

ECPR Political Culture Standing Group

Political Culture Lecture Series

Precarious work and its impact on young people's political behavior and public trust.

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- It is based on a recent Research Project. More specifically, **this research** (in which the presentation is based on) **was co-financed by Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund- ESF) through the Operational Programme «Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020» in the context of the project “Precarious Work and Youth in today’s Greece: secondary quantitative analysis, qualitative filed research and research-based policy proposals” (MIS 5048510).**
- The presentation is mainly based on the following: a) Papadakis N., Drakaki M., Saridaki S., Dafermos V. (2021), «“The degree of despair”. The disjointed labour market, the impact of the pandemic, the expansion of precarious work among youth and its effects on young people's life trajectories, life chances and political mentalities- public trust. The case of Greece», in *The European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities (EQPAM)*, Vol 10, no 2, April 2021, pp. 26-53. Available at: <https://www.eqpam.unibuc.ro/papadakis-et-al> and b) Papadakis N., Drakaki M., Saridaki S. (2021), “*The degree of despair*”. *Labour Market, Precarious Work and Social Vulnerability in Youth, in Greece: The state of Play (in the EU and Greece), parameters, trends, transformations, impact and challenges for the employment policies*. Athens: I. Sideris publ. (in Greek).

Greece has been one of the countries of the European Union, that was affected the most by the multi-parameter 2007/8 Economic Crisis and Recession. The strict fiscal measures taken in the framework of the implementation of the Memoranda had a major impact on the economy, employment and labour market, increasing dramatically the Greek unemployment rates, especially youth ones, deregulating the labour market, expanding inequalities and threatening the country's social cohesion and social fabric (Matsaganis, 2013; Kotroyannos et al 2013, Papadakis et al 2017). The current pandemic and the subsequent Recession have further intensified the abovementioned.

It is worth noting that in many countries, as in the case of Greece, young people constitute one of the age groups that have been significantly affected by the economic crisis, whereas they have also been impacted by transformations taking place in the labour market, including the expansion of precarious work (Green, 2017).

2. Theoretical Insights

The term “precarious work” conceptually means the form of work that is characterized by uncertainty, insecurity and instability, and in which employees have limited social benefits and protection and an increased risk of losing their job (Kalleberg and Vallas 2018: 1 as cited in Papadakis et al., 2020). Even though precarious work *“is not necessarily new or novel to the current era; it has existed since the launch of paid employment as a primary source of sustenance”* (Kalleberg, 2009: 2), the economic boom of the 1990s, especially in the United States, widened the gap between rich and poor people and resurfaced inequalities in job quality, expanding precarious employment as well (Kalleberg, 2011).

According to ILO (2011), precarious work and specifically precarious forms of employment can be categorized into two main clusters, based on the type of contractual arrangements:

i. The duration of the contract, characterized by limitations, e.g. seasonal work, temporary work etc.,

ii. The terms/nature of the employment relationship, e.g. triangular and disguised employment relationships etc. (ILO, 2011).

It is worth mentioning that the extent and the intensity of precarious work among the countries depend on several parameters such as for instance, social institutions, the growth rate of the country and its culture (Kalleberg, 2009). Regarding the latter, as Vallas & Prener (2012) point out *“work structures do not develop and survive in a cultural vacuum. Rather, discursive formations [...] occupy significant cultural space, impinging on the view workers adopt toward the employment relationship and even toward themselves.”* (p. 348).

2. Theoretical Insights II

Within this framework, in recent years, there has been a growing evidence-based trend that posits the view that the fact that **young people work in precarious forms and posts of employment, seem to be related with persistent and established pathogens of the labour market of a country, such as, for instance, the deconstructed labour market and the high unemployment rates in Greece and the skills mismatch in Italy** (Lodovici & Semenza, 2012).

Furthermore, **precarious work seems to be expanded by the employers themselves, who find gaps in the labour legislation or circumvent the regulatory framework in order to favor themselves and their businesses** (ILO, 2011).

Even though the EU has recently attempted to combat precarious work by implementing initiatives such as the “European Platform Tackling Undeclared Work” (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2016),

however the impact of the economic recession on the labour market and the emergence of Mega-Trends (such as globalization, digital economy, social changes etc.), which have been gradually established over the years, have completely transformed the operational structure of labour markets and work schemes, altering the working conditions, expanding precarious forms of employment, and changing, as a consequence, the mechanisms of social welfare systems in Europe (Eurofound, 2020a).

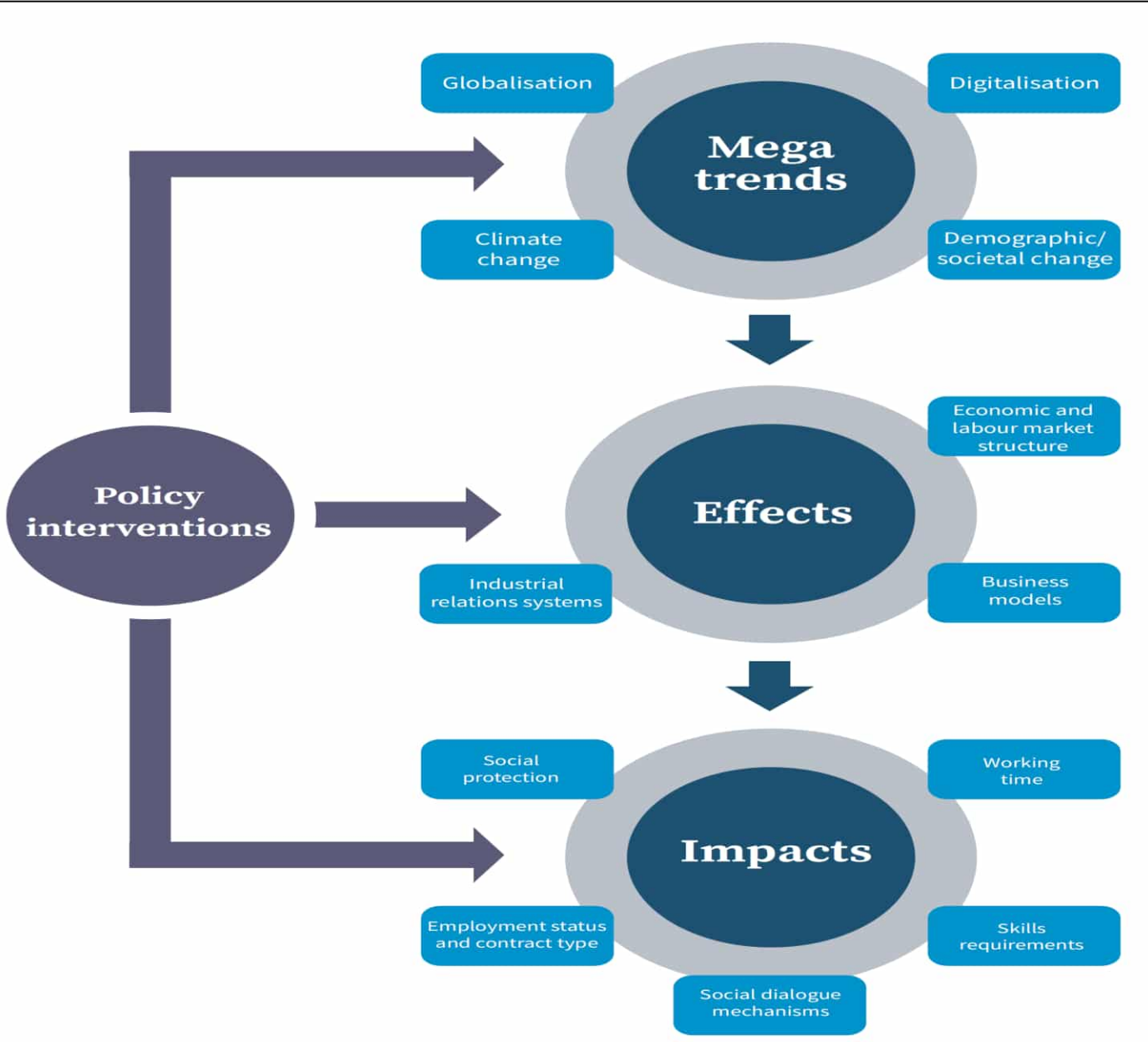
Within this context, **Eurofound has recorded and highlighted seven phenomena-emerging transformations in the area of the European labour market, namely i. Flexibilisation, ii. Part-time work, iii. Temporary contracts, iv. Self-employment, v. Polarization, vi. New business models and vii. Rising insecurity.**

