



15.0% OF SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS IN ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE AND 11.4% IN ORGANISATIONAL DEPENDENCE

Of the total of 736.8 thousand self-employed workers in 2024, 15.0% (110.8 thousand; 2.3 percentage points (pp) more than in 2023) had a client which represented 75% or more of their income (after taxes), an indicator of economic dependence. From that total, 11.4% (84.2 thousand; down 0.9 pp) stated that their working hours are determined by their clients, an indicator of organisational dependence. Combining these two types of dependence, it can be said that 2.1% (15.6 thousand; 0.2 pp more) of the self-employed workers were, simultaneously, economically and organisationally dependent.

Of the total of 7,923.3 thousand people aged 16 to 74, 11.7% (925.3 thousand; 0.4 pp less than in 2022) attended formal education and 28.7% (2,274.2 thousand; up 3.1 pp) attended a non-formal education course in the last 12 months. Combining these two types of education, it was observed that 35.5% (2,809.5 thousand; up 2.1 pp) of that population participated in at least one type of education and training activities in the past 12 months.

Of the total of 9,068.1 thousand people aged 16 to 89 years, 39.5% (3,585.3 thousand; 0.2 pp more than in 2022) assessed their general health status as good. However, 4.4% (397.5 thousand; down 1.1 pp) considered themselves to be severely limited by health problems, for at least 6 months, to perform activities or tasks considered usual for most people.

In the context of Portugal 2030 Strategy, in 2024, the education indicator estimated with Labour Force Survey data closest to its target was the share of people aged 20 to 24 with at least an upper secondary qualification (89.3%), which was at 0.7 pp from the minimum target of 90%.

1. Introduction

In 2021, a new series of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) began, introducing some changes to this statistical operation, of which stand out, for the purposes of this Press Release, the modularization of the questionnaire (which now includes questions of different periodicities), the introduction, redefinition and elimination of variables, and the implementation of a subsampling strategy in the estimation of non-quarterly variables.¹

The subsampling strategy (wave approach) consists of taking advantage of the organisation of the LFS sample in waves. This feature enables the construction of an annual microdata base composed of four subsamples, each one corresponding to the wave that enters in the sample for the first time (new rotation) in each quarter. This

¹ For a more detailed analysis of the new features introduced by the new series of the Labour Force Survey, see the note attached to the Press Release "Employment Statistics - 1st quarter 2021" available at <http://www.ine.pt/xurl/dest/472918526>.



means that, in each quarter, the annual, biennial and eight-yearly questions are only asked to 1/6 of the quarterly sample's households (new rotation). In subsequent interviews, only quarterly questions are applied to these households, regardless of the result of the first interview. Therefore, the microdata base with non-quarterly questions is only completed after the end of the 4th quarter of each year.

This methodology made it possible to reduce the statistical burden on families and, consequently, the interview time, as they only responded to the entire questionnaire in one of the six survey quarters (in the quarter in which they enter the sample for the first time).

Nevertheless, it was observed that the estimates obtained from the four sub-samples were associated with higher coefficients of variation than expected for the usual breakdown variables, not allowing their dissemination and analysis to the extent requested by Statistics Portugal's information users.

In this context, the impact on the coefficients of variation of doubling the number of sub-samples used to eight, the maximum allowed under the wave approach strategy, was studied and it was concluded that the improvement was not enough to sustain the maintenance of this data collection strategy, as the balance between reducing the statistical burden on families and disseminating useful information to society was not being achieved.

Therefore, in the 1st quarter of 2024, Statistics Portugal dropped the sub-sampling strategy for the annual and biennial variables defined at the start of the 2011 series.^{2 3}

In this Press Release, Statistics Portugal analyses some of these variables which are structural, i.e. they are stable over the quarters and it is sufficient to study them annually. In addition to these, the evolution of education indicators estimated Labour Force Survey data towards their targets set within the scope of the Portugal 2030 Strategy are also analysed.⁴

Since the weighting factors of persons in the subsample wave approach are adjusted to a set of selected variables to ensure their consistency with the weighting factors for the annual averages obtained from the complete sample, it is possible to make a direct comparison between the estimates collected using the wave approach strategy (from 2021 to 2023) and those collected on a quarterly basis in the overall quarterly sample (from 2024 onwards).^{5 6}

² As required by the [Integrated European Social Statistics Framework Regulation](#), the wave approach strategy is maintained for the variables in the regular and ad hoc modules collected jointly with the Labour Force Survey.

³ To minimise the impact of the statistical burden on families, the number of 'dependent variables' was increased, i.e. variables that, when pre-defined criteria are met, do not need to be collected and a previous response is replicated.

⁴ Other structural variables are available on request and subject to an analysis of the reliability of the estimates obtained.

