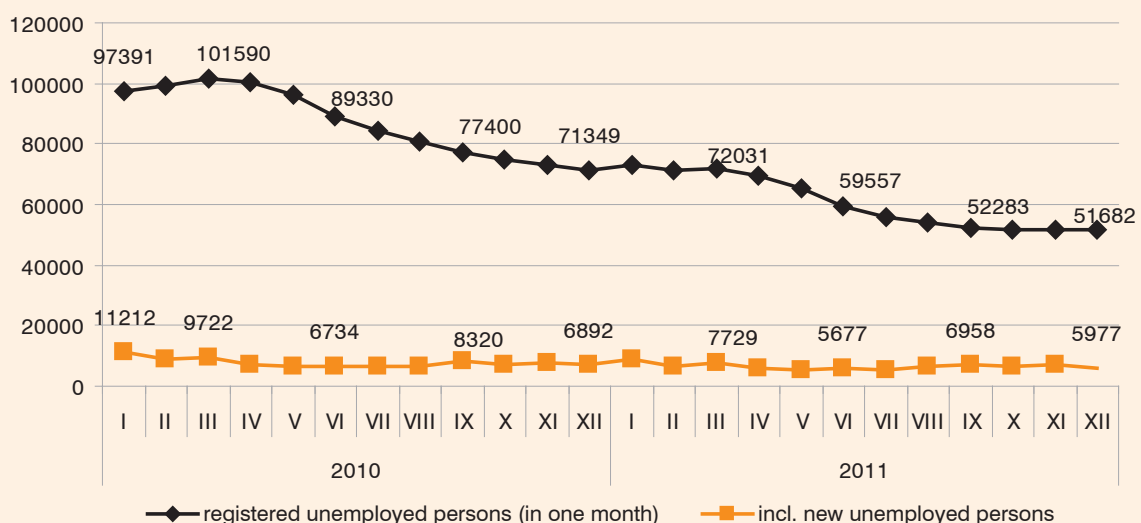
This chapter provides an overview of persons registered as unemployed in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, and the belonging of them into different risk groups as well as of provided vacancies and placement. This chapter will also cover services provided by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, allowances and benefits paid and expenses on the labour market policy.

### 5.1. Registered unemployment

The number of persons who registered themselves as unemployed in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund increased during the economic crisis as the lack of jobs, due to recession, made it difficult to find a job and thus unemployed persons turned to the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund for assistance. Redundancy waves also

entailed the right of new unemployed persons to apply for unemployment insurance benefit from the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. Registered unemployment started to increase in the second half of 2008 and reached the maximum level in March 2010 when 101,590 unemployed persons were registered in the Estonian Unem-

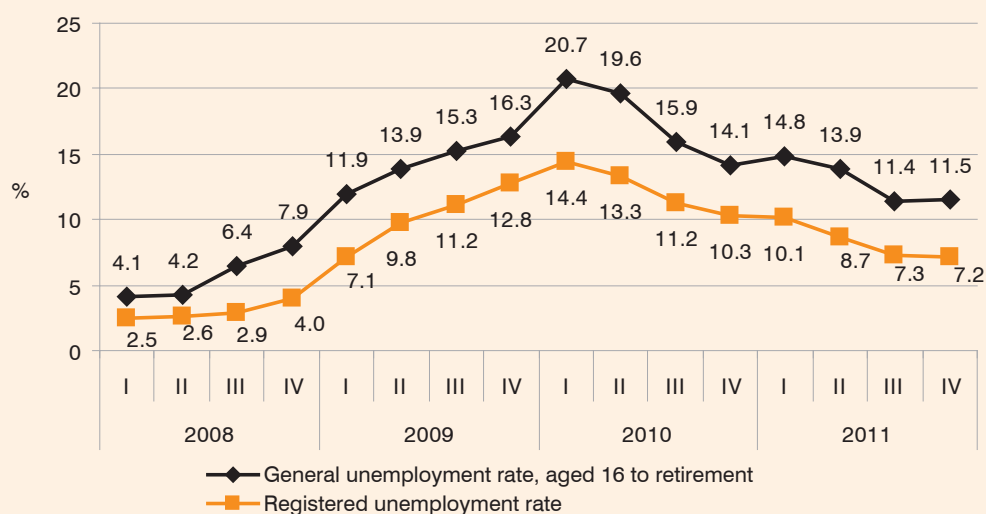
Figure 5.1. **Dynamics of registered unemployed persons, including new unemployed persons in 2010–2011 (in one month)**



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

<sup>19</sup> On 1 May 2009, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund took over the tasks of the Labour Market Board and became the main implementing body of labour market policy in Estonia.

Figure 5.2. **Dynamics of registered unemployment rate and general unemployment rate, 2008–2011 (quarterly, %)**



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund; Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey

ployment Insurance Fund in a month. This was an increase of 75% when compared to the same indicator in the same time in 2009. In April 2010, the first signs of economic expansion had their positive effect on the labour market and registered unemployment and the number of new unemployed persons started to decrease. In 2009, an average of 10,091 new unemployed persons were registered in one month; in 2010, the respective figure was smaller by 21.8% (an average of 7860 new unemployed persons per month) and in 2011, this figure was smaller by another 16.3% (an average of 6581 new unemployed persons per month). At the end of 2011, a total of 47,405 unemployed persons were registered in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, i.e. 27.4% less than at the end of 2010 and 45.7% less than at the end of 2009.

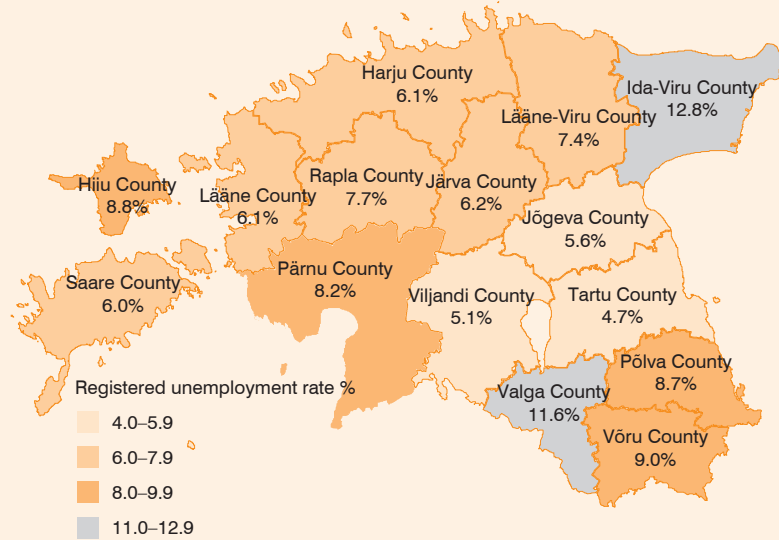
Dynamics of registered unemployment rate and general unemployment rate<sup>20</sup> are characterised on Figure 5.2. The figure shows that registered unemployment and general unemployment move at the same pace. However, registered unemployment is ca 1.6 times lower than general unemployment as not everyone registers themselves in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. According to the Estonian Labour Force Survey, in 2011 the main

reasons for not turning to the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund are: could manage by oneself (34%), were not entitled to unemployment insurance benefit or unemployment allowance (31%) and lack of a suitable job in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (25%). Registered unemployment rate reached its maximum level, 14.4%, in the first quarter of 2010, and decreased in a stable manner to 7.2% by the fourth quarter of 2011. At the same time, general unemployment rate dropped from 20.7% to 11.5%.

When observing registered unemployment rate in terms of counties it is clear that Ida-Viru County stands out from the others due to its higher unemployment rate, i.e. 12.8% at the end of 2011 (Estonian average is 7.2%). Registered unemployment rate was significantly higher than the average registered unemployment rate in Estonia at the end of 2011 in the following counties: Valga County (11.6%), Võru County (9.0%), Hiiu County (8.8%) and Põlva County (8.7%). Unemployment rate was the lowest in Tartu County (4.7%), Viljandi County (5.1%) and Jõgeva County (5.6%). Compared to the end of 2010, the number of unemployed persons has decreased in all counties, most in Tartu, Viljandi and Harju Counties, 35%, 34% and 32%, respectively.

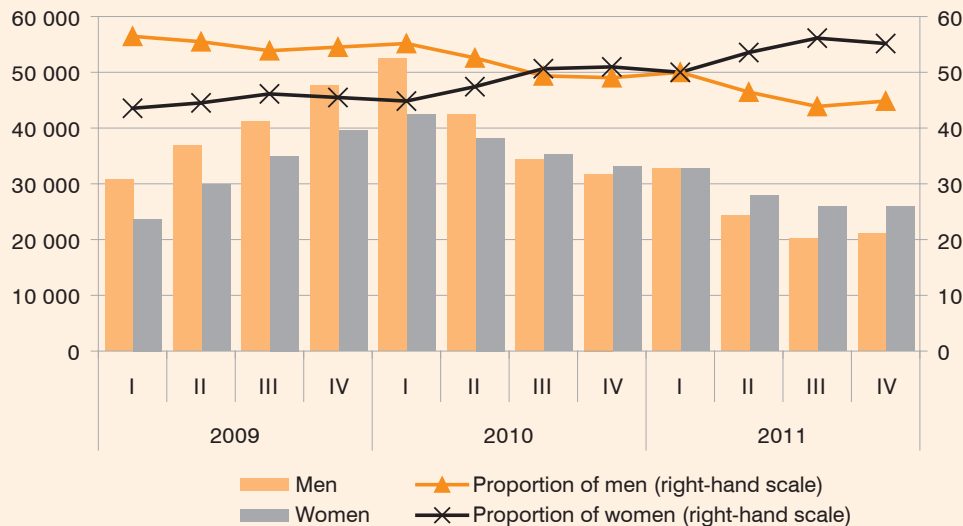
<sup>20</sup> General unemployment rate—proportion of unemployed persons of the labour force whereas, according to the definition of the ILO, an unemployed person is a person without work who is actively seeking a job and is ready to start working within two weeks of finding a job (used upon carrying out the Labour Force Surveys of Statistics Estonia). Registered unemployment rate—proportion of registered unemployed persons of the labour force from 16 years of age till retirement whereas a registered unemployed person is a person who is not working and has registered himself or herself in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund as an unemployed person.

