



Western Balkans
**Youth
& Jobs**
in 2020

2020 was marked by the **COVID-19 pandemic** crisis worldwide, which in the Western Balkans **stopped job creation**, affecting severely the job prospects of **young people**, especially those who hadn't had a secure job when the crisis struck.



Out of close to **18 million people** living in the Western Balkans, **around 3 million are young people**¹



30%

Western Balkans' labour force involves around **7.5 million people (15-64)**, and **only around 30%** of Balkan's **youth (15-24 years of age)** are active in the labour markets



lower than **EU**
average of **37.8%**



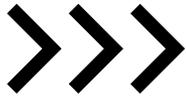
23.3%

Large **gender gap** in youth labour force participation between activity rates for **young men** averaging **36.5%** against the rate for **young women of 23.3%**

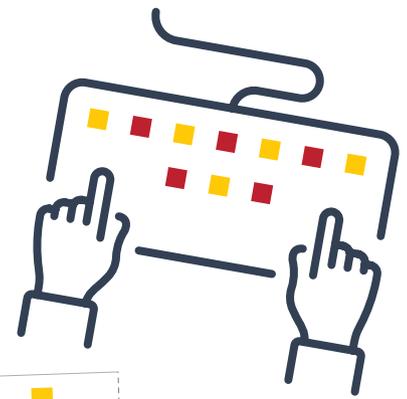


¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/news/themes-in-the-spotlight/western-balkans-2019>

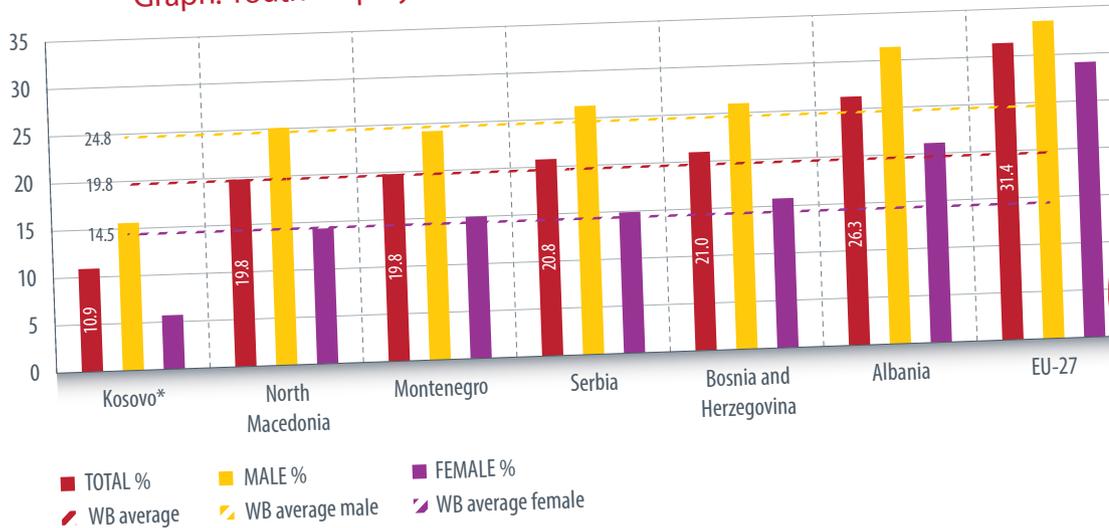
Employment



In 2020 was **below 27%** in all WB6 economies



Graph: Youth Employment



Compared to **31.4%** in the EU

30%

Despite the mitigation measures, there was a **30% increase** in registered youth unemployment in the period February - December 2020 in the region.

Youth in the Western Balkans are **frequently employed:**

- ▷ through **temporary job contracts**
- ▷ with **disproportionate share of part-time contracts**
- ▷ **informally** and
- ▷ suffering from **“underemployment”** (working in jobs below their skill level)



which could result in anxiety due to lack of job security; negative effects on productivity, especially in high-skill sectors; lower earnings; etc.