⁵ The figures presented in this analysis differ from those previously published due to the revision of the calibration weights based on Monthly Resident Population Estimates, calculated specifically for the Labour Force Survey according to the 2021 Census final results, which covered the estimates from the 1st quarter of 2011 to the 1st quarter of 2024. For more details, please consult the methodological note released together with the Press Release "[Employment Statistics - 2nd quarter 2024](#)", published on the Statistics Portugal's website.

⁶ Nonetheless, to ensure simple and legible graphics, the Figures presented refer to the last three years.



2. Economically dependent self-employed workers

In this section, it is analysed the impact of clients on the activity of self-employed workers, namely the existence of clients who alone account for a high share of the worker's income and who have the possibility of stipulating the worker's working hours.

From the total of 736.8 thousand self-employed workers in 2024, 68.9% (507.9 thousand) had 10 or more clients and none of them was considered dominant, that is, none of them represented individually 75% or more of the worker's income (after paying taxes). That share is 3.1 percentage points (pp) lower than in 2023.

Additionally, 8.3% (61.2 thousand) of self-employed workers stated that, in the last 12 months, they only had one client (which represents an increase of 1.2 pp from the previous year), 4.5% (33.3 thousand; 0.4 pp more) had between 2 and 9 clients, one of which dominant, and 2.2% (16.4 thousand; 0.7 pp more) had 10 or more clients, also one of which was dominant. In other words, 15.0% (110.8 thousand) of self-employed workers had a dominant client in 2024, which represents an increase of 2.3 pp from 2023.

When self-employed have only one client or, if they have two or more clients, one of them is dominant, this is considered as "economic dependence". In 2024, this is more frequent among men (15.8%) than among women (13.9%), young people between 16 and 34 years old (19.9%), individuals with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (17.2%), and those working in the agriculture, farming of animals, hunting and forestry sector (49.9%).

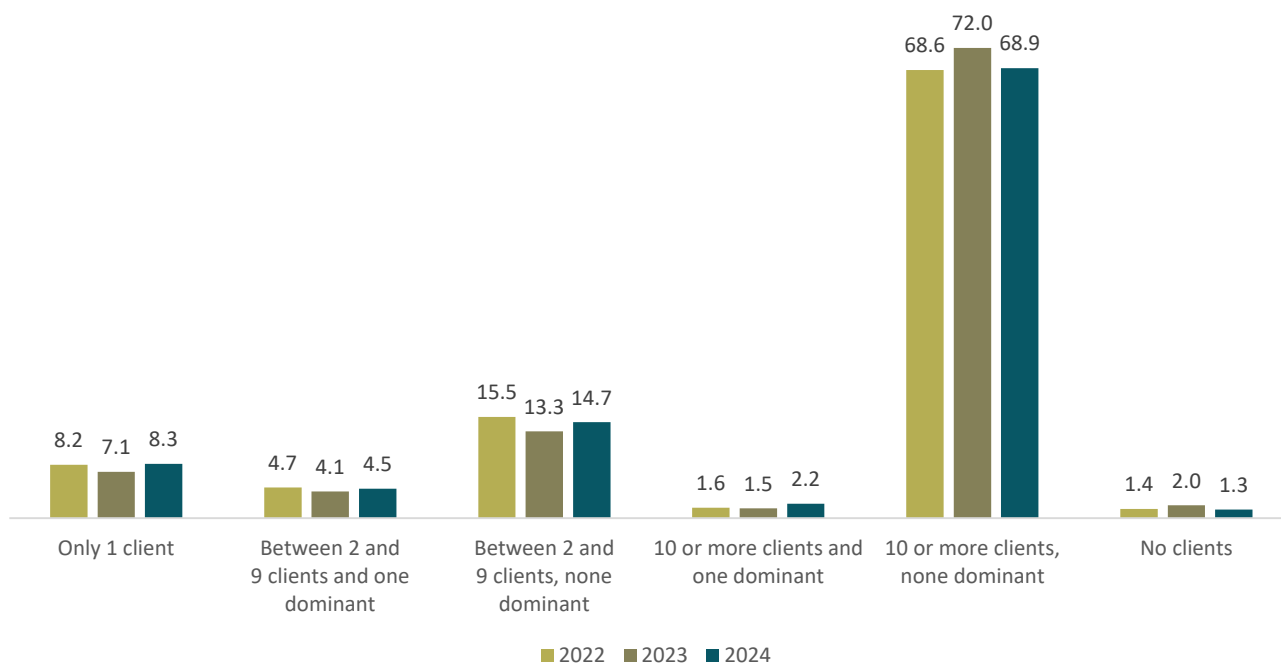
Another measure that allows for the analysis of the impact of clients on the self-employed's activity is related to the determination of daily working hours.