Figure 5.3. Registered unemployment rate by counties, at the end of 2011 (%)



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

Figure 5.4. Registered unemployed persons by gender, 2009–2011 (at the end of quarter)



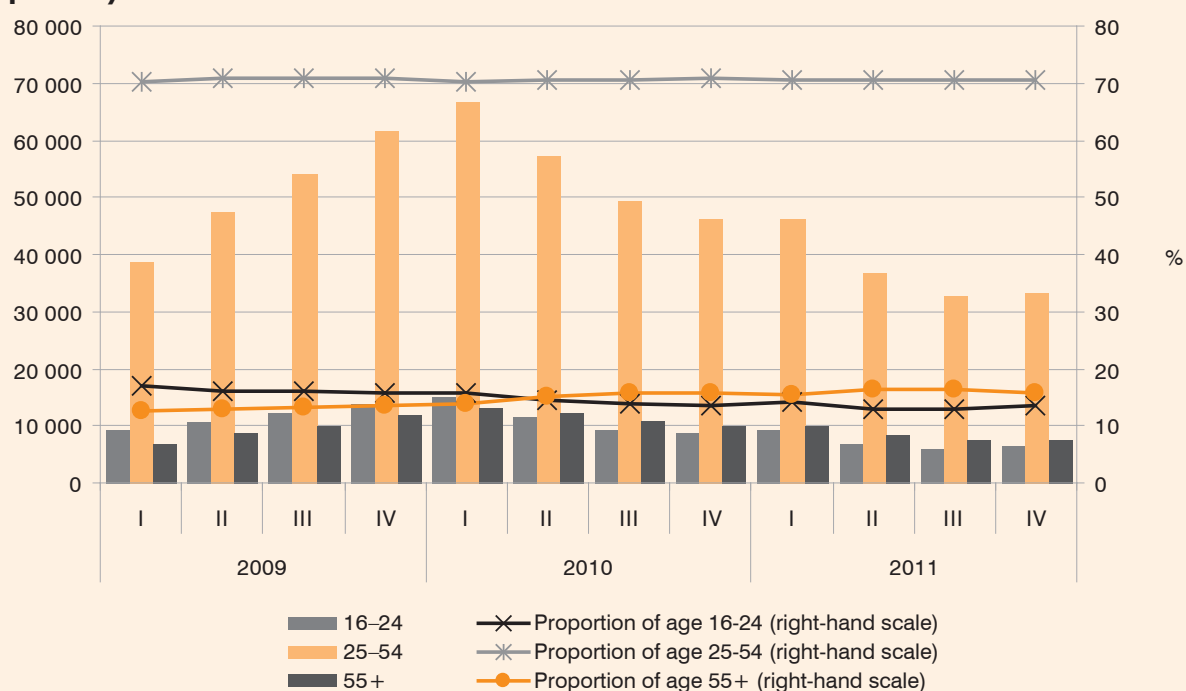
Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

With the start of the economic crisis jobs first started disappearing in construction and manufacturing, i.e. in sectors where men traditionally work. For this reason, the crisis had a major impact on men and their proportion among registered unemployed increased to 55% by the end of 2009. In the second quarter of 2010, the number of registered unemployed persons among men started to decrease faster than among women and as of the third quarter of 2010, the proportion of women is higher among registered unemployed persons. At the end of 2011, 26,138 women (55.1%) and

21,267 men had registered themselves as unemployed in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund; compared to the end of 2010, this indicator is smaller by 21.4% and 33.5%, respectively.

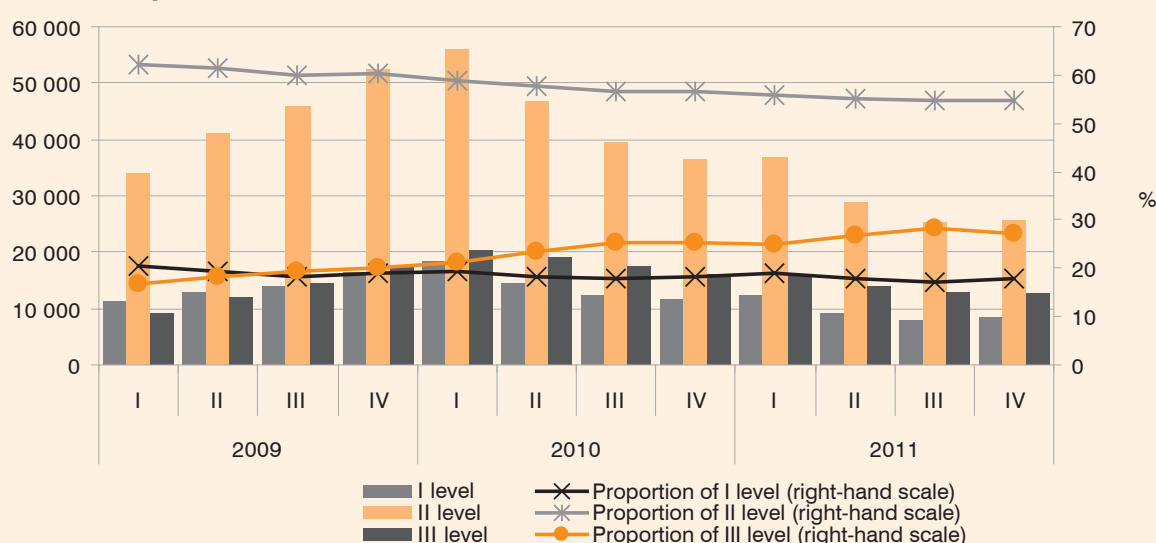
At the end of 2011, the number of young persons aged 16–24 among unemployed persons was 6474, i.e. 13.7% of all registered unemployed persons. At the same time, the proportion of older persons (aged 55 to retirement) among registered unemployed persons was 15.7% (7429). Compared to the end of 2009, the proportion of young per-

Figure 5.5. **Registered unemployed persons by age groups, 2009–2011 (at the end of quarter)**



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

Figure 5.6. **Registered unemployed persons by level of education, 2009–2011 (at the end of quarter)**



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

sons among registered unemployed persons had decreased by two percentage points and the proportion of older persons had increased by 2.2 percentage points.

The main impediment for the quick return to the labour market of unemployed persons is their insufficient skills and low level of education<sup>21</sup>. In the last few years, however, the number of unemployed persons with secondary specialised education and

<sup>21</sup> I level - primary education, basic education, vocational education without basic education II level - general secondary education, vocational secondary education based on basic education, professional secondary education based on basic education, vocational training based on basic education, vocational secondary education based on secondary education III level - professional higher education, professional secondary education based on secondary education, academic higher education, Doctoral degree

higher education has increased significantly and at the end of 2011 formed 27.2% (12,889 unemployed persons) of all registered unemployed persons, which is seven percentage points more than at the end of 2009. The proportion of unemployed persons with the second level of education is the big-

gest among all unemployed persons registered in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund – in 2011, 54.8% of all registered unemployed persons. Unemployed persons with a lower level of education formed 17.9%.

## 5.2. Risk groups

There are several risk groups on the labour market for whom it is difficult to find a job due to insufficient qualifications, lack of experience, age, insufficient skill in the Estonian language, health problems or some other reasons. Therefore it is important to offer various labour market services to the unemployed persons belonging to risk groups so as to assist them in finding a job as quickly as possible. This section provides an overview of the risk groups listed in the Labour Market Services and Benefits Act:

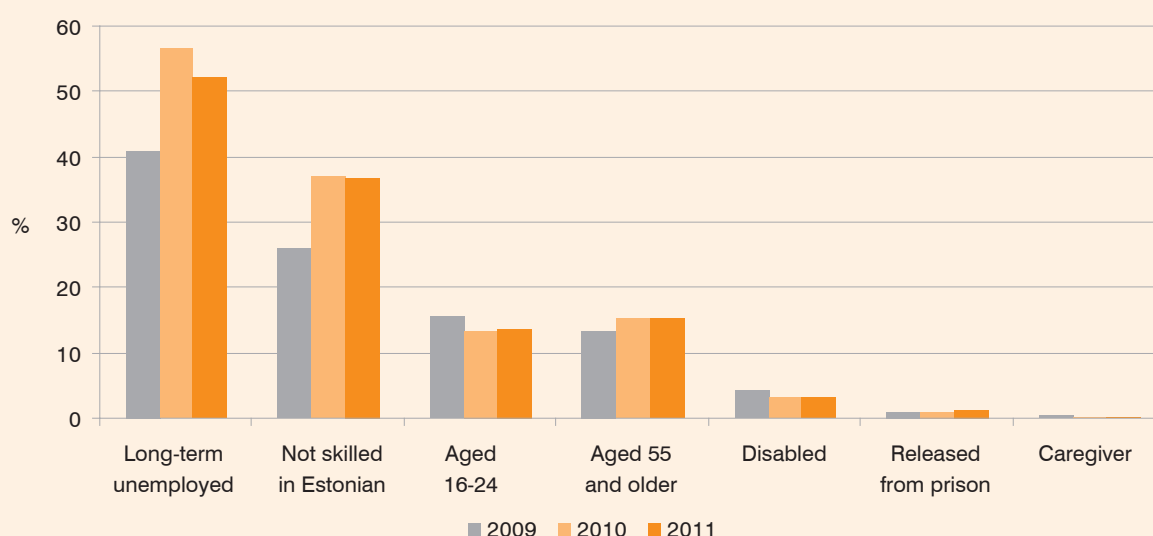
- Long-term unemployed persons<sup>22</sup>;
- Young unemployed persons aged 16–24;
- Unemployed persons aged 55 till retirement;
- Disabled unemployed persons;
- Unemployed persons without sufficient knowledge of Estonian;

- Unemployed persons who have been previously engaged in duties of care;
- Unemployed persons released from prison.

At the end of 2011, 76.4% of all registered unemployed persons belonged to one or several risk groups; compared to the previous year, this indicator has decreased by 2.2 percentage points. At the end of 2011, the number of persons belonging to risk groups was 36,204, i.e. 29.4% less than at the end of 2010 and 30.8% less than at the end of 2009.