Unemployment



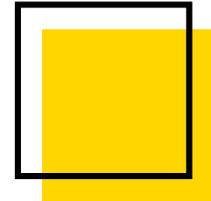
Average **regional youth unemployment** rate is **35.1%**, more than double the youth unemployment rate of **17% in the EU**



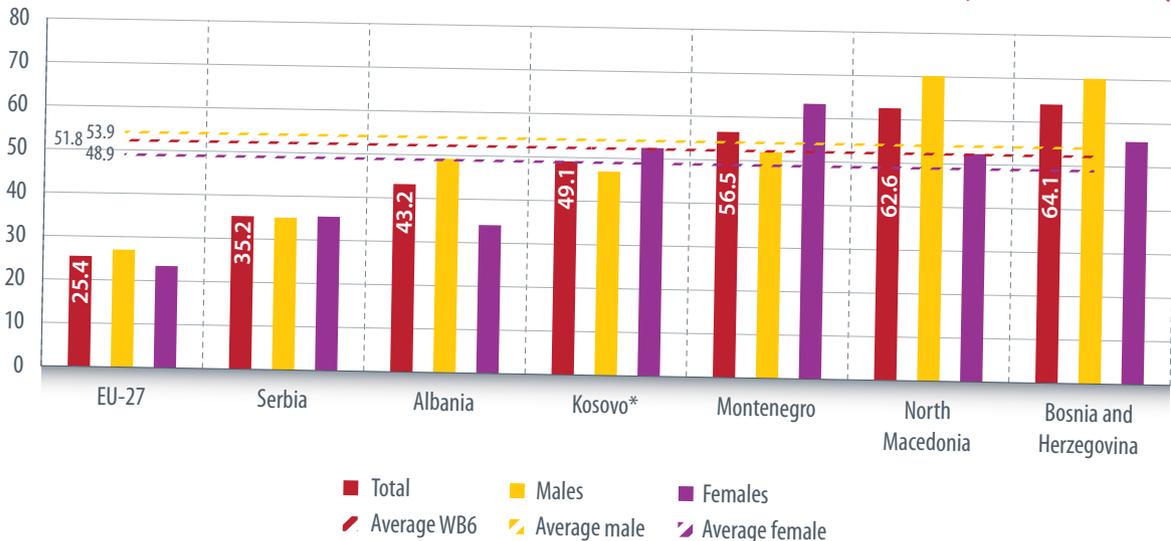
In 2020 marked with **COVID 19** pandemic **youth unemployment increased** throughout the region from **33.12%** Western Balkan average in 2019 to **35.1%**

Long-Term Unemployment

or being unemployed for more than 12 months affects **more than half of young, unemployed people** in the Western Balkans



Graph: Long-term youth unemployment as a share of total unemployment, 2019 (%)





Level of education affects young people's position in the labour market - activity rate of young people with only low level of education (primary school or less)

is below

10%

in WB economies

(except Albania)

7.2%

is average employment rate for **youth with low level of education**

(with the exception of Albania) - less than half of EU's

18.5%

Although much better

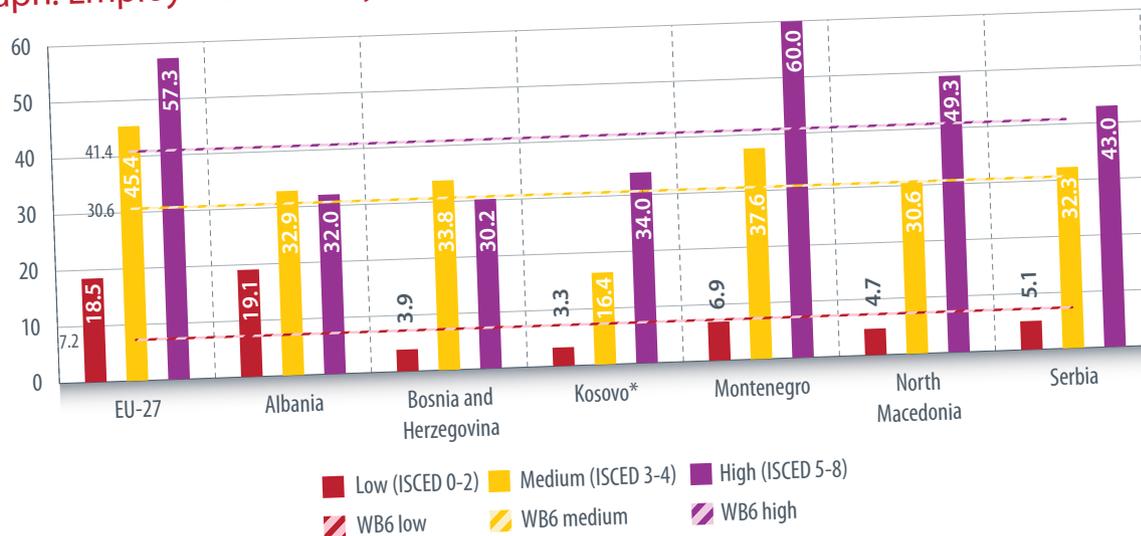
(41.4%)

the WB6 employment rate for **highly educated youth** still significantly falls behind the EU average of