In 2024, of the total of 736.8 thousand self-employed workers, 71.4% (526.4 thousand) considered that they determine their daily working hours without restrictions, a lower share than in 2023 (down 1.6 pp), while 17.1% (126.2 thousand; up 2.4 pp) reported that their working hours are determined by circumstances other than their clients (for example, legal provisions) and 11.4% (84.2 thousand; down 0.9 pp) stated that it is their clients who establish their working hours.

When clients determine the working hours, this is considered to be "organisational dependence". Similarly to economic dependence, organisational dependence was more common among young people between 16 and 34 years old (14.7%). However, it was higher among women (12.1%) than men (11.0%), among those with upper secondary and post-secondary education (13.4%), and in the services sector (12.4%).

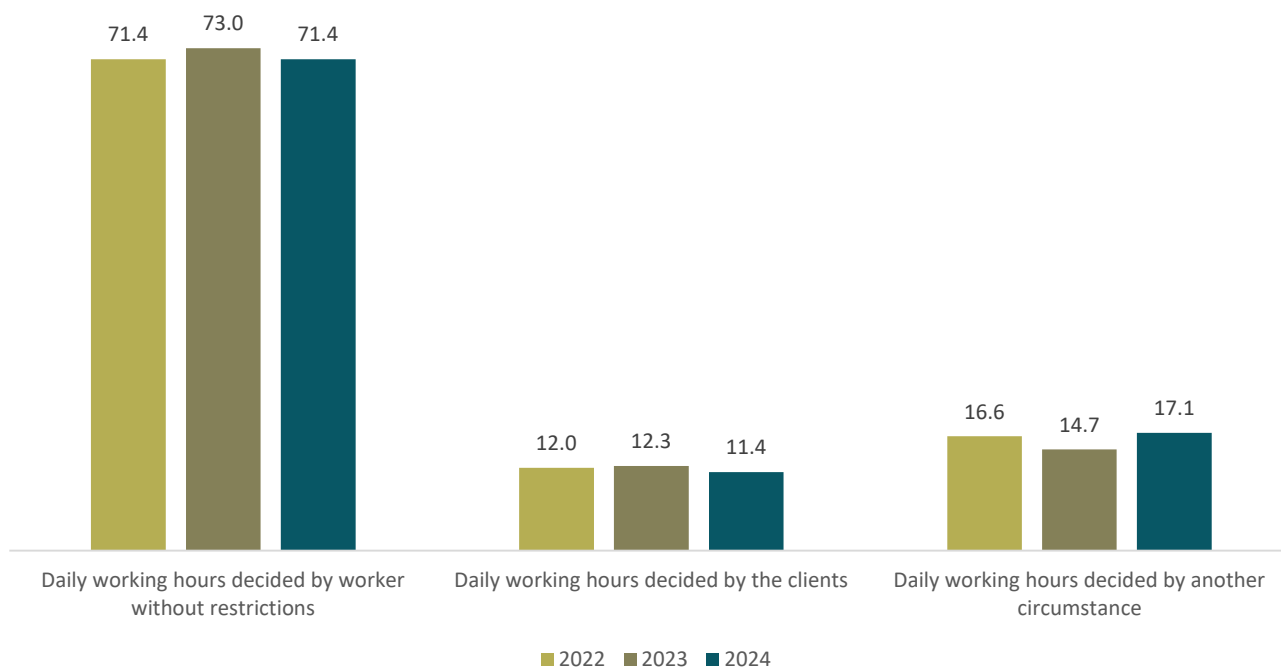


Figure 1. Self-employed workers by number and importance of clients in the last 12 months (%)



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Force Survey – 2024.

Figure 2. Self-employed workers according to who decides the daily working hours (%)



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Force Survey – 2024.



The two measures analysed, economic dependence (a single client or the existence of a dominant client) and organisational dependence (clients who determine the daily working hours), are part of the indicator on “economically dependent self-employed workers”, which considers the number of self-employed workers economically dependent on a single client or on a dominant client, with that client determining the daily working hours.⁷

In 2024, this indicator covered 15.6 thousand people, corresponding to 0.3% of the total employed population and 2.1% of the self-employed workers. Compared to the previous year, this indicator increased by 2.1 thousand people (15.3%), covering a higher share of self-employed workers (1.9% in 2023). Their weight in the employed population has remained unchanged.

Table 1. Self-employed workers by economic and organisational dependence

	2024					
	Total	Organisational dependence	Organisational independence	Total	Organisational dependence	Organisational independence
	Thousands			%		
Total	736.8	84.2	652.6	100.0	11.4	88.6
Economic dependence	110.8	15.6	95.2	15.0	2.1	12.9
Economic independence	626.0	68.6	557.4	85.0	9.3	75.7

Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Force Survey – 2024.