Lack of jobs has extended the period of unemployment and thus increased the proportion of long-term unemployed persons among all registered unemployed persons. The largest risk group is that of long-term unemployed persons; at the end

Figure 5.7. **Proportion of unemployed persons belonging to risk groups among all registered unemployed persons<sup>23</sup>, 2009–2011 (as at the end of year, %)**

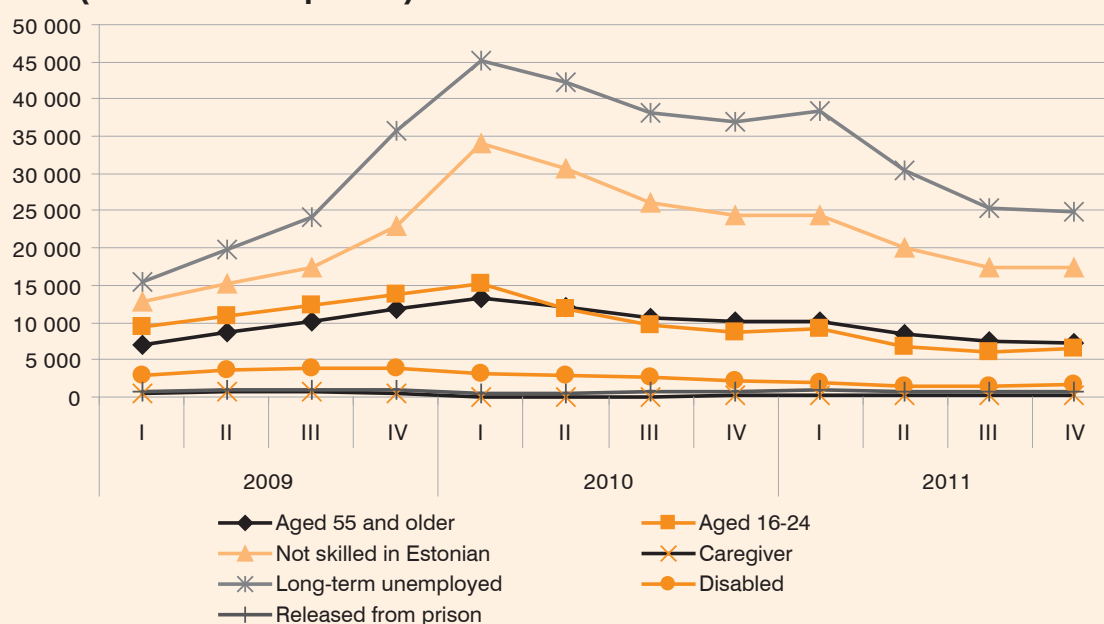


Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

<sup>22</sup> Long-term unemployed – a person who has not been employed or engaged in an activity equal to work during the 12 months prior to their registration as unemployed. Young person aged 16–24 is a long-term unemployed if he or she has not been employed or engaged in an activity equal to work during the 6 months prior to their registration as unemployed. (§10 (5)(7) of the Labour Market Services and Benefits Act)

<sup>23</sup> An unemployed person may belong to several risk groups.

Figure 5.8. Number of registered unemployed persons belonging to risk groups<sup>24</sup>, 2009–2011 (at the end of quarter)



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

of 2011, it formed 52.3% of all registered unemployed persons (see Figure 5.7). The proportion of unemployed persons who are not skilled in Estonian was 36.8%, older persons 15.5% and younger persons 13.7%. The proportion of the rest of the risk groups among registered unemployed persons is relatively marginal. In the last few years, the proportion of long-term unemployed persons and of unemployed persons who are not skilled in Estonian has increased significantly; by 11.3 and 10.6 percentage points, respectively by the end of 2011, compared to the end of 2009.

Observing the dynamics of unemployed persons belonging to risk groups it becomes clear that the general increase in the number of unemployed persons was accompanied by an increase in the number of unemployed persons belonging to all risk groups, reaching its maximum level in the first quarter of 2010 (see Figure 5.8). From there on, the number of unemployed persons belonging to risk groups has decreased significantly. At the end of 2011, there were 24,814 long-term unemployed; this is 33% less than in the previous year. The number of young and older unemployed persons has decreased by 26–27% and the number of unemployed persons not skilled in the Estonian language has decreased by 28%.

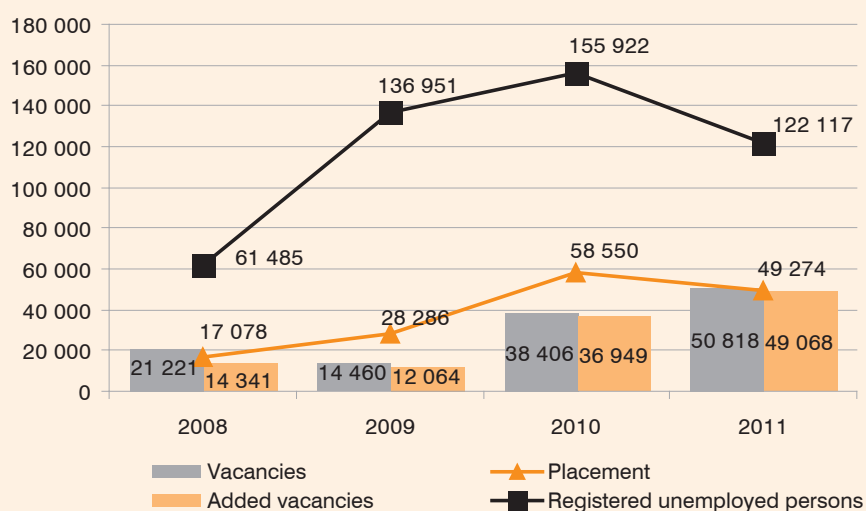
### 5.3. Employment mediation and placement

One of the tasks of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund is employment mediation which aims to find a suitable job for the unemployed person and job-seeker, and a suitable employee for an employer. Increase in the number of vacancies mediated by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund indicates the improvement of the condition of the labour market. In 2011, the Estonian

Unemployment Insurance Fund offered 50,818 vacancies, which is 32.3% more than in 2010 and 3.5 times more than in 2009. The number of new vacancies has also increased significantly. 2011 saw the addition of 49,068 new vacancies which is 32.8% more than in 2010 and four times more than in 2009. On the average, every month of 2011 saw the addition of 4100 new vacancies which is 33%

<sup>24</sup> Due to the changeover to a new information system at the end of 2009, entering of the risk groups of registered unemployed persons has changed and the data of 2010 and the periods preceding it cannot be completely compared in certain risk groups (caregivers, persons with insufficient knowledge of Estonian, disabled persons, persons released from prisons).

Figure 5.9. **Dynamics of vacancies, placements and registered unemployed persons, 2008-2011**



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

more than in 2010 and four times more than in 2009. Skilled workers and craftsmen, service and sales personnel and plant and machine operators are needed the most.

Significant increase in the number of placements is a sign of a recovering economy. In 2010, the number of unemployed persons starting work was 58,550,

i.e. over two times more than in 2009. In 2011, the number of unemployed persons starting work was 49,274, i.e. 15.8% less than in 2010. Placement rate was 40.3% in 2011 (37.6% in 2010), i.e. less than half of the persons registered as unemployed in a year found a job. The number of persons finding a job is most probably underestimated as it is based on persons' statements that they returned to work.

## 5.4. Labour market services

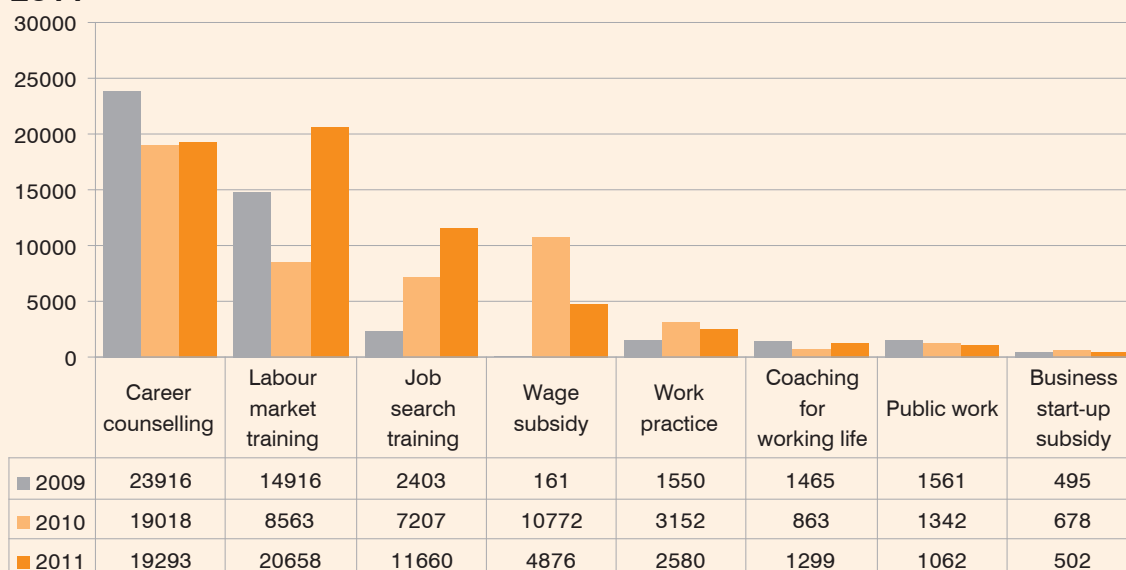
Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund provides labour market services pursuant to the Labour Market Services and Benefits Act and "Increasing supply of qualified labour 2007-2013" programme of the European Social Fund. An unemployed person is directed towards labour market services on the basis of an individual action plan, offering to the unemployed persons services needed for finding work. In 2011, the number of entries into various labour market services was 67,945 which is 27% more than in 2010 and 43% more than in 2009.

Figure 5.10 provides an overview of entry to labour market services by selected services. The figure shows that career counselling and labour market training are the most popular services; in 2010, wage subsidy became a priority service. In 2009, the

number of persons starting work with wage subsidy was 161; in 2010, the respective number was 10,772. In 2010, the number of persons entering work practice increased by nearly twice and the number of recipients of business start-up subsidy by 37%.