Furthermore, Eurofound has pointed out that the **COVID-19 crisis has increased potential employment risks for workers with precarious contracts** (Eurofound, 2020a). The abovementioned result in seven key-challenges for the future of labour in the EU, that are directly or indirectly associated with the intensity and extent of precarious work in Europe (Eurofound, 2020a).

3. Research Methodology

The Research Methodology of the Project is based on triangulation (Patton, 2002). More specifically, secondary quantitative analysis is combined with primary qualitative research (mixed methods), while the primary qualitative research is based on the principles of Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990). conducted on young people aged 18-29, in three (3) Administrative Regions of Greece, namely Crete, Central Macedonia and Attica The sampling method was based on the snowball sampling technique (Tsiolis, 2014). The primary qualitative research was conducted in the period from September to October 2020. 30 interviews were conducted (24 semi-structured interviews and 6 narrative interviews). 10 interviews (8 semi-structured and 2 narrative interviews) per Administrative Region. Regarding the participants, 15 men and 15 women participated in the qualitative research. The qualitative research was conducted on young people aged 18-29, and the majority of them belong to the age group of 25-29 years.

Figure 1.1: Relationship between megatrends, effects and impacts on the labour market, and policy interventions



▪The above mentioned intensification is due on the one hand to the impact of the multidimensional economic Recession on employment and labour market, and on the other hand due to Mega-Trends that are taking place and seem to gradually prevail (e.g. globalization, digital economy, digitalization, demographic and social changes, climate change, etc.) (Eurofound, 2020: 3-4)

▪These Mega-Trends had a clear impact on the structure of economy and labour market, industrial relations systems, and business models, having, in turn, direct impact on work relations, forms of employment and contracts types and, consequently, on social welfare systems in Europe (Eurofound, 2020: 3-4) (see Figure 1).

Source: Eurofound, 2020: 4.

4. Results and key findings of the secondary quantitative research, emphasizing the Pandemic Impact

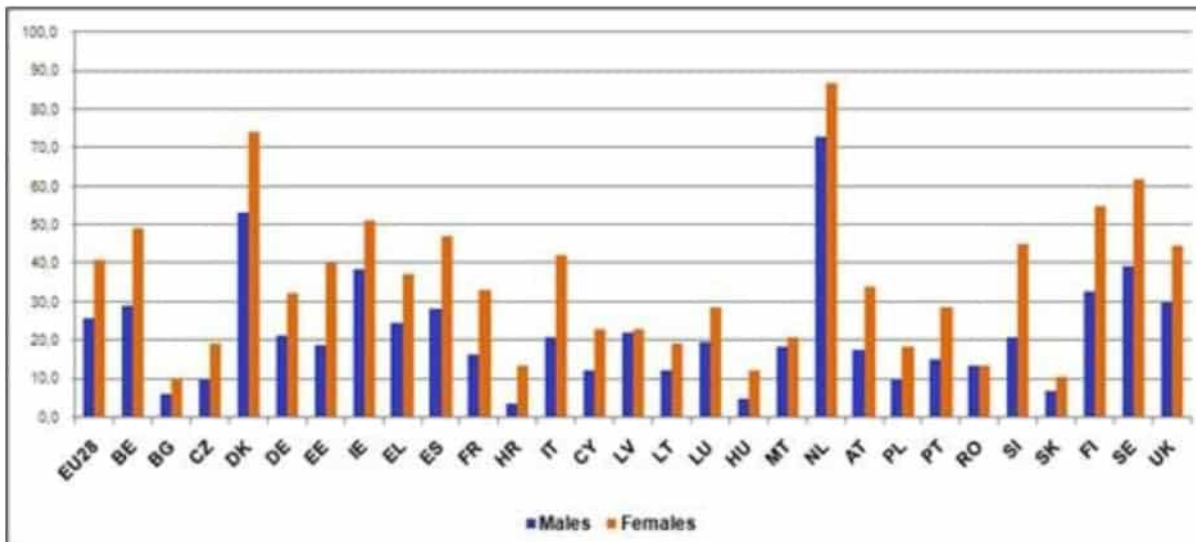
4.1. The state of play during the decade 2010-2019, in Europe.

In 2019 the rates of part-time and temporary employees in the EU member states were much higher for young people, who *were also at a greater risk of poverty* than those employed full-time or permanently. Moreover, the gender gap in part-time employment was large. More specifically:

During the decade 2008-2018 (Eurofound 2020a) the rates of part-time employment in all its types (permanent, fixed-term, self-employed) increased in most EU countries.