3. Attendance of education and training activities by adults

The set of biennial questions previously collected in even years⁸ include a group of questions on the participation in education and training activities in the last 12 months (as in AES⁹), in addition to the quarterly questions about the last 4 reference weeks. These questions are fundamental for the calculation of public policy monitoring indicators in this area.

Thus, the population from 16 to 74 years of age was asked about the attendance, in the last 12 months, of formal education activities (that which confers an education level) or of non-formal education (those which, despite

⁷ Eurostat, in its releases, restricts this indicator to the self-employed persons without employees. Considering this population group, in 2024, the indicator “economically dependent self-employed persons” covered to 13.3 thousand people, representing 0.3% of the total employed population, 1.8% of self-employed workers and 2.7% of self-employed workers without employees.

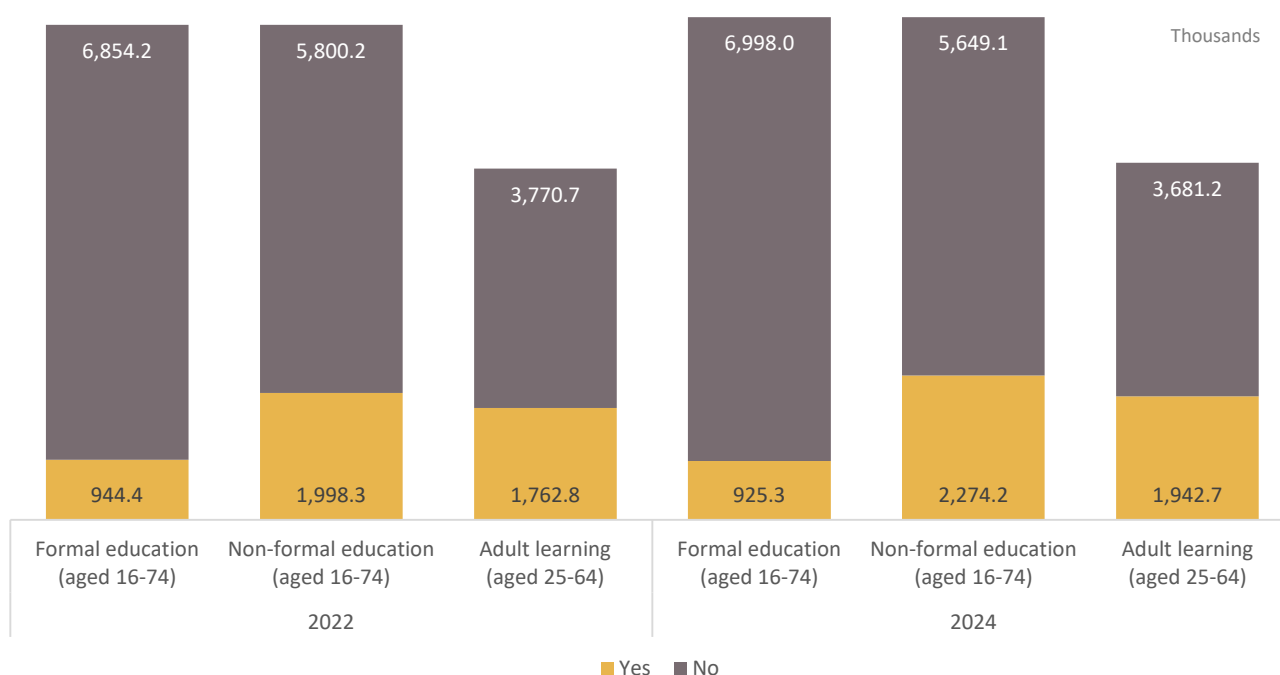
⁸ This is why, while the wave approach strategy was in place, they were only collected in 2022.

⁹ The Adult Education Survey (AES) is a survey of the European Statistical System, carried out every six years, with the main objective of analysing the participation of the adult population (aged 18 to 69) in education, training and learning activities. The results of the latest edition of this survey (AES 2022) can be found in the Press Releases of [17 October 2023](#) and of [22 March 2024](#).

being institutionalized, only confer a certificate of attendance and not a level of education; for example, an English course at a language institute).¹⁰

In 2024, of the total of 7,923.3 thousand people aged 16 to 74, 11.7% (925.3 thousand; 0.4 pp less than in 2022) indicated having attended formal education activities and 28.7% (2,274.2 thousand; up 3.1 pp) a non-formal education course in the last 12 months.

Figure 3. Attendance of education and training activities in the last 12 months



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Force Survey – 2024.

Attending formal education was more common in *Grande Lisboa* region (13.2%; 206.9 thousand), similar among men (11.7%; 448.8 thousand) and women (11.6%; 476.5 thousand), in the 16 to 24 age group (70.8%; 693.1 thousand) and among the inactive population (24.7%; 614.3 thousand). However, 4.9% (250.5 thousand) of the employed population stated having attended one of these activities. Of these, 91.5% (229.3 thousand) were employees, 85.5% (214.1 thousand) worked in the service sector and 37.9% (94.9 thousand) were professionals.

The attendance of non-formal education activities was also higher in *Grande Lisboa* region (34.5%; 540.0 thousand), but more common among women (29.3%; 1,202.2 thousand) than men (28.0%; 1,072.0 thousand). The group of those aged 35 to 44 had the highest share of people who attended these courses (37.6%; 507.6 thousand) and participation in this type of activities occurred more frequently among the employed

¹⁰ A more precise definition of the concepts of formal and non-formal education can be found in the Technical Note at the end of this Press Release.



population (35.9% ; 1,825.3 thousand), unlike what was observed in the attendance of formal education activities. Nevertheless, the profile of the set of employees who attended non-formal education activities in the last 12 months was similar to that of those who attended formal education: 89.5% (1,634.0 thousand) were employees, 79.6% (1,453.6 thousand) worked in the service sector and 36.6% (667.7 thousand) were professionals.

Combining the answers on the attendance of these two types of education allows to conclude that, in 2024, from the total of 7,923.3 thousand people aged between 16 and 74 years, 35.5% (2,809.5 thousand; 2.1 pp more than in 2022) attended education and training activities in the last 12 months, either formal education or non-formal education. Restricting the analysis to those aged between 25 and 64 years, it is possible to determine the indicator “Adult learning”, which covered 1,942.7 thousand people, 34.5% of the population in this age group (up 2.6 pp).¹¹

4. Health status perception and its impact in the labour market

With the start of the new Labour Force Survey data series, a biennial (even years)¹² module on health was introduced and it is composed of three questions, addressed to the population aged 16 to 89, on the perception of their general health, the existence of limitations due to health problems and their duration.

In 2024, of the total of 9,068.1 thousand people aged 16 to 89 years, 39.5% (3,585.3 thousand; 0.2 pp more than in 2022) assessed their general health as good and 33.4% (3,028.2 thousand; up 1.0 pp) said it was fair (neither good nor bad). Only 15.4% (1,397.6 thousand; down 0.1 pp) considered themselves to be in very good health. This proportion is, nonetheless, higher than those who considered their health to be poor (8.7%; 788.9 thousand) or very poor (2.6%; 239.2 thousand), 0.8 pp and 0.5 pp less than in the latest data collection.

It was in the *Centro* region that a greater share of people aged 16 to 89 rated their general health as bad (10.1%) or very bad (3.9%) and it was in the *Grande Lisboa* region that it was most classified as very good (19.8%) or good (43.4%). In *Região Autónoma da Madeira*, the majority assessed it as fair (40.6%). Both men (41.5%) and women (37.7%) tended to rate their general health as good, although the proportion of men who assessed their health between very good (17.3%) was 3.6 pp higher than that of women (13.7%). As expected, the perception of a very good general health decreases with increasing age: 39.7% among those aged 16 to 24 and 2.9% among those aged 65 to 89. At last, analysing the labour status, the employed population and the unemployed population have considered, mainly, to be in a good health (50.7% and 44.7%, respectively), while the inactive population tended to rate their general health as fair (43.0%).

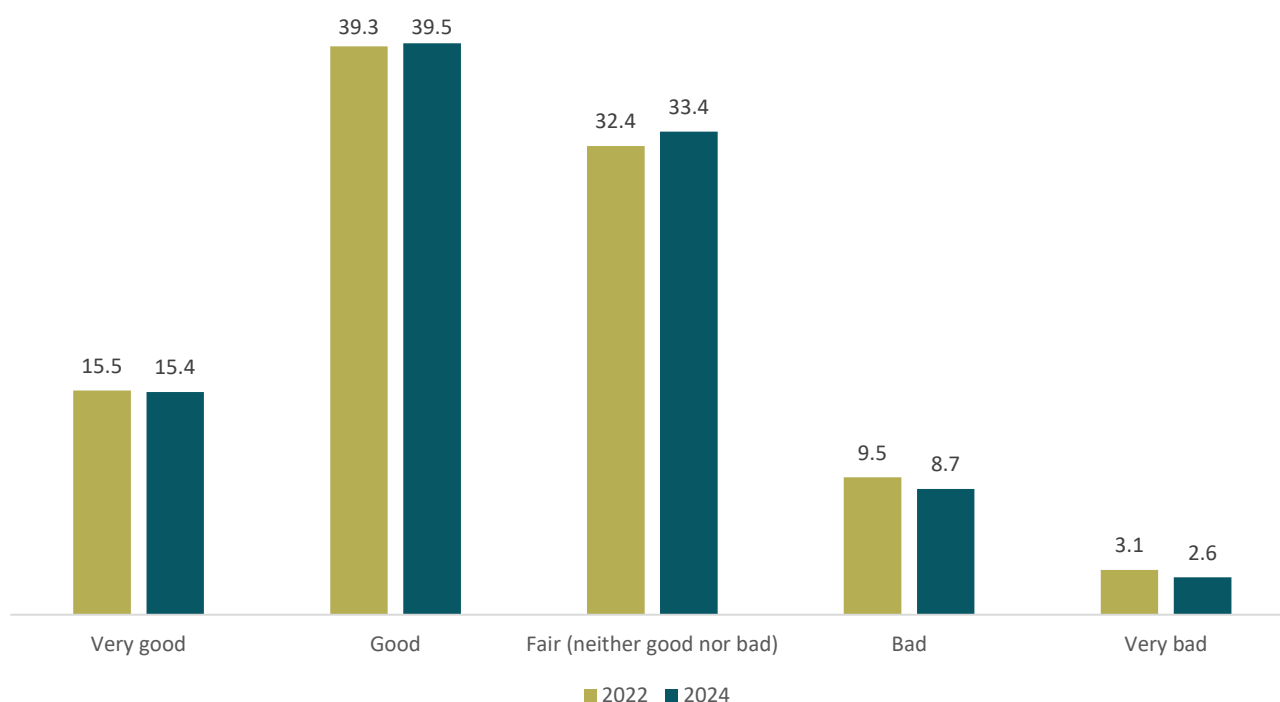
Focusing the analysis on the employed population, both employees (51.2%) and the self-employed workers (48.3%) assessed their general health as good, while 38.3% of unpaid family workers rated their health as fair. By economic activity, the rating “very good” was higher among those working in the tertiary sector (19.9%) than among those in the secondary (15.3%) and primary (13.7%) sectors. With the exception of the occupation groups ‘Skilled agricultural and fishery workers’, who mostly rated their general state of health as reasonable (40.0%),

¹¹ This indicator is similar to the better known “Lifelong Learning” indicator. The difference between them concerns to the reference period: Adult learning refers to the last 12 months, while Lifelong Learning focuses on the last 4 weeks. In 2024, the Lifelong Learning rate was 16.1%, 2.7 pp more than in 2022.

¹² From 2024 onwards, this module is collected on a quarterly basis.

and 'Armed Forces', who rated it as very good (44.0%), all occupation groups perceive their general health as good.

Figure 4. Population aged 16 to 89 by general health status (%)



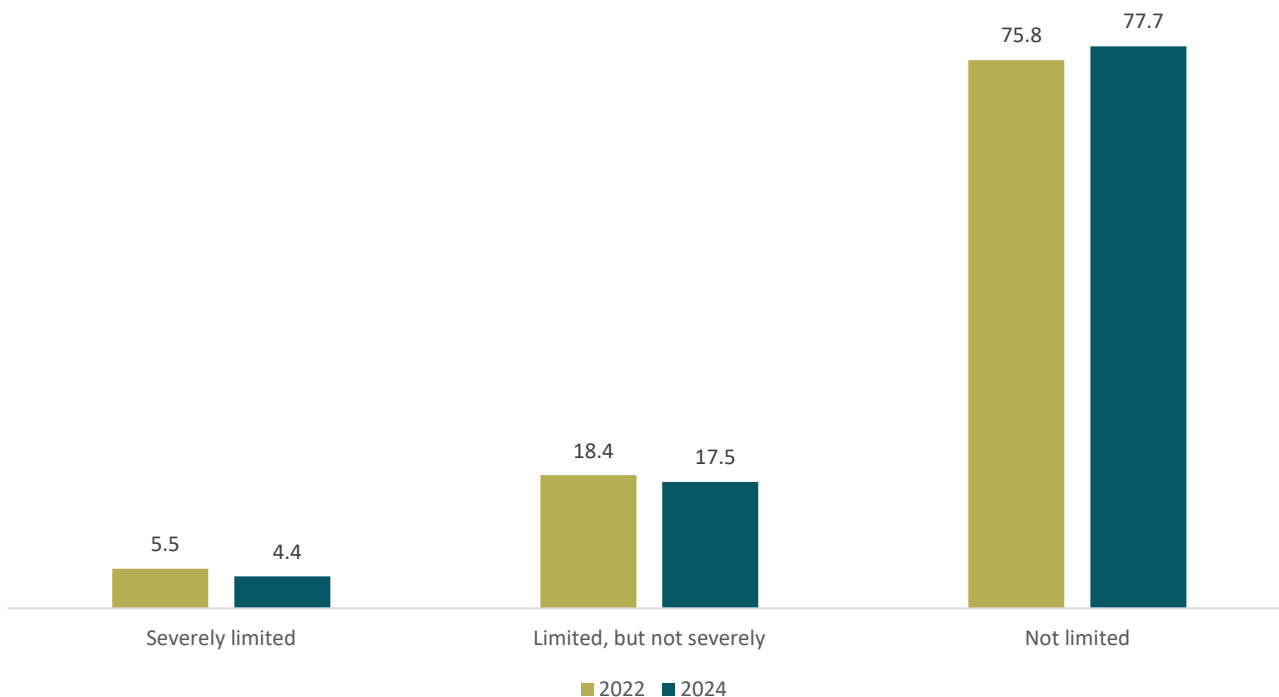
Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Force Survey – 2024.

The two other questions in the Labour Force Survey module on health focused on the existence of limitations due to health problems that prevented the respondent, for at least 6 months, from carrying out activities or tasks considered usual for most people. In 2024, of the total of 9,068.1 thousand people aged 16 to 89 years, 77.7% (7,042.3 thousand; 1.9 pp more than in 2022) said that they had no limitation, while 17.5% (1,590.3 thousand; down 0.9 pp) said they were limited, but not severely, and 4.4% (397.5 thousand; down 1.1 pp) considered themselves to be severely limited.

The highest share of people who indicated to be severely limited for at least 6 months was observed in *Centro* and in *Oeste e Vale to Tejo* regions (5.4% in both), with more men reporting not being limited (80.6%) than women (75.0%). As expected, as age increases there were more people stating to be severely limited (10.6% of those aged 65 to 89 compared to 0.6% of those aged 16 to 24) and fewer indicating that they were not limited at all (55.2% from the first group and 95.5% from the second). Only 0.8% of the employed population said they were severely limited, for at least 6 months, to carry out activities or tasks considered normal for most people.



Figure 5. Population aged 16 to 89 by limitations due to health problems for the past 6 months (at least) (%)



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Force Survey – 2024.

5. Portugal 2030 Strategy

Europe 2020 was an European Union strategy, which seted targets to be achieved in various indicators, two of which on education estimated with Labour Force Survey data. In the year of its evaluation, in 2020, Portugal achieved one of the intended values and came close to another:

- The early leavers from education and training rate was estimated at 9.1%, complying with the target set for this indicator (maximum of 10%) by 0.9 pp. In 2011, Portugal was 12.8 pp from the goal.
- In turn, the tertiary education attainment rate (which corresponds to the share of people aged 30 to 34 with tertiary educational attainment) was estimated at 39.7%, 0.3 pp below the target for 2020 (minimum of 40%). In 2011, Portugal was 13.4 pp from the goal.

The Portugal 2030 Strategy¹³ was set for the decade ending in 2030 and its programming was made around five strategic objectives of the European Union: a smarter, greener, more connected, and more social Europe that its closer to its citizens.

¹³ For more information read: https://portugal2030.pt/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/11/RCM98_2020.pdf (only in Portuguese).

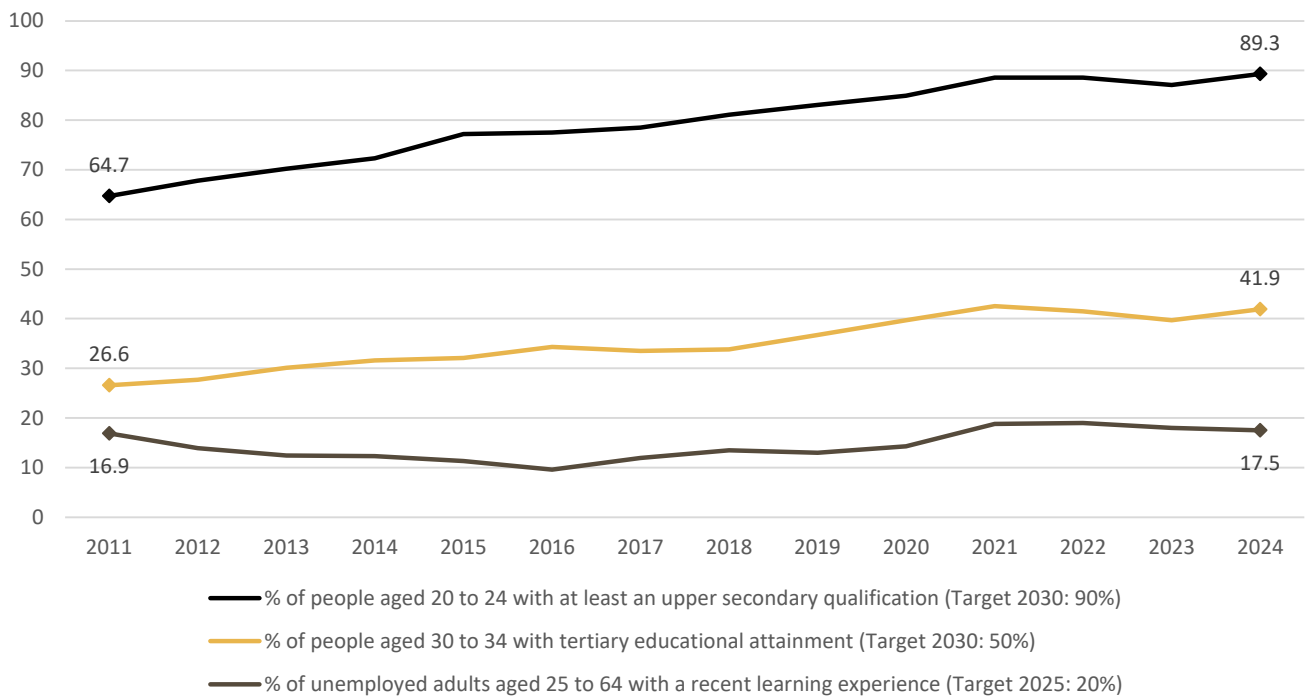


In this context, the following targets were set for three indicators on education, estimated with Labour Force Survey data:

- Increase the share of people aged 20 to 24 with at least an upper secondary qualification to 90% minimum (target set for 2030).
- Increase the rate of tertiary education attainment to at least 50% (target set for 2030).
- Increase to at least 20% the share of unemployed adults aged 25 to 64 who have attended education or training activities in the last four weeks (target set for 2025).

In 2024, the indicator closest to its target was the share of people aged 20 to 24 with at least an upper secondary qualification (89.3%), which was at 0.7 pp from the minimum target of 90%.

Figure 6. Portugal 2030 Strategy – Indicators on education



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Force Survey – 2024.



TECHNICAL NOTE

The main purpose of the Labour Force Survey is to classify the population in terms of their participation in the labour market. It is a quarterly sample survey, addressed to all persons living in the national territory.

Most of the characteristics observed in this survey report to the situation in one pre-defined week (from Monday to Sunday), known as reference week. The reference weeks are uniformly distributed throughout the quarters and years. The interviews usually take place in the week following the reference week.

The information is obtained directly, through computer-assisted interview by using a mixed data collection mode: the initial interview is done face-to-face by an interviewer visiting the household and the other five interviews are done by telephone if certain requirements are met. However, it should be noted that, following the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures adopted by the competent authorities, Statistics Portugal has decided, between the first fortnight of March 2020 and the end of the collection of the 2nd quarter of 2022, to suspend the face-to-face collection mode, replacing it exclusively with telephone interviews. After analysing the impact of this suspension, Statistics Portugal decided to incorporate the variable "completed level of education" into the process of calibrating the individual weights of the samples for the 2nd quarter of 2020 to the 3rd quarter of 2023, in addition to the information usually used (monthly estimates of the resident population by sex, age group and region).¹⁴

The Labour Force Survey weights were calibrated by using the resident monthly population estimates calculated from the final results of Census 2021.

Due to rounding, the totals in tables and figures do not always match the sum of parts.

For more detailed information consult the [Labour Force Survey methodological document](#) (only in Portuguese) available at <https://smi.ine.pt/> (tab *Documentação metodológica; tema "Labour market"*).

SOME CONCEPTS

Employed: person aged 16 to 89 who, during the reference period, was in one of the following situations:

- worked for at least one hour for a wage or salary, in cash or in kind (including unpaid family work);
- had a formal attachment to his/her job but was not at work temporarily;
- was in early retirement but working in the reference week.

¹⁴ For more information, see the "Methodological note on the revision of the Labour Force Survey data: the context of the COVID-19 pandemic", published on 8 November 2023 together with the [Press Release "Employment Statistics – 3rd quarter of 2023"](#).



Unemployed: person aged 16 and 74 who during the reference period met simultaneously the following situations:

- neither had a job nor was at work;
- had actively sought work, i.e. had actively searched for a paid or unpaid job during the specified period (reference period or the three previous weeks); and
- was available for a paid and unpaid job.

Self-employed person: an individual who pursues an independent occupation, alone or with 1, or various, associates, benefiting from a remuneration that is directly linked to profits (gained or potential) from goods or services produced and who, in general, does not hire employees to work with him/her. The associates may or may not be immediate family members.

Formal education: Intentional, institutionalized and planned education that materializes in education and training offers, confers an academic certification or a dual certification (academic and professional), comprises a hierarchical succession of education levels, and is provided by public or private entities recognized by the competent national authorities in matters of education and training.

Non-formal education: Intentional, institutionalized and planned education that adds and/or complements formal education in the context of lifelong learning process and assigns a certificate of attendance, but not a level of education.

Next Press Release - 18 February 2026