In 2011, main focus was on labour market training; compared to the previous year, entry into labour market training increased 2.4 times. Training helps unemployed persons add to their knowledge and skills so as to increase the chances of competing on the labour market. Career counselling and job search training are also popular, in 2011, entry to these services was 19,293 and 11,660, respectively. 4876 unemployed persons started work with wage subsidy, 2580 persons started work practice and 1299 persons started coaching for working life.

Figure 5.10. **Number of entries to labour market services by selected services, 2009–2011**



Comment: Entries into services – all entries in the observed period, i.e. one person may be counted several times (e.g. he or she started several trainings in a period).

Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

## 5.5. Unemployment allowance, unemployment insurance benefit, insurance benefit upon lay-offs, benefit upon insolvency of the employer

In addition to providing labour market services, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund is also paying unemployment allowance and unemployment insurance benefits to unemployed persons as well as insurance benefit upon lay-offs and benefit upon insolvency of the employer.

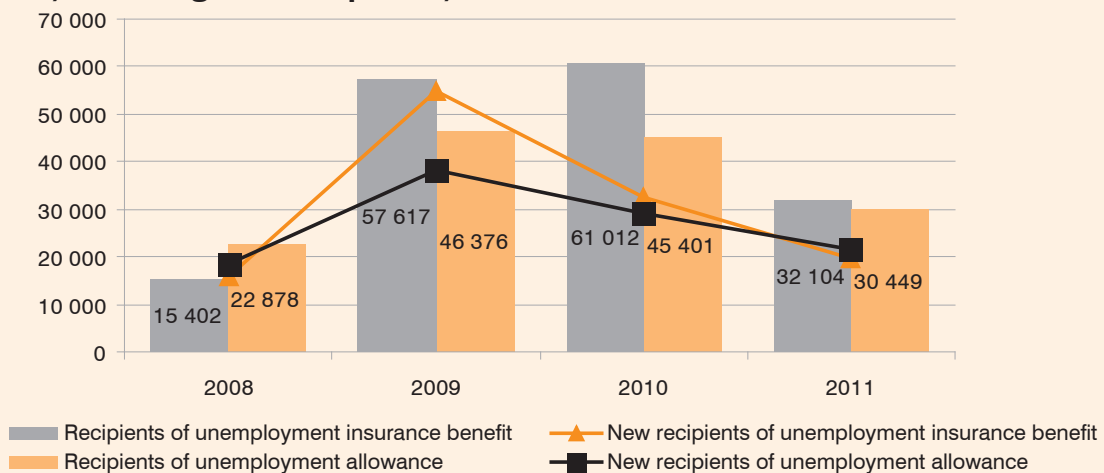
Unemployment allowance is paid to unemployed persons who have worked for at least 180 days during the previous 12 months or have been engaged for at least 180 days in activities that are considered as equivalent of work (e.g. studies, military service)<sup>25</sup>. In 2011, unemployment allowance was paid to 30,449 unemployed persons which is 32.9% less than in 2010. The number of recipients of unemployment allowance started to decrease at the beginning of 2010 and became stable during the last months of 2011, with a little less than 10,000 recipients a month. The number of new recipients of unemployment allowance has also decreased. In 2009, the average number of recipients

of unemployment allowance was 3182; in 2010, the respective number was smaller by 24% (2418) and in 2011, smaller by 44% (1784). On the average, new recipients of unemployment allowance formed 27% of new registered unemployed persons in 2011 (31% in 2010).

During the crisis, the number of recipients of unemployment insurance benefit also increased significantly, and since 2009 has exceeded the number of recipients of unemployment allowance. Rapid increase in the number of recipients of unemployment insurance benefit is due to the fact that many unemployed persons have previous work experience and had lost their jobs for reasons arising from the employer; this gave them the right to apply for unemployment insurance benefit. Unemployment insurance benefit is paid to unemployed person whose insurance period in the three preceding years is at least 12 months and whose last employment relationship did not end

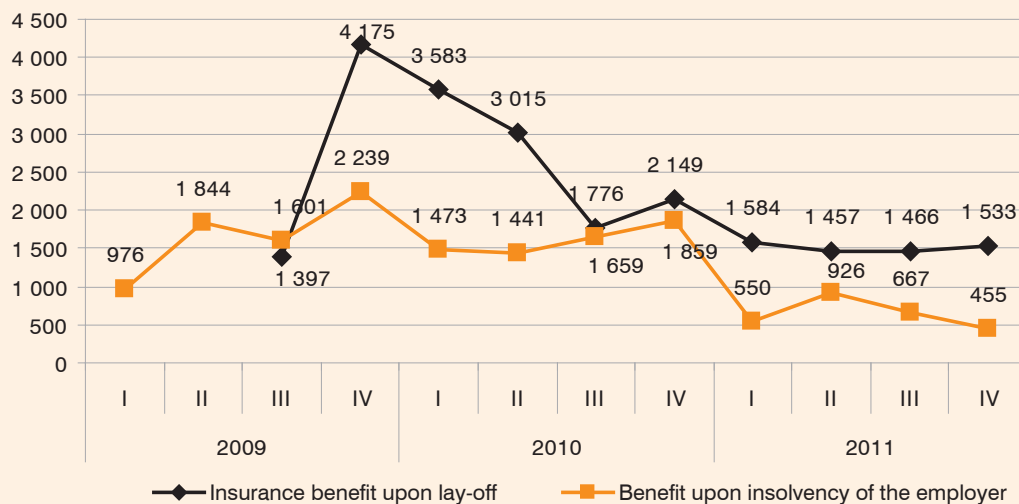
<sup>25</sup> Labour Market Services and Benefits Act (RT I, 21.12.2011, 23)

Figure 5.11. **Recipients of unemployment insurance benefit and unemployment allowance, including new recipients, 2008–2011**



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

Figure 5.12. **Recipients of benefit upon insolvency of the employer and insurance benefit upon lay-off, 2009–2011 (in a quarter)**



Source: Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

on their own initiative or mutual agreement<sup>26</sup>. In 2010, unemployment insurance benefit was paid to a total of 61,012 unemployed persons; in 2011, the respective number had decreased by 47%, i.e. 32,104 unemployed persons. Compared to 2010, the number of new recipients of unemployment insurance benefit decreased by 39% (from 32,363 to 19,830). On the average, new recipients of unemployment insurance benefit formed 25% of new registered unemployed persons in 2011 (45% in 2009, 34% in 2010). In 2011, the average paid unemployment insurance benefit was EUR 257 per month (EUR 265 in 2010).

Insurance benefit upon lay-off is paid since 1 July 2009<sup>27</sup> and it shall be paid to an employee whose employment relationship with current employer has lasted for at least five years and whose employment relationship was terminated as a result of redundancy. In case of insolvency of employer the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund shall pay to the worker any remuneration, holiday pay, and other benefits laid down in the Employment Contracts Act but not received upon the termination of the employment contract.

<sup>26</sup> Unemployment Insurance Act (RT I, 23.12.2011, 10)

<sup>27</sup> Collective redundancy benefit was paid prior to 1 July 2009.

The number of recipients of these benefits decreased significantly in 2011. In 2011, 6040 persons received insurance benefit upon lay-off; this is 43% less than in 2010. In 2011, the num-

ber of recipients of benefit upon insolvency of the employer was 2598; this is ca 60% less than in 2009 and 2010.

## 5.6. Expenditure on labour market policy

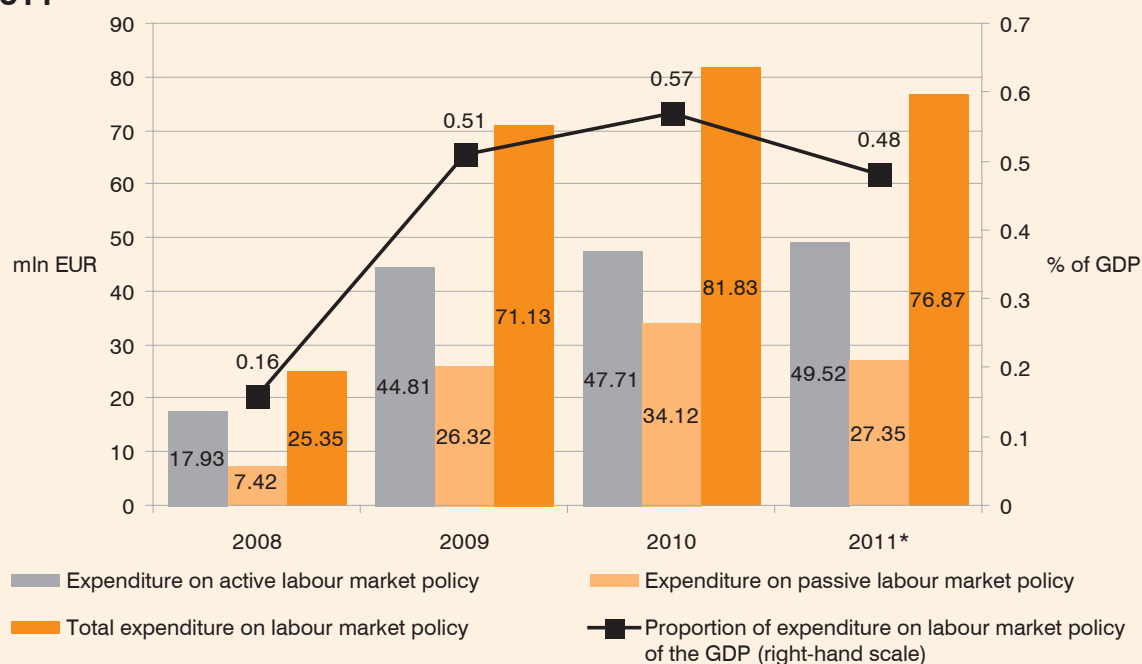
Labour market policy is funded from the state budget and external resources of the European Social Fund. Figure 5.13 illustrates the dynamics of expenditure and it is clear that expenditure on both active and passive labour market policy, and the proportion of the total expenditure in the GDP, has increased significantly in the last few years. In 2010, the proportion of the expenses on labour market policy in the GDP increased to 0.57%. According to the 2011 estimate, expenditure on labour market policy shall be 0.48% of the GDP (EUR 76.87 million).