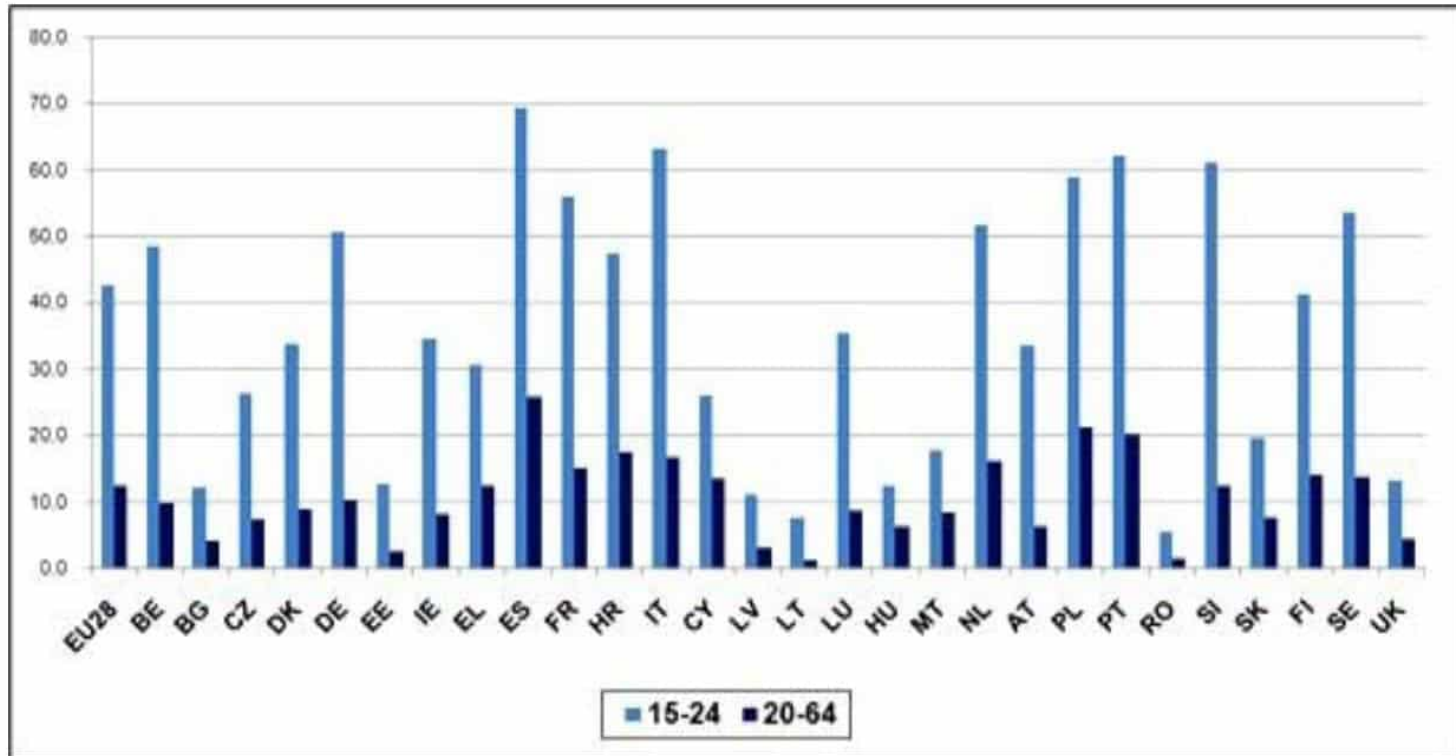
The gender gap regarding part-time workers (Eurostat, 2020f) was very large during the last decade (2010-2019). As illustrated in **Figure 1**, in 2019, the share of people aged 15-24 who worked part-time in the EU28 was 25.5% for men and 40.9% for women. The highest proportions for both men and women were recorded in the Netherlands (males: 72.9%, females: 86.6%) and Denmark (males: 53.1%, females: 74.2%).

Figure 1.2: EU28, 2019, Part-time employment share by sex, age group 15-24 (% of total employment (Source: Eurostat, 2020f)



In all EU28 countries (Eurostat, 2020f), the proportion of employees in temporary employment recorded in 2019 was much higher for young people. As reported by Eurostat (2020j), in the second quarter of 2019, almost half (42.8%) of employees aged 15-24 were employed under a temporary contract. More specifically (Figure 2), the share of such contracts for employees aged 15-24 was more than three times higher than that for employees aged 20-64 (EU28: 42.6% for the age group 15-24 vs. 12.6% for the age group 20-64). In 9 out of the 28 EU countries, more than half of the employees aged 15-24 worked on a temporary basis in 2019.

Figure 2: EU28, 2019, Temporary employment share by age group 15-24 & 20-64 (% of total employment) (Source: Eurostat, 2020f)