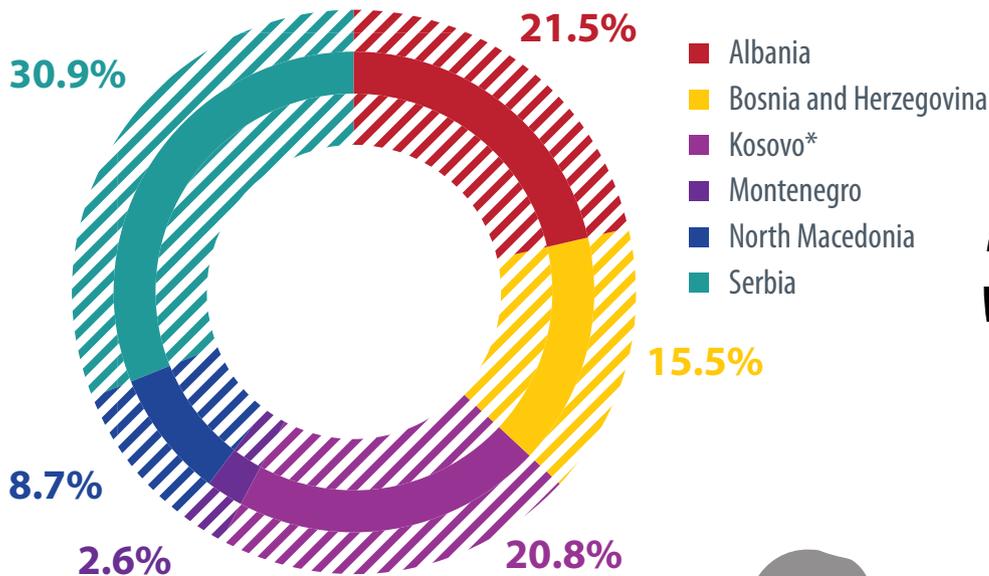
57.3%



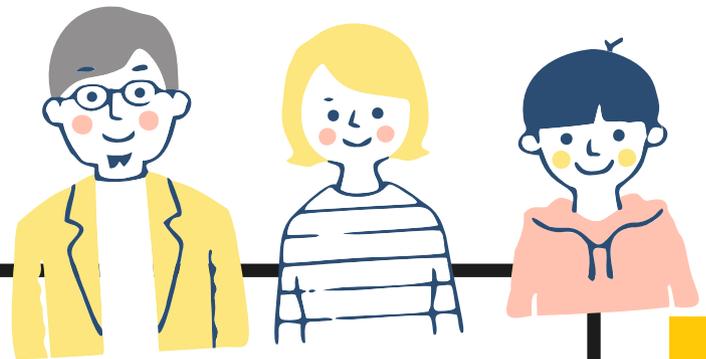
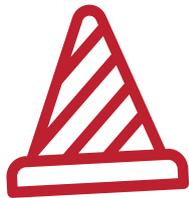
Graph: Employment rate by education



Graph: Proportion/share of NEETs in the Western Balkan economies



There are around **530,000 NEETs** aged 15-24 in **WB6**, out of which **352,000 are unregistered.**



NEETs

23.7% of young people in the Western Balkans are **Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training** (NEET), which is **an increase of 2.4%** from the **2019** and **poorly** compares with **11.1% in the EU.**



Main areas of concern regarding youth employment in WB6

- ▷ teaching of skills demanded by the labour market
- ▷ job search process leading to skills mismatches or lengthy transitions from school and university to work
- ▷ lack of available jobs for young people
- ▷ lack of child-care facilities to support women returners to work
- ▷ high level of informality

Young people think

- ▷ **Inadequate employment opportunities** are one of the biggest problems they face **(62%)**
 - ▶ Followed by **lack of access to education** or quality education **(14%)**, and
 - ▶ **Lack of structured dialogue** and activism **(12%)**.
- ▷ **92%** believe that **public administrations should strengthen mechanisms for consulting and involving youth in decision-making**



According to RCC's Balkan Barometer 2021



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All data sources used in this brochure
are available in Study on Youth
Employment in Western Balkans



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