Passive labour market policy includes expenditure on unemployment allowance and special social tax; benefits paid from unemployment insurance fund are not taken into account (unemployment insurance benefit, benefit upon insolvency of the employer, insurance benefit upon lay-off). Rapid increase in the number of unemployed per-

sons and accompanying need for the payment of unemployment allowance contributed to the drastic increase in expenditure, compared to 2008. In 2010, expenditure on passive labour market policy was EUR 34.12 million which is 4.6 times more than in 2008 and 29.6% more than in 2009. In 2011, expenditure on passive measures decreased somewhat, being EUR 27.35 million, i.e. 20% less than in the previous year.

Active labour market policy includes expenditure on various labour market services, operational expenditure of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund and other measures (e.g. open application rounds). In 2010, expenditure on active labour market policy formed 59% of all expenditure; the 2011 budget had estimated an increase to 64%. Expenditure on active labour market policy also increased significantly during the crisis as the number of unemployed persons in need of ser-

Figure 5.13. **Expenditure on labour market policy and proportion of the GDP, 2008–2011**



vices increased too. In 2010, expenditure on active labour market policy was EUR 47.71 million which is 2.7 times more than in 2008 and 6.5% more than in 2009. Compared to the previous year, expenditure increased by another 4% in 2011, reaching EUR 49.52 million.

In conclusion it can be said that after the significant increase in the proportion of registered unemployment in 2009 and the beginning of 2010, the number of registered unemployed persons has decreased noticeably, but at the end of 2011 it still

exceeded the level of registered unemployment as it was before the crisis. Therefore it is important to further contribute in helping unemployed persons via various labour market services, aiming to reduce the various factors that prevent a person from finding a job.

## 6. Working environment

Ester Rünkla

Working environment is the surroundings in which the person works. Pursuant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, it is the task of the employer to ensure that the working environment is safe to work in and safe to the health of employees.

Employers, employees and the state are interested in a good working environment and the development thereof.

- The expectations of the employer are related to avoiding occupational accidents and illnesses caused by work, increasing productivity, good capacity for work of the employees and competent activities by occupational healthcare specialists.
- The expectations of the employee are related to the improvement of the working environment in order to eliminate the possibility for damage to health, timely detection of health disorders and, if necessary, possibilities of rehabilitation and health promotion supported by the employer.
- The interests of the state are to decrease the health disorders of employees by ensuring a good level of occupational health and safety and lengthen the period of capacity for work of persons.

The worse the situation in the working environment, the more common are the occupational accidents and the more illnesses related to work are diagnosed. The internationally accepted indicators

for assessing the level of occupational health and safety in a state are:

- Number of occupational accidents per 100,000 employed persons;
- Number of fatal occupational accidents per 100,000 employed persons;
- Number of occupational diseases per 100,000 employed persons.

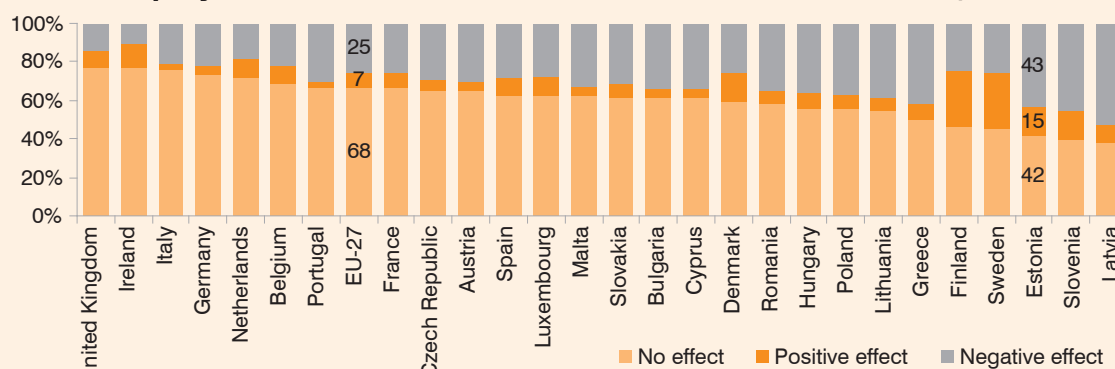
In Estonia, occupational accidents and occupational diseases are registered on the basis of the report of the employer; diseases caused by work are registered on the basis of a doctor's notice. Register for occupational accidents, occupational diseases and diseases caused by work is maintained by the Labour Inspectorate.

This chapter provides an overview of the effect of work on health and change in the indicators characterising the working environment over the last few years. Registered statistics shall be compared and assessments of employees on the indicators characterising the safety of the working environment, collected via surveys. In addition to the annual reports of the Labour Inspectorate, databases of the Estonian Labour Force Survey and Estonian Working Life Survey have been used when composing this overview as well as data from Eurostat, European Working Conditions Survey and reports on a stress-related survey of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work have been used.

### 6.1. Effect of work on health

As work is one of the most important activities in our lives, it has an effect on human health. International comparative statistics on the effect of work has been published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions who carries out a European working life survey after every five years.

Generally, such surveys address the effect of work on health from a negative aspect but certain questions were specified in the 2010 survey to analyse the effect of work on health and employees' assessments are collected on both the negative and positive effects of work on their health (see Figure 1).

Figure 6.1. **Employees' assessment on the effect of work on health, 2010**

Source: European Working Conditions Survey, 2010

Survey data is made up of the subjective assessments of employees but we can be happy about the fact that no less than 15% of employees in Estonia are of the opinion that their work has a positive effect on their health; this characteristic places Estonia in the same group with countries of high level of occupational health and safety such as Finland, Sweden and Denmark while in the European Union only an average of 7% of employees feels that their work has a positive effect on their health.

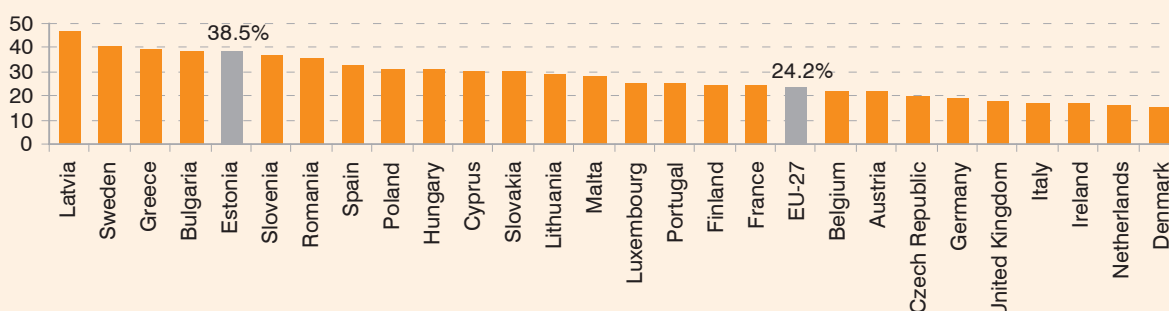
Compared to the average of the European Union Member States, the number of employees who feel that their work has a negative effect on their health is significantly bigger (25% and 43%, respectively), and the number of employees who say that their work has no effect on their health is significantly smaller (68% and 42%, respectively).

Assessment on the negative or positive effect of work given during the survey may be based on emotions, taking into account only employment relations, colleagues, etc. and excluding health hazards arising from risk factors in the working environment.

There are various hazards in the working environment where the employee is working, and such hazards may, after long-term contact, have an effect on the health of the employee and make the employee feel unwell, cause work-related diseases or injuries – such hazards may arise from machinery that are hazardous to health, structures, tools, used materials, work processes, organisation of work and nature of work. Below we will provide an overview of how employees assess the risk arising from their workplace on their health and safety.

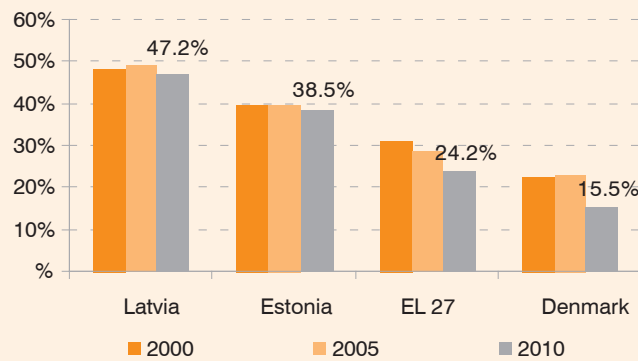
There are hazards in every working environment but it is the duty of the employer to reduce any risks of occupational accidents or disease arising from hazards. Analysis of the results of the survey shows that (see Figure 6.2) Estonia is among those European Union countries where employers seem to pay little attention to the safety of their employees' workplaces; it is surprising to find Sweden in this group as well.

To observe the developments over the last 10 years, we will compare Estonia to the average of

Figure 6.2. **Employees' assessments on health risks and safety arising from work, 2010**

Source: European Working Conditions Survey, 2010

Figure 6.3. **Employees' assessments on health risks and safety arising from work, 2000, 2005, 2010**



Source: European Working Life Survey, 2000, 2005, 2010

the 27 Member States of the European Union and, according to the 2010 survey (Figure 6.2), to the countries with the most hazardous and the safest working environment. Figure 6.3 illustrates the effectiveness of addressing occupational health. Over the last 10 years, the assessments of the Estonian employees have improved somewhat, and the same can be said about Latvia. This poses a question of how many years will it take, in such development pace, to reach the level of Denmark, or the average of the European Union today.

It can be concluded on the basis of the employees' assessments that although 15% of employees in Estonia feel that their work has a positive effect on their health, there are still 43% of employees who feel their work has a negative effect on their work (Figure 6.1), and almost all of them (38.5%, to be exact) are of the opinion that work poses a risk for their health and safety. In the terms of the European Union, Estonia is still among the countries where the working environment is not safe enough and does not pay enough attention to ensuring the health of employees.

## 6.2. Occupational accidents

Below we will provide an overview of the statistics of occupational accidents registered on the basis of employers' reports (this will be done in absolute numbers and as a ratio to 100,000 employed

persons) as well as of the employees' assessments, collected via surveys, on the frequency of occupational accidents and related sick days.

### 6.2.1. Registered occupational accidents

- In 2011, 3741 occupational accidents (2413 with men and 1328 with women) were registered in the Labour Inspectorate; compared to 2010, the number of accidents had increased by 526. In one year, the number of occupational accidents increased by 16.4 %. The ratio of occupational accidents to 100,000 workers has also increased to 614 occupational accidents (563 in 2010), i.e. 9%.
- The number of registered serious occupational accidents was 796. Compared to 2010, this number has increased by 11%, i.e. by 79

occupational accidents. The ratio of serious occupational accidents to 100,000 workers has also increased to 131 occupational accidents (125 in 2010). The proportion of serious occupational accidents of the number of all accidents decreased somewhat when compared to the previous year.

- The number of registered fatal occupational accidents was 19 (all involved men). Compared to 2010, the number of fatal occupational accidents has increased by 10%, i.e. by two occupational accidents.

Table 6.1. Occupational accidents by sectors of activity, 2009–2011

ACTIVITY	Total occupational accidents			Serious occupational accidents			Fatal occupational accidents		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2939</b>	<b>3215</b>	<b>3741</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	144	150	164	38	44	46	1	1	3
Mining	40	31	37	14	11	14	0	0	0
Food industry	203	182	203	23	33	29	0	0	0
Textile and leather industry	54	76	62	6	19	16	0	0	0
Timber industry	200	254	305	43	62	68	0	0	1
Furnishing industry	83	99	98	22	15	25	0	0	0
Paper production, printing	25	34	44	4	13	18	0	0	0
Production of chemicals and chemical products	94	101	141	18	23	20	0	0	1
Metal industry, manufacturing of machinery and equipment	267	291	352	79	79	84	2	0	1
Electricity, gas, steam and conditioned air	21	18	14	5	7	6	0	0	0
Water supply and sewerage	26	37	29	1	4	10	0	0	0
Construction	262	272	293	61	84	81	5	4	4
Wholesale and retail trade	279	313	360	38	60	62	0	1	3
Accommodation and food service activities	116	113	146	17	16	15	0	0	0
Transportation and storage	237	252	319	59	64	93	3	6	2
Information and communication	15	11	19	3	1	4	1	0	0
Financial intermediation, real estate	27	37	45	8	6	17	0	1	0
Professional, scientific and technical activities	27	32	30	6	6	9	0	1	0
Administrative and supportive activities	181	209	279	34	42	42	1	1	1
Public administration and defence; compulsory social insurance	334	368	425	42	44	53	5	2	3
Education	108	89	118	40	33	26	1	0	0
Human health and social work activities	108	142	155	23	27	29	0	0	0
Art, entertainment	73	76	73	9	15	19	0	0	0
Other service types	15	28	30	4	9	7	0	0	0

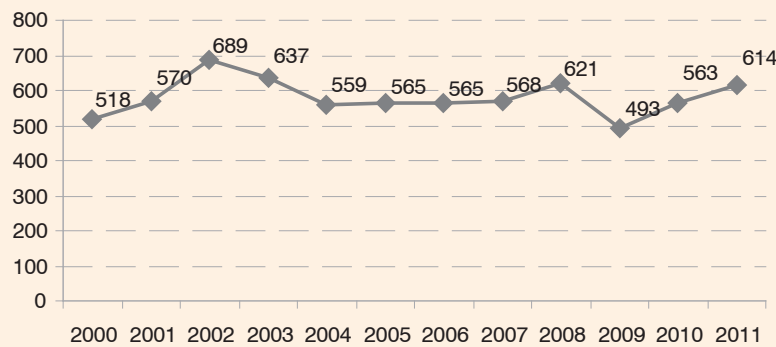
Source: Labour Inspectorate

The division by activities of occupational accidents occurred in the last three years and registered in the Labour Inspectorate is given in Table 6.1 below.

Compared to 2010, the number of registered occupational accidents increased in 2011 in almost all branches of manufacturing, especially in the undertakings of chemical industry and paper industry (40% and 29%, respectively), but also in accommodation and catering undertakings (29%) and in administrative and supportive activities

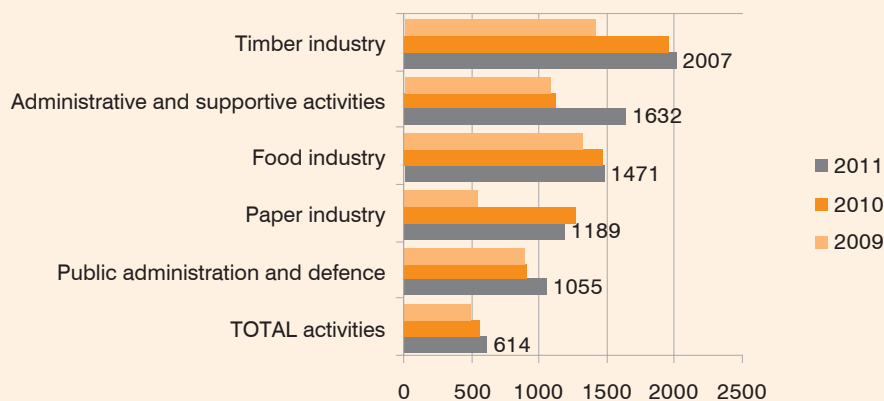
(33%). Of all the branches of manufacturing, the number of registered occupational accidents has decreased only in textile industry and furnishing industry (18%, i.e. by 14 occupational accidents and 1%, i.e. by one occupational accident, respectively). The number of occupational accidents has decreased noticeably (on the average, 22%) in the undertakings engaging in the supply with electricity, gas, steam and conditioned air, and in water supply and sewerage.

Figure 6.4. **Registered occupational accidents per 100,000 employed persons, 2000–2011**



Source: Labour Inspectorate

Figure 6.5. **Hazardous sectors of activity by the ratio of occupational accidents**



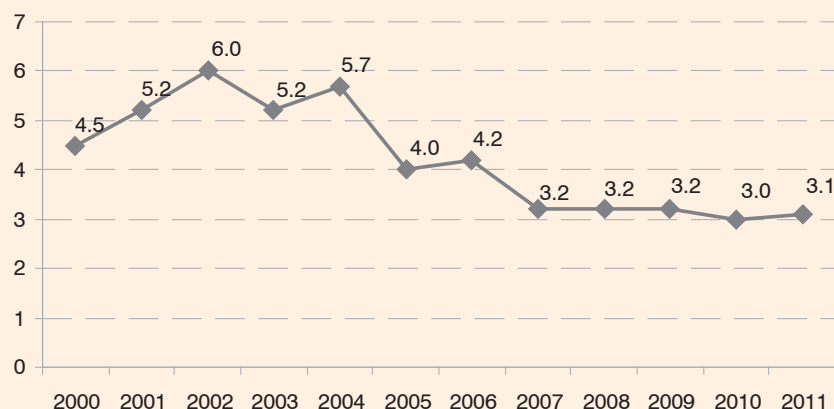
Source: Labour Inspectorate, Statistics Estonia

In terms of age, most occupational accidents involved men aged 25–34. For women, most accidents occurred in the age group of 45–54. According to the Labour Inspectorate, the majority of occupational accidents involve workers who have been working for less than a year, and one of the reasons for accidents is insufficient supervision and training.

In terms of fatal occupational accidents, construction sector still holds the first place, with four accidents; after construction there are manufacturing, agriculture, wholesale and retail trade and public administration and defence with three accidents, transport and storage with two accidents and administrative and supportive activities with one accident. Half of fatal occupational accidents involved young men aged 25–34; one victim was younger than 18 years of age.

The number of occupational accidents per 100,000 employed persons (see Figure 6.4) has been quite stable up to 2008. A sudden drop in 2003 was related to a change in legislation (accidents occurring on the way to work were no longer considered occupational accidents). The drop in 2009 (21%, compared to 2008) was probably related to the recession which contributed to the decrease in the number of employed persons and reduced the intensity of work.

Ratio of occupational accidents towards 100,000 employed persons enables to compare different sectors of activity from the viewpoint of harmfulness and draw conclusions on the effectiveness of addressing occupational health. In 2011, most occupational accidents per 100,000 employed persons occurred in the branches of manufacturing, such as timber industry, food industry and paper production; of the rest of the sectors most accidents

Figure 6.6. **Fatal occupational accidents per 100,000 employed persons, 2000–2011**

Source: Labour Inspectorate

happened in administrative and supportive activities and public administration and defence. In these sectors the proportion of occupational accidents per 100,000 differs from the average of all activities by 2–3 times (see Figure 6.5), i.e. considering the number of employed persons in the sectors of activity, every 50th person in timber industry is involved in an occupational accident while in all the other sectors the same indicator is 160.

For the third consecutive year, more occupational accidents per 100,000 employed persons have been registered in the public administration and defence sector than in several branches of production or manufacturing. According to the Labour Inspectorate the majority of occupational accidents registered in the public administration and defence sector involve the police, rescue workers and employees of prisons as well as peacekeepers in the defence sector.

The sector of construction sees many occupational accidents as well, some of them serious accidents, but pursuant to the registered statistics the construc-

tion sector per 100,000 employed persons is not as hazardous as it could be predicted. The Labour Inspectorate is of the opinion that this can be due to the tendency to hide occupational accidents, predominant in the construction sector, and this is confirmed by the analysis of employee surveys.

The ratio of fatal occupational accidents towards 100,000 employed persons has stayed more or less the same (Figure 6.6). The waves of fatal occupational accidents in the previous years were most likely random and related to a situation characteristic of Estonia – considering the small size of the country, the proportion of fatalities is quite small and thus the statistics is based on single occupational accidents.