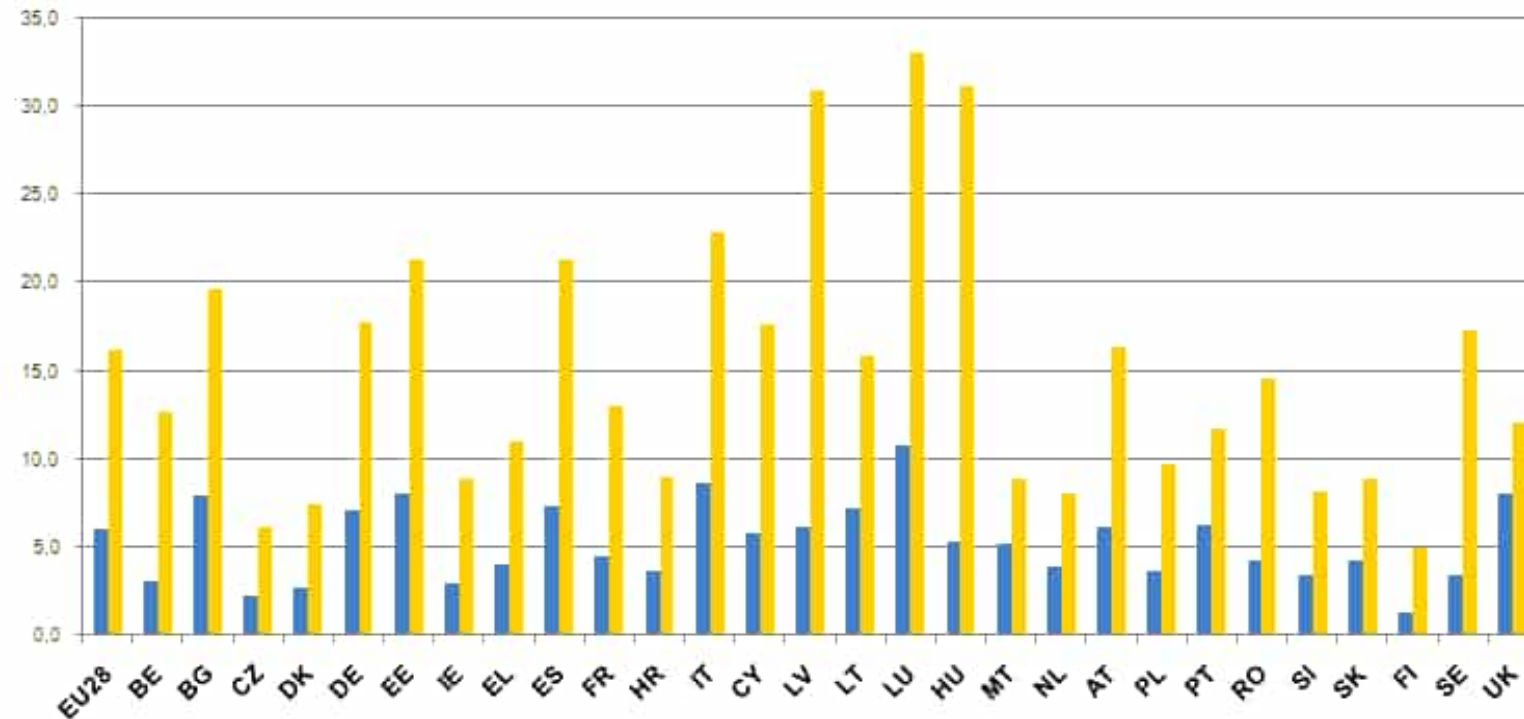


4.2. Precarious employment and social vulnerability in the EU

According to Eurostat (2020i), in 2020, part-time workers in the EU28 were twice the risk of poverty than those employed full-time. Moreover, during the years 2010-2018 the poverty risk rates (Eurostat, 2020c) recorded in part-time employment, were consistently higher for workers aged 16-24 than for those aged 25-54, with differences ranging from 1.6 to 3.3 percentage points. During the years 2010-2018, the risk of poverty in temporary employment increased considerably in the majority of EU28 countries (Eurostat, 2020d). The risk was almost three times higher for employees with temporary jobs, than for those with permanent jobs (Eurostat, 2020i).

EU28 Member States, 2018 In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by type of contract

■ Employees with a permanent job ■ Employees with a temporary job



Source: Eurostat EU-SILC Survey, online data code [ilc_iw05] 8

4.3. Youth Unemployment and Precarious Work among Young People, in Greece

In Greece, during the period 2010-2019, there was a significant increase in the proportion of young part-time workers, whilst the share of young temporary employees was much higher than that of the other age groups. Additionally, the gender gap in part-time employment was considerable.

With regard to the 15-24 age group (Eurostat, 2020h), **Greece was the EU Member State, with the highest youth unemployment rate during the decade.** This trend was *continuous* between 2012 and 2020, apart from the year 2013 (Papadakis et al., 2020). **In December 2020, the youth unemployment rate stood up to 34,2% (men: 32%, women: 36,9%), while in the EU- 27 (February 2021) it was 17,2% (men: 16,9%, women: 17,5%) (Eurostat 2021c) . The total unemployment rate in Greece reached 15,8% (men: 12,8% , women: 19,5%), while in the EU was 7,5% (men: 7,1%, women: 7,9%) (Eurostat 2021d)**

As shown in Figure 3 (Eurostat, 2020e), **in the period from 2010 to 2019 in Greece, part-time employment rate for workers aged 15-29 rose significantly, approaching the EU28 rate. In 2019, the part-time employment rate in Greece was higher than in 2010 by 8.8 p.p., while one out of five 15-29 year-olds used to work part-time.**

Figure 3: Greece and EU28, 2010-2019, Part-time employment, age group 15-29 (% of total employment) (Source: Eurostat, 2020e)

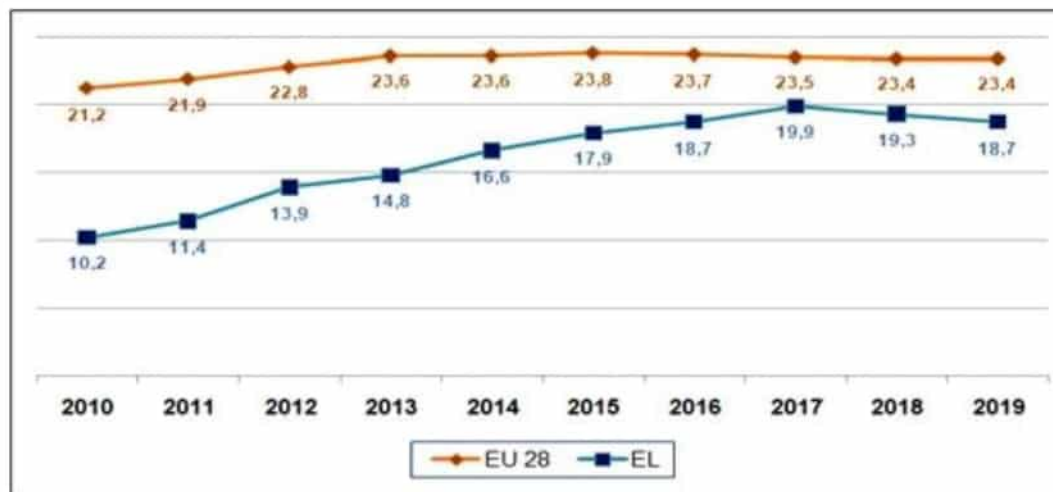


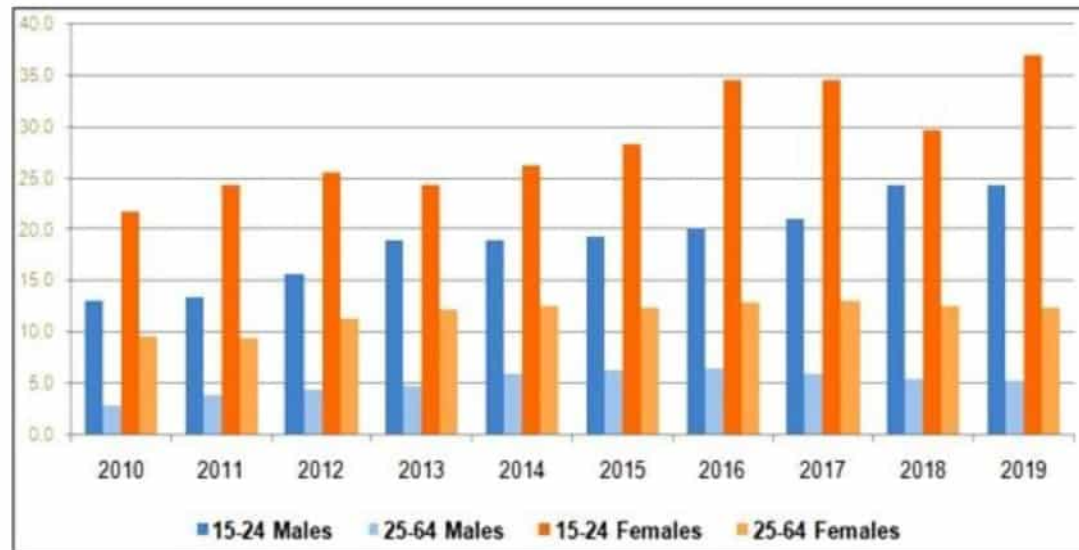
Figure 4 (Eurostat, 2020e) illustrates that throughout the period 2010-2019, part-time employment was much more common among women in both age groups (15-24 and 25-64). The proportion of women working part-time not only was *substantially* higher, but also increased more than that of men. In 2019, the part-time employment rate for 15-24 year-olds was at its peak, with about a quarter of men and two-fifths of women working part-time.

During the period 2010-2019, part-time workers with educational attainment corresponding to ISCED level 3-4 had a predominant share. In 2019, more than four-fifths of young people aged 15-24 were upper secondary and post-secondary education graduates (Eurostat, 2020a).

In the private sector (ELSTAT, 2020a), over the latest years, part-time and rotating employment recruitments exceeded by far those of full-time employment. During the period 2010-2018, out of all part-time workers, more than half did not change their employment status, about one in four went into full-time employment, while one in ten became unemployed.

In Greece, during the period 2010-2018 (Eurostat, 2020c), part-time employees were twice the risk of monetary poverty than full-time employees. During this period a fluctuation was recorded as regards the risk of poverty rate in part-time employment: from 29.4% in 2010, it rose to a peak of 30.3% in 2016, and then started to fall gradually. In 2018 it reached 24.6%, a particularly high rate.

Figure 4: Greece, 2010-2019, Part-time employment by sex and age, 15-24 & 25-64 (% of total employment)
(Source: Eurostat, 2020e)



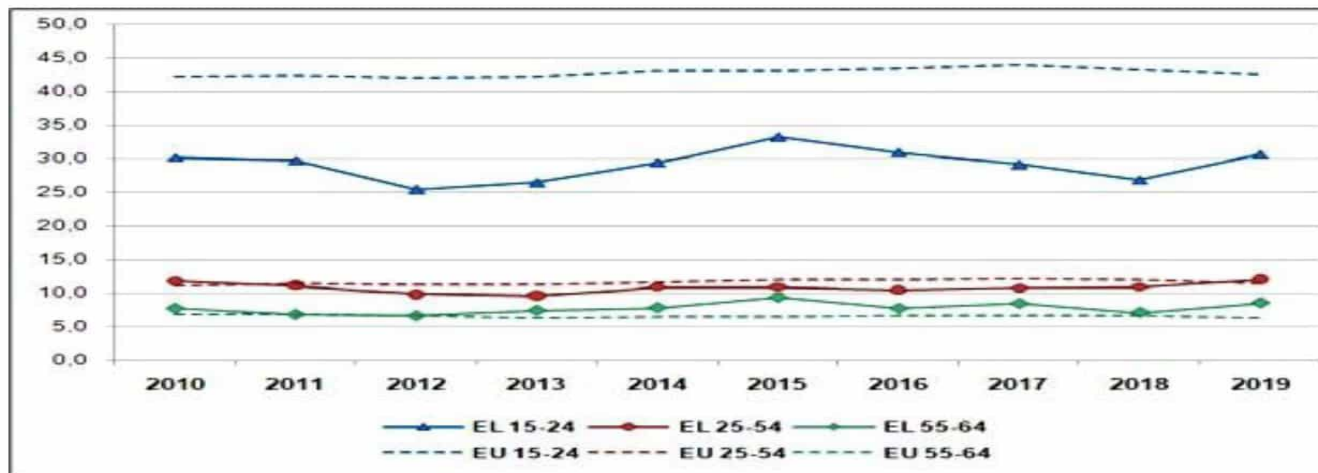
In the last decade (2010-2019), the share of temporary employees aged 15-24 was about three times higher than the share of the 25-54 and 55-64 age groups.

Figure 5 (Eurostat, 2020f) indicates that throughout the abovementioned period, both in Greece and in the EU28, the share of temporarily employed young people was much higher than the share of the other two age groups.

In Greece, the percentage of temporarily employed young people aged 15-24 reached its highest point in 2013 (33.3%) and then, after a gradual decline until 2018, began to increase again, reaching, the last quarter of 2019, 31.6%.

In 2019, the duration of most temporary employment contracts for young people in Greece was from 4 to 12 months (as cited in Papadakis et al., 2020).

Figure 5: Greece and EU28, 2010-2019, Temporary employment rates by age groups, 15-24, 25-54 & 55-65 (Source: Eurostat, 2020f)



In the period 2010-2019, more than half of young people aged 15-24 chose a temporary job because they could not find a permanent one (Eurostat, 2020g). On average, the percentage of 15-24 year-olds in involuntary temporary employment during the years 2010-2019 in Greece was much higher than the EU28 average (56.4% vs. 31.9%). Moreover, in Greece (Eurostat, 2020d), over the years 2010-2018, temporary workers' risk of poverty was more than double, comparing to permanent workers.

4.4. The impact of COVID-19 and resulting Recession pandemic in precarious work in EU and Greece

Throughout 2020, Greece was among the EU countries with the highest rates of labour market slack, the consequences of which were more severe among young people. Moreover, the impact of the pandemic crisis on the labour market was broad and deep, resulting in increased employment precariousness. In particular:

In the third quarter of 2020, Greece was the EU27 M-S with the highest unemployment rate (December 2020: 16.7%) in terms of the extended labour force. In addition, Greece was among the countries for which the largest gender gap was identified. Unemployment of women in Greece reached, in the third quarter of 2020, 19% while that of men was 13.4% (Eurofound, 2020b). According to ELSTAT (2020c), the highest unemployment rates are observed in women, people up to the age of 24 and those who have not completed primary education.

Moreover, in the third quarter of 2020, the total percentage of part-time workers was 8.2%, while the percentage of people with a temporary contract was 7.2%.

Figure 6: Greece and EU27, first quarter of 2019 - third quarter of 2020 Age group: 15-24 of the extended workforce Labour market slack (%), (Source: Eurostat, 2021b)

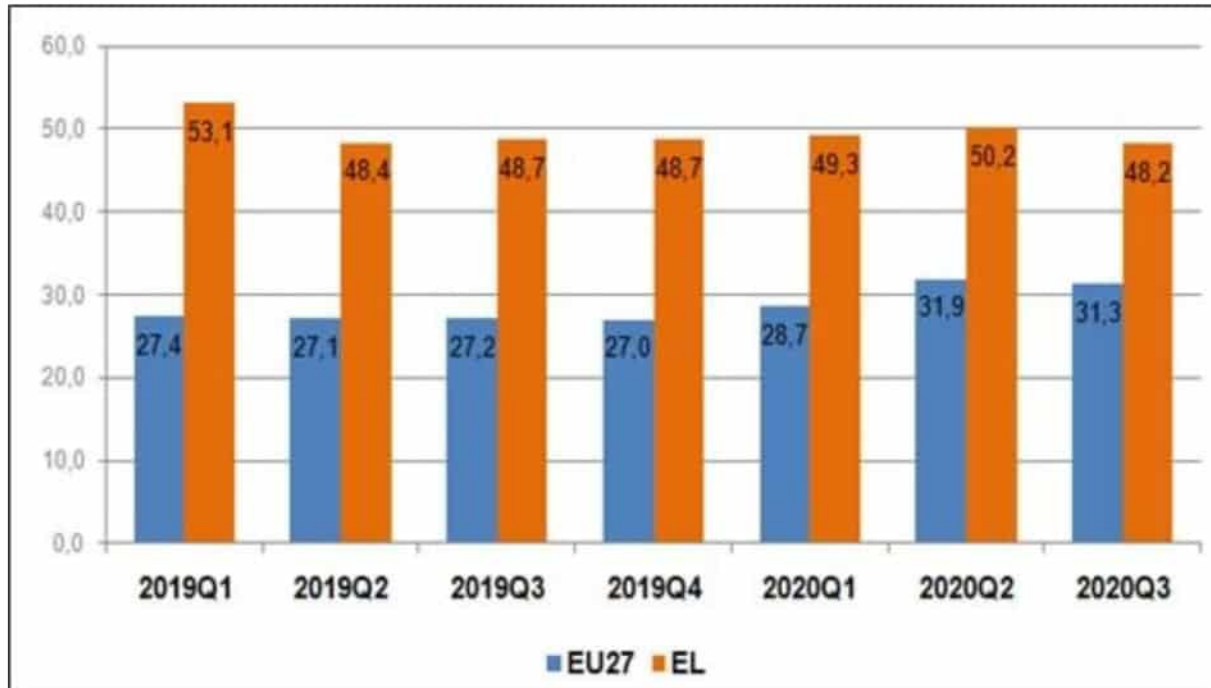


Figure 6 (Eurostat, 2021b) depicts the fluctuation of the labour market slack as regards young people aged 15-24 of the extended workforce, for the years 2019 and 2020 in Greece and the EU27 (on a quarterly basis). It is obvious that during 2019 and 2020, the rates of labour market slack in Greece were much higher than those of the EU27 average. In all three quarters of 2020, Greece was among the countries with the highest rates of labour market slack (49.4% in the first quarter, 50.2% in the second quarter and 48.2% in the third quarter). It should be noted here that for the young people, during the Q1 2021, the labor market slack stood up to 55.4%, the highest percentage among the EU27 M-S (Eurostat, 2021b).

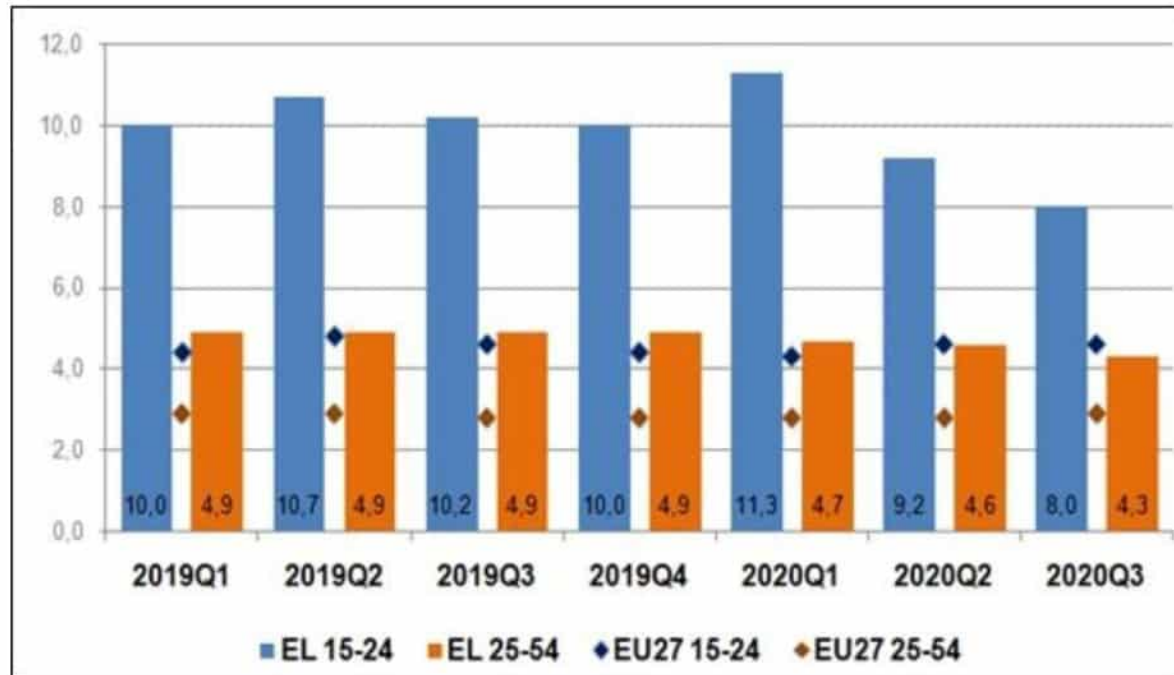
Figure 7 (Eurostat, 2021b) refers to one of the three subcategories of the extended workforce, the part-time underemployed, aged 15-24 and 25-54 in Greece and Europe in the years 2019 and 2020.

In Greece, throughout the period 2019-2020, young people aged 15-24 seem to have been hit hardest by the labour market slack compared to people aged 25-54, with differences ranging from 3.7 to 6.6 percentage points.

It is also obvious that the labour market slack for both age groups in Greece was much higher than that of the respective EU27 averages.

The difference regarding the 15-24 age group was much greater and ranged from 3.4 to 7 percentage points, while the respective difference for the 25-54 age group ranged from 1.4 to 2.1 percentage points.

Figure 7: Greece and EU27, first quarter of 2019 - third quarter of 2020, Age groups: 15-24 & 25-54 of the extended workforce Labour market slack of underemployed part-time workers (%) (Source: Eurostat, 2021b)



According to Eurofound (2020b), **Greece is one of the countries with the highest percentage of people who lost their jobs (either temporarily or permanently) during the pandemic (14%). The total job losses in paid employment in March 2020 amounted to 41,903 positions (compared to the immediately previous months). 73.77% were related to part-time (50.71%) and rotating (23.06%) employment** (Kotsios, 2020).

Eurofound (2020b), in a large-scale online survey conducted in two phases (April and July 2020) examined **the impact of the first “wave” of the pandemic on well-being, work, and economic situation of people living across the European Union. The following are some of the published data concerning Greece:**

✓ **4.7% of the survey respondents (aged 18-50 plus) lost its job or contract permanently and 41.8% temporarily. As for the 18-34 age group, 4.1% lost its job or contract permanently and 43.7% temporarily.**

✓ **53.5% of the respondents stated that its working hours had been greatly decreased and 12.8% that it had been slightly decreased.**

✓ **22.9% started working from home as a result of the pandemic, while the percentage of people aged 18-34 was much higher, standing at 36.1%.**

Regarding the individuals’ financial situation and their living standards during the pandemic:

✓ **Comparing the current financial situation of their household (during the pandemic) to the one existed three months ago (before the crisis), 47.4% of the respondents considered that it had worsened and 48.2% that it had remained the same.**

✓ **Regarding the percentages for the 18-34 age group, 47.4% of them reported its financial situation as worse than before the pandemic.**

According to statistical data gathered by ELSTAT (2020a, 2020b and 2020c), **the repercussions of the pandemic on the labour market were multidimensional and affected all sectors of the economy. For both the first and the second quarter of 2020 (ELSTAT, 2020a, 2020b), as regards absences from work and reduced working hours, the sectors most affected were those related to the provision of services (trade, hotels, restaurants, transport, communications etc.), while agriculture, forestry and fisheries were affected to a lesser extent.** The percentages of people working from home were higher in the financial and business sectors. However, according to ELSTAT (2020c), during the third quarter of 2020 the impact of the pandemic on the labour market slightly declined. Both the rate of absences from work and the rate of inactive population decreased (in comparison to the second quarter of 2020), while the working hours increased. However, the following “second wave” of the pandemic has severely worsened the situation.

GSEE (2020) in a survey conducted in September 2020 to examine the insecurity and the growing concern of private sector employees due to the changes that occurred during the pandemic recorded that more than 7 in 10 workers (73%) believe that the pandemic crisis could endanger core workers’ rights. Similarly, the level of employment security had also followed a downward trend, with just 54% of the employees (in September 2020) stating it was optimistic about maintaining its position in the labour market (2% less than in June).

5. On The current state of play

Particular emphasis should be placed on the **significant increase in the percentage of Neets** (young people not in education, employment or training). In the 1st Quarter of 2021 the percentage of Neets in Greece reached 13.2% in the age category 15-24 (men: 13.8% & women: 12.6% / Eurostat, 2021h) and **20.4% in the age category 15-29** (men: 19.9% & women 20.8% / Eurostat, 2021h) **versus 11.3% and 13.8% respectively in the EU-27** (Eurostat, 2021h). **The percentage of Neets, in the age group 15-24 increased about 10% compared to 2019** (ie in 1.5 years), when it had decreased to 12.5% (Eurostat 2020r). **The very high percentage of young people (and especially in the age category 25-29) who are essentially "away from any major institutional provision of the Welfare State" and constitute a predominantly socially vulnerable group (Papadakis, 2013: 16) is particularly worrying and at the same time indicative of the evolutionary dislocation of the labor market in Greece, indicating, at the same time, the effects of the pandemic on it.**

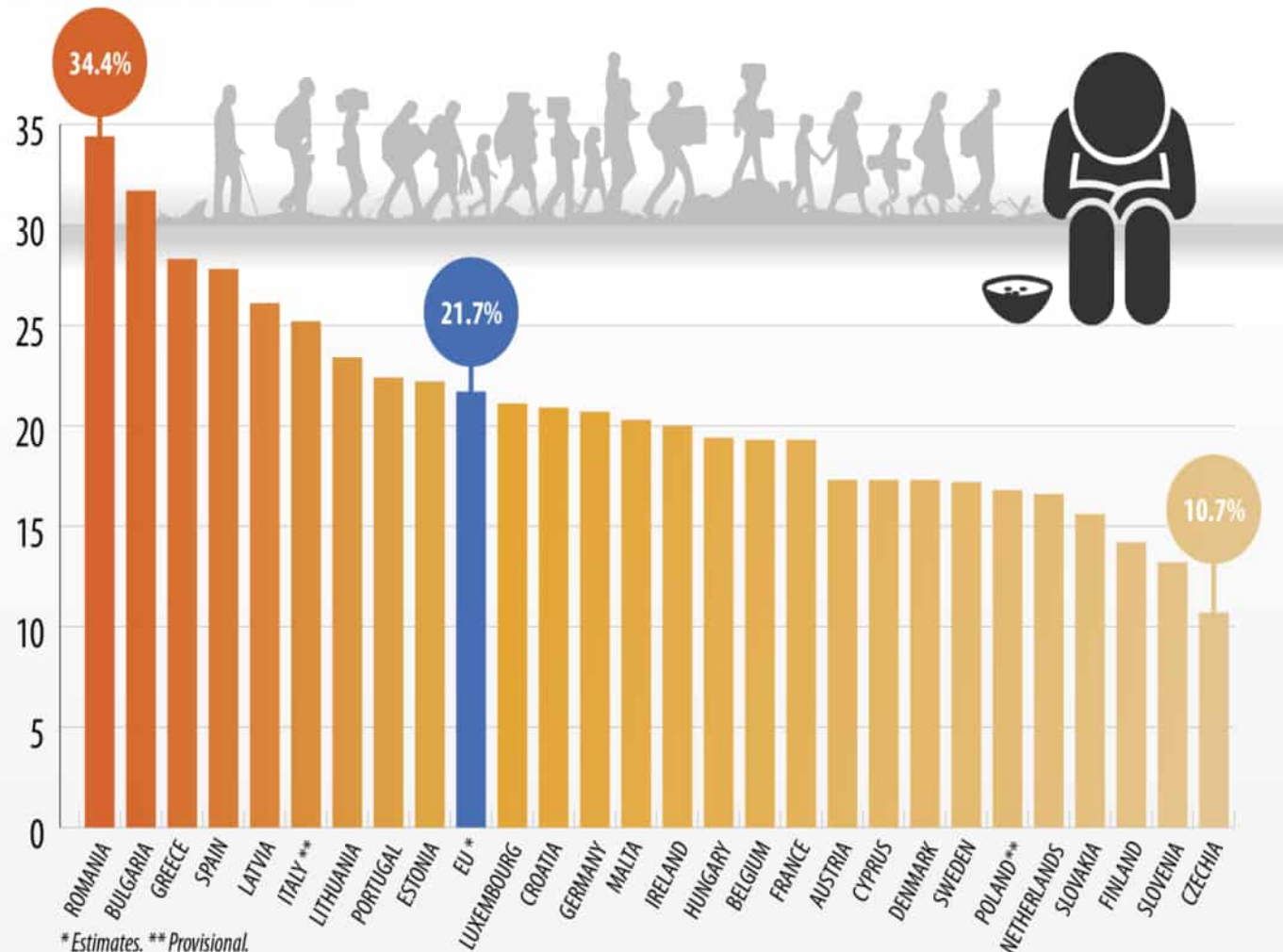
It would be an omission not to mention the major (and permanent) problem of the long-term unemployment, as it crystallizes into a structural problem and further detaches the unemployed from the labor market (see Papadakis 2005 for details). **In the 1st Quarter of 2021 the percentage of long-term unemployment (15-74 years) in Greece was 10%** (men: 7.5% & women: 13.2% / Eurostat, 2021i), **almost four times more than the corresponding European average which was 2.8%** (men: 2.6% & women: 2.9% / Eurostat, 2021i). Finally, it is worth noting that in almost all the aforementioned parameters of unemployment, the **gender dimension** is more than visible.

In September 2021, after the complete resumption of economic activity in the summer and the successful tourist season, a significant improvement was observed in some of the critical sizes of the labor market. **The total unemployment fell to 13.3% (from 14.6% in July 2021 - it was about the same percentage at the end of 2021) and it fell even further in December 2021 to 12.8% according to ELSTAT (ELSTAT 2022a: 3). However it remains at the top 3 in the EU-27, according to Eurostat. The reduction of youth unemployment was also significant, mainly due to seasonal work. More specifically, it decreased to 24.5% (from 37.6% in July 2021), it increased slightly in December 2021 reaching 27% (according to ELSTAT) and it still remains very high (September 2022: youth: 28,5%- total unemployment: 11,8%/ ELSTAT 2022b: 3).**

However the ongoing energy Crisis is already affecting the labour market in Greece.

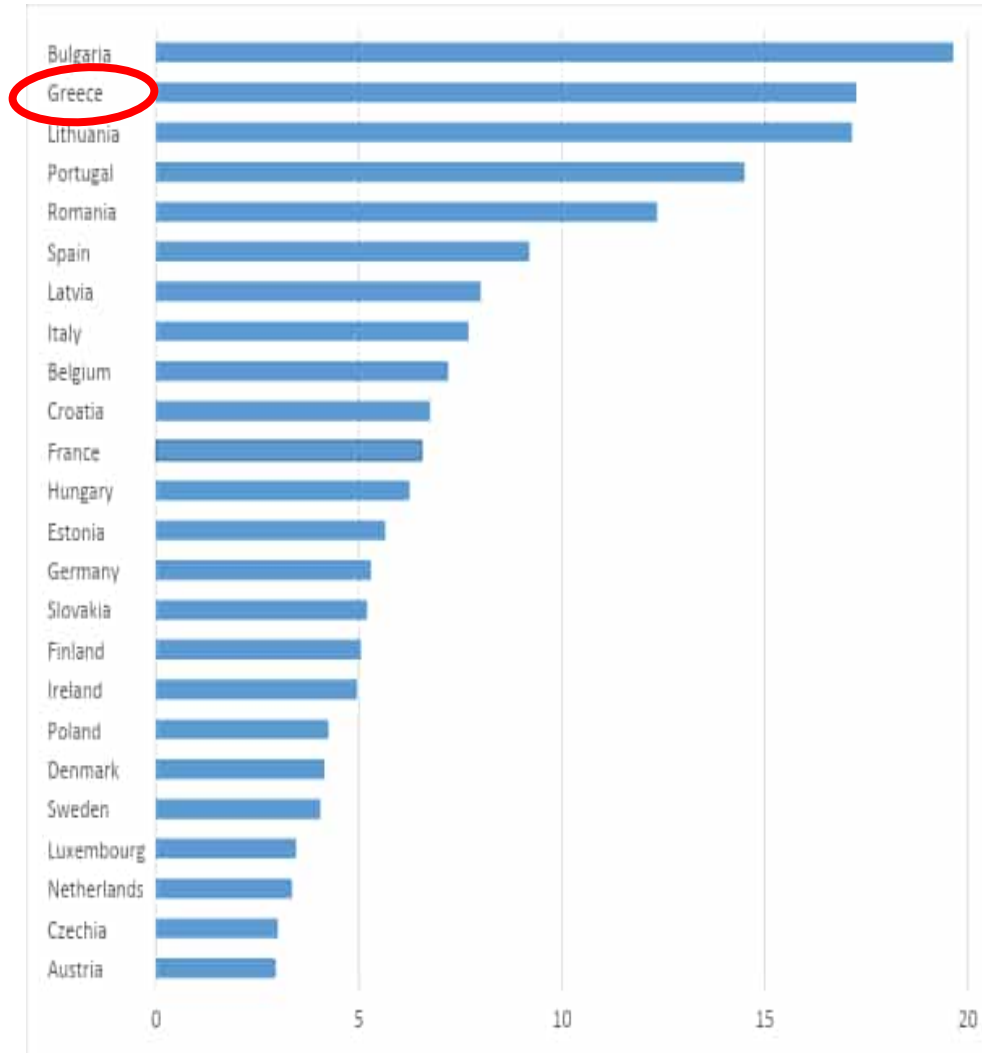
People at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU Member States

(% of total population, 2021)



Source: Eurostat, cited in Papadakis & Tzagkarakis 2022: 21

Socio-Ecological Poverty Indicator at the EU



6. Results and Key Findings of the Qualitative Research

Based on the findings of the primary qualitative research of the Project, young people (18-29 years old) seem to be employed, mostly in precarious forms of employment, either by concluding fixed-term or indefinite contracts (full-time or mainly part-time) or by undeclared work, either in businesses or as self-employed (including undeclared tele-working).

However, there are also cases of shift work and to a lesser extent declared self-employment. It is worth noting that precarious work among young people is not only traced in sectors of the economy such as tourism and catering, but it is observed (based on the research findings) in several occupations, e.g. pharmaceutical industry, telecommunications, e-commerce, etc.

The main characteristics of precarious forms of employment, especially when they are part of the contracting process, quite often seem to take a combined form. There is a gradually increasing combination of a mismatch between the contract and the actual employment (in hours, days, earnings and stamps): *“I.: [...] We had a contract based on which I worked two days a week and I instead worked full time ten hours every day. I was getting about 400 euros a month [...]”* (B.II.1, Marianna).

Further, a combination of declared and undeclared work is also observed. In most cases, these two combinations coexist and are applied in the context of the precarious work of young people.

Regarding the reasons for choosing precarious work and working conditions, based on the research findings, it emerged that young people choose to work in precarious jobs, mostly: i. For livelihood and survival reasons in order to get out of the unemployment status in which they are, ii. Due to the lack of viable alternatives, as to the impossibility of finding permanent or full-time employment or a job on the subject of their studies, iii. In order to continue and/or complete their studies, for financial reasons (payment of tuition and/ or livelihood reