13th International Conference on Sustainable Development, 10-11 September 2025, Rome, Italy
https://ecsdev.org

UNEMPLOYMENT IN ROMANIA – REALITIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LABOR MARKET

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INTRODUCTION

Employment and unemployment remain central issues for economic development and social welfare. In Romania, labor market imbalances have persisted through post-transition restructuring, economic downturns, and changing sectoral demand. Unemployment cannot be fully eliminated, but it can be maintained within acceptable economic and social limits through effective policy design.

RESULTS

- Total registered unemployed: 461,213 in December 2025, up by 6,235 from the previous month.
- Beneficiaries of unemployment support: 182,538; non-beneficiaries: 278,490.
- Male unemployment rate rose from 5.21% to 5.38%; female rate fell slightly from 4.83% to 4.81%.
- Young people aged 15–24 and rural regions remain among the most vulnerable groups.
- Lowest county unemployment rate: Ilfov, 1.67%.
- By education: 70% have primary, secondary or vocational education; 22% high school/post-high school; 8% university education.

DISCUSSION

Romania's declining unemployment trend since 2010 reflects economic recovery, stronger private-sector activity, foreign investment and labor migration toward other EU states. However, persistent disparities by age, region and qualification level show that unemployment is also structural. Seasonal activities, weak local absorption of graduates and a mismatch between labor supply and demand continue to shape labor-market fragility.

CONCLUSIONS

Unemployment in Romania remains a persistent challenge with social, economic and regional implications. The evidence points to the need for integrated measures: targeted training and retraining, youth employment support, alignment of education with labor-market needs, infrastructure and regional development, and stronger inclusion of vulnerable groups.

REFERENCES

Albu (2013); Andrei et al. (2017); Beldiman (2024); Grecu (2017); Ionescu (2018); Kluve (2010); Pelinescu (2015); Simionescu (2023); Simionescu & Lazányi (2016).

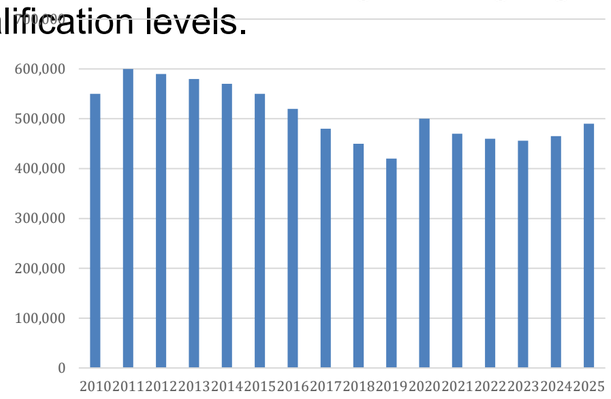
ABSTRACT

This paper examines unemployment in Romania and its implications for the labor market. The analysis draws on official statistical data, economic studies, and institutional reports to outline the evolution of unemployment by age, gender, education, and region. Results indicate that although the overall unemployment rate has generally declined since 2010, important structural vulnerabilities remain. Young people, rural areas, and low-skilled workers are disproportionately affected. The paper also highlights the role of macroeconomic conditions, seasonality, labor migration, and structural mismatches between education and labor demand. Unemployment has broad economic and social effects, including lower productivity, pressure on social protection systems, and risks of exclusion. The findings support the need for coherent public policies focused on skills development, inclusion, and employment growth in emerging sectors.

Keywords: unemployment; Romania; labor market; employment policies; regional economy

UNEMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS IN ROMANIA

Unemployment has been shaped by post-communist adjustment, economic crises, foreign investment flows and structural changes in the economy. Although the aggregate rate has trended downward since 2010, inequalities remain visible across regions, age groups and qualification levels.



STRUCTURAL FACTORS

- Mismatch between labor-market requirements and workers' skills.
- Geographical gaps between urban and rural regions.
- Long-term unemployment in regions with weaker economic development.
- Higher risk among young people without experience, people over 50, rural women and low-educated workers.

LABOR MARKET IMPLICATIONS

High unemployment reduces household income, limits consumption and weakens social inclusion. It also pressures social-security systems and can encourage undeclared work. For firms, abundant labor supply may reduce wage pressure, but persistent unemployment is associated with lower motivation, skills erosion, high turnover and higher training needs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Effective responses include vocational training and retraining programs, incentives for hiring young people and vulnerable groups, support for internships and apprenticeships, adaptation of curricula to digital and green-economy needs, infrastructure development and regional investment policies that improve labor mobility and job creation.