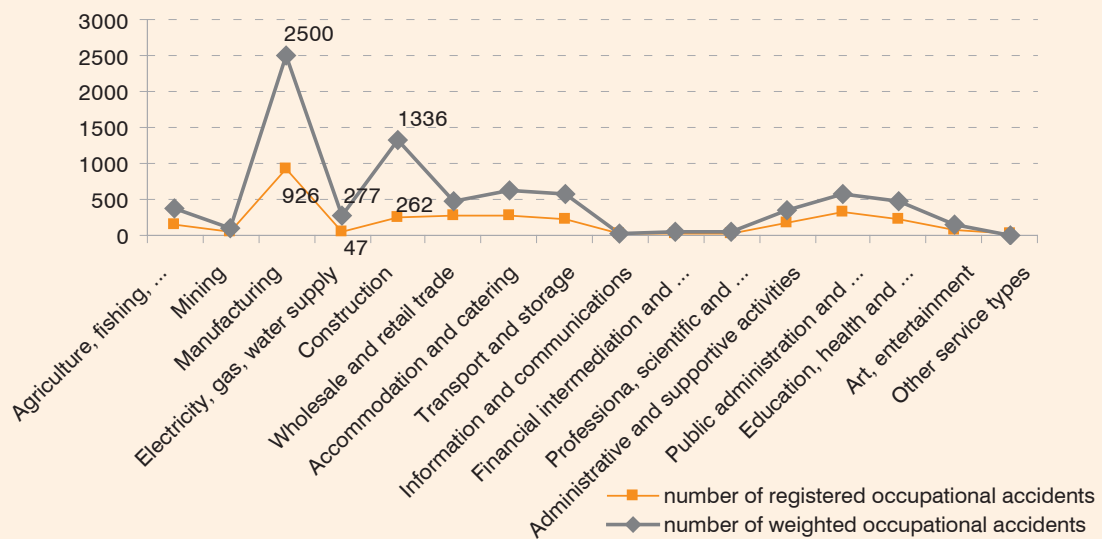
In conclusion it can be said about the statistics on registered occupational accidents that while Estonia's statistics on fatalities corresponds to reality, the rest of occupational accidents have not been sufficiently reported and it can be assumed that the statistics on sectors of activity is not accurate either.

### 6.2.2 Occupational accidents on the basis of survey data

Registration of occupational accidents and procedure of reporting differs from country to country, relying on the data of insurance undertakings or reports of employers. To compare the statistics on occupational accidents of different countries, Eurostat has introduced a methodology which

enables to compare the data on occupational accidents from the reports of employers to the data from insurance undertakings. To this end, the levels of underreporting of occupational accidents are used, calculated on the basis of surveys conducted in different countries.

Figure 6.7. **Registered occupational accidents and weighted occupational accidents by activity, 2009**



Source: Labour Inspectorate, Statistics Estonia

As in Estonia occupational accidents are registered on the basis of the reports of employers, it is probably the case of underreporting of occupational accidents. To obtain accurate information on the frequency of occupational accidents the methodologists of Statistics Estonia have used the data collected with surveys and calculated the weights of occupational accidents registered in the Labour Inspectorate which would enable to predict the actual frequency of occupational accidents. According to the data weighted by Statistics Estonia, the average weight of occupational accidents in 2009 was 2.6 and in terms of sectors of activity, the average weight was 2.7 in manufacturing, 5.9 in electricity, gas and water supply, and 5.1 in construction.

Comparison of registered occupational accidents and weighted occupational accidents (see Figure 6.7) provides an overview of the concealment of occupational accidents. The proportion of concealed occupational accidents is the largest in electricity, gas and water supply, and construction, followed by manufacturing.

Statistics Estonia has calculated the weights of registered occupational accidents for three years – in 2007, 2008 and 2009. A positive aspect here is that compared to the 2007 data, concealment of occupational accidents in manufacturing, energy, con-

struction and agriculture started to decrease and scope of reporting increase in 2009. Concealment/reporting of occupational accidents in the servicing sector has stayed the same.

Coded data on occupational accidents registered in the Labour Inspectorate along with weights shall be forwarded to Eurostat for the comparative statistics on occupational accidents between countries. In addition to the weights of occupational accidents calculated by Statistics Estonia, Eurostat takes into consideration several other aspects related to occupational accidents, e.g. the sector of activity of the undertaking, occupation of worker, tools used when the occupational accident occurred, nature of work, etc. In terms of comparison between countries, Eurostat's methodology for occupational accidents does not include all activities; it excludes public administration, education, health, social welfare, art and entertainment. Of the data on 3723 occupational accidents registered in Estonia in 2007 and forwarded to Eurostat, the use of Eurostat's methodology enable to develop statistics on 6567 occupational accidents so as to compare said data with other countries.

In addition to the calculation of weights of occupational accidents, surveys help predict the potential frequency of occupational accidents and the number of days of incapacity for work accompa-

nying the occupational accidents, on the basis of the assessments of employees. 2007 Labour Force Survey interviewed inhabitants of the European Union countries, aged 15–64, on occupational accidents occurred in the past 12 months. Survey results showed (see Figure 6.8) that over the last 12 months 2.3% of the respondents had been involved in an occupational accident in Estonia (total of ca 15,000 accidents), 69% of these (ca 10,000 accidents) were accompanied by at least one day of incapacity for work and 15% of the latter (ca 1500 accidents) accompanied by at least 30 days of incapacity for work.

Compared to the 3723 accidents registered in the Labour Inspectorate, 15,000 occupational accidents seems to be a large number but we must also take into consideration the respondent's subjectivity when assessing the events of the year. Compared with other countries of the European Union, Estonia lies on the positive side with this indicator (2.3% of unemployed persons); in the 27 countries of the European Union, the average proportion of persons involved in occupational accidents is 3.0%, in Finland even 6.3%.

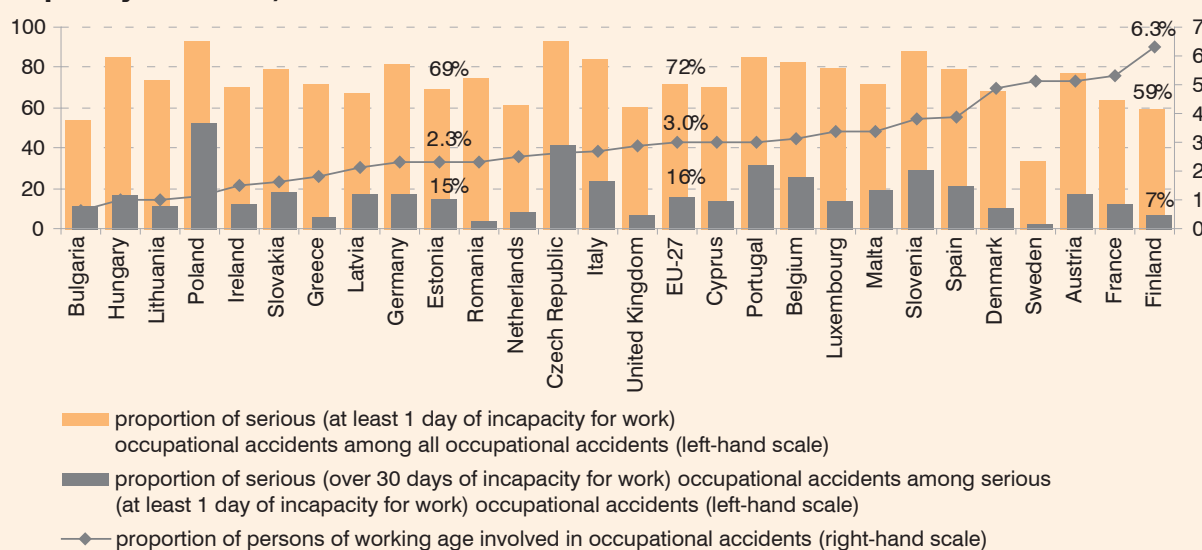
A much more objective assessment on the working environment comes from the employees' assessment on the frequency of serious occupational accidents.

Finland's indicator of the frequency of occupational accidents exceeded that of Estonia's by more than three times (6.3% and 2.3%, respectively) but the number of occupational accidents accompanied by at least one day of incapacity for work was bigger in Estonia (69% and 59% of all occupational accidents, respectively) and likewise, the number of serious occupational accidents accompanied by at least 30 days of incapacity for work was bigger in Estonia than in Finland (15% and 7% of all occupational accidents with days of incapacity for work).

It is certain that neither Finland nor France, Austria, Sweden and Denmark who all belong to the group of countries with a large proportion of occupational accidents, pursuant to the survey, are among the countries with the most hazardous working environments; it is more likely that the employees of these countries criticise the working environment and are more aware of their rights to a safe working environment, and much more so than in the new Member States of the European Union, including in Estonia.

In conclusion it can be said that while on the European Union level there is an objective to reduce the number of occupational accidents by 25% in the period of 2007–2012, in terms of Estonia it is more important to ensure reliable statistics on occupational accidents in the near future.

Figure 6.8. Proportion of occupational accidents by the number of days of incapacity for work, 2007



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey 2007

## 6.3. Health disorders related to work

Below we will provide an overview of the registered statistics of occupational diseases and illness caused by work as well as of the assessment of

employees, collected via surveys, of health disorders related to work. Special attention is paid to the spread of work-related stress.

### 6.3.1. Diseases caused by work

The Occupational Health and Safety Act classified health disorders caused by the hazards of the working environment into occupational diseases and diseases caused by work. Occupational diseases are health disorders that develop in case of long-term working under conditions that pose a health hazard. Occupational diseases are directly caused by the hazards of the working environment, i.e. there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the hazard and the disease. In the case of an occupational disease, the professional capacity for work of the injured person has decreased and he or she has a right to demand compensation for damage from the employer.

In case of diseases caused by work, the hazard of the working environment is one of the many factors that could cause the disease. Diseases caused by need the attention of specialists who deal with solving the issues of the working environment in order to channel the necessary resources to reduce the effect of the hazards of the working environment and prevent occupational diseases.

Pursuant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, occupational diseases and diseases caused by work are diagnosed by an occupational health doctor who will collect data about the current and previous working conditions and type of work for it. The Labour Inspectorate maintains a register of occupational diseases and, since 2004, of diseases caused by work as well.

In 2011, according to the Labour Inspectorate:

- 87 cases of occupational diseases (OD) were registered (29 men and 58 women), in the course of which 223 different diagnoses of occupational diseases have been raised (104 cases and 234 diagnoses in 2010);

- 167 cases of diseases caused by work (DCW) were registered (78 men and 89 women), there were 311 different diagnoses (154 cases in 2010);
- The age group with the most diagnoses of ODs or DCWs was persons aged 45–54 (aged 55–64 in 2010). Women are diagnosed with diseases in younger age groups than men. The number of persons diagnosed with disease has not increased in younger age groups but in 2011, disease caused by work was diagnosed for four persons younger than 25;
- Of occupations, the operators of various machines and skilled workers and craftsmen have the most diagnoses of ODs; the most diagnosed DCWs are among operators of lifting devices and unskilled workers in mines.

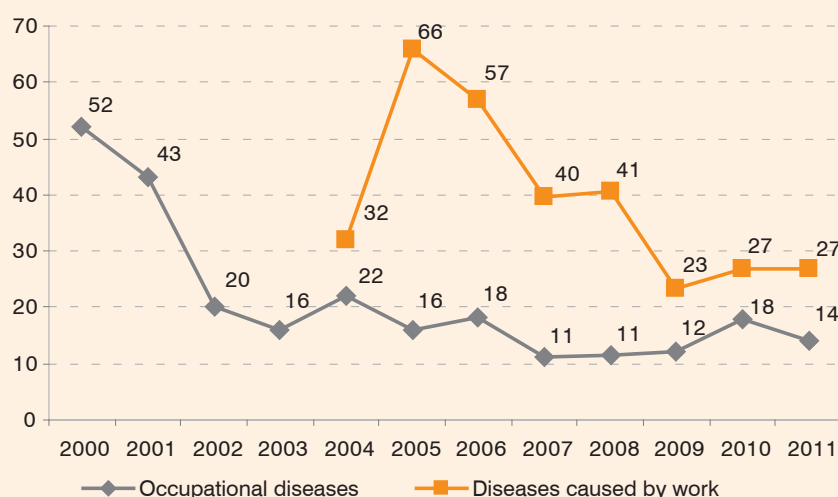
The substantial analysis of the ODs and DCWs of 2011 is available at the website of the Health Board: [www.terviseamet.ee/fileadmin/dok/Tervishoid/tootervis/toost\\_pohjustatud\\_haigused\\_2011.pdf](http://www.terviseamet.ee/fileadmin/dok/Tervishoid/tootervis/toost_pohjustatud_haigused_2011.pdf)

The constantly low level of registered occupational diseases and the continuing decrease in the number of diseases caused by work (Figure 6.9) can be explained on the one hand by the decrease in the number of employed persons in the recent years and also by the depending issues in the funding of occupational health services<sup>28</sup> provided by occupational health doctors.

A case of occupational disease is often registered as a disease caused by work because the occupational health doctor cannot perform the necessary expert assessments in order to diagnose the occupational disease due to funding issues. Taking into account the fact that essentially, a disease caused by work is the same as an occupational disease (in both cases,

<sup>28</sup> Occupational health service– fulfilling the duties of the occupational health doctor, occupational health nurse, occupational psychologist or ergonomist with the purpose of contributing to creating a safe working environment for the health of the employee, to prevent work-related diseases and to preserve and promote the health capacity for work of the employee.

Figure 6.9. **Registered occupational diseases and diseases caused by work per 100,000 employed persons in Estonia, 2000–2011**



Source: Labour Inspectorate

at least one of the factors causing the disease is the hazard of the working environment), it is important that workers do not continue working under

the same conditions and in the same working environment where the disease was formed for both diseases caused by work and occupational diseases.

### 6.3.2. Work related diseases on the basis of survey data

Occupational diseases and diseases caused by work are registered when the occupational health doctor has diagnosed a relationship between the disease and the hazard of working environment.

The definition of a work related disease is broader, covering all health disorders and diseases that working conditions may cause, aggravate or cause along with other factors. Data about diseases related to work is collected with surveys.

According to the 2011 Labour Force Survey conducted in Estonia, 6.7% of employed persons aged 15–64 (ca 40,000 persons), had experienced a health disorder related to work in the last 12 months (except occupational diseases). In 2007, the respective number was 9.8%.

Changes in the nature of work in the last decades have drawn attention to psycho-social health disorders caused or deepened by the psychological hazards in the working environment. Psycho-social health disorders arise from the employee's need to adjust to the changes in working environment and

organisation of work, and from tensions related to work-related requirements if these exceed the employee's capacity to manage, adjust or control them. Figure 6.10 uses the data from the Estonian Working Life Survey and provides an overview of the proportion of employees who have experienced psycho-social health disorders caused or deepened by work during the month preceding the survey.

The survey shows that nearly one fifth of employees have experienced such psycho-social health disorders, e.g. mental or physical exhaustion caused by tension at work, work-related stress or nervousness. The proportion of sadness caused by tension at work is somewhat smaller.

Psycho-social health disorders are more common among women. 13% of men and 17% of women have experienced work-related stress; 12% of men and 19% of women have experienced nervousness arising from tension at work, 4% of men and 9% of women have experienced sadness arising from tension at work, 15% of men and 21% of women have experienced physical and mental exhaustion.

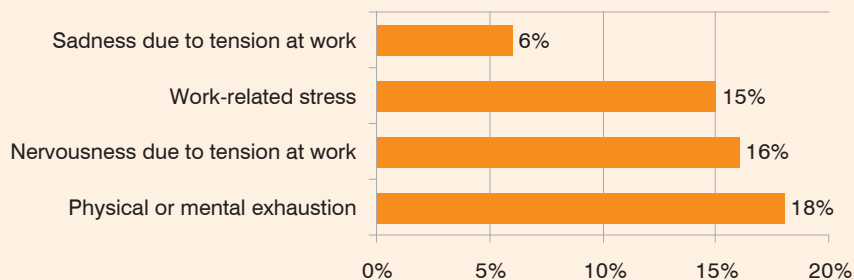
Psycho-social health disorders are more common among middle-aged persons. 11% of persons aged 15–24 and 14% of persons over 50 years of age have experienced work-related stress; the same number for persons aged 25–49 is 17%. Nervousness arising from tension at work is more common among persons aged 15–24 (20%), compared to persons aged 25–49 (16%) and those over 50 years of age (14%).

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work regularly organises cross-European surveys on health and safety at work. One of the aims of the survey conducted in 2011 was to assess the spread of work-related stress. Over 35,000 persons were surveyed in 36 European countries. It was revealed that most European employees are worried by work-related stress. This survey does not say how many people currently experience work-related stress, but it is directed at the future, trying to assess the spread of work-related stress in the coming years.

According to the Estonian Working Life Survey, in 2009, 15% of employees felt that they were experiencing work-related stress (See Figure 6.10); according to the survey conducted in Europe in 2011, 39% of Estonian residents feel that work-related stress will aggravate significantly in the next five years. Only 7% of the Estonian residents thought that work-related stress will decrease in the future.

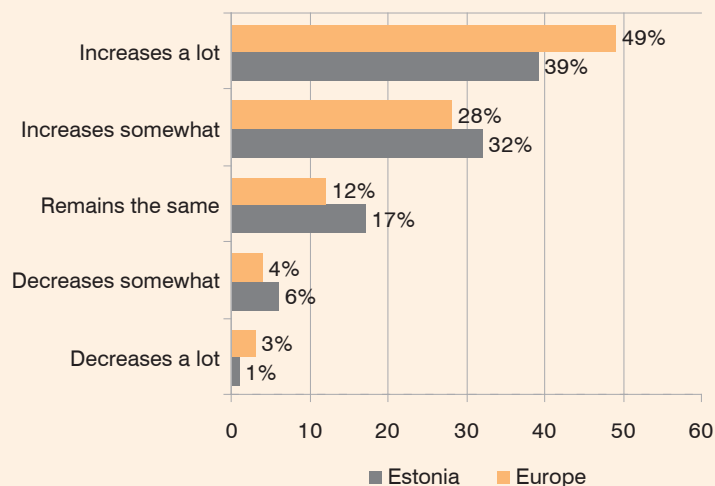
In conclusion it can be said that registered statistics on occupational diseases and diseases caused by work is probably under-registered due to problems related to the provision of occupational health services. Surveys often include questions on diseases related to work but taking into consideration the various methodologies of surveys, the results of surveys cannot often be compared and thus it is not possible to present reliable trends on work-related diseases over the years.

Figure 6.10. **Psycho-social health disorders caused or deepened by work**



Source: Estonian Working Life Survey 2009

Figure 6.11. **Estimate of the spread of work-related stress in the next five years**



Source: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011

In conclusion of the working environment chapter it can be said that pursuant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act it is the duty of the employer to ensure safe and healthy working environment. However, 38.5% of employees are certain that their work is a hazard for their health and safety.

As in Estonia occupational accidents and occupational diseases are registered on the basis of the reports of employers, it is probably the case of underreporting of occupational accidents and occupational diseases. The number of occupational accidents registered in 2011 was 3741 and the number of diseases caused by a hazard of the working environment was 254, but it becomes clear from the surveys that the number of occupational accidents per year is nearly 15,000 and nearly 40,000 persons experience work-related health disorders every year.

Occupational accidents and diseases caused by hazards of the working environment are the result of the activities of employers ignoring the Occupational Health and Safety Act. National supervision over the compliance with the requirements of the working environment is carried out by the Labour Inspectorate. 1749 undertakings were inspected in

2011, which is 12% of undertakings with 5 or more employees. Inspectors of the Labour Inspectorate gave a positive assessment on 81% of the working environments of inspected undertakings and are certain that the number of undertakings with good working environments has noticeably increased recently. Annual reports of the Labour Inspectorate can be found at: [www.ti.ee](http://www.ti.ee).

It is important to ensure the good health of the employee and to this end both the employers and the employees must pay attention to the environment where the person works, and to the manner of working. Occupational health addresses the effect of work on the health of the worker and includes activities for ensuring the health of workers. If the issue of occupational health is ignored, the work shall cause diseases and injuries. To improve the working environment, the labour market policy-makers have recently conducted several surveys in order to identify the activities and occupations that are most hazardous to the health of workers, so as to increase the awareness of employers and employees of the need and possibility to create a healthy working environment by developing instructions for employers and employees.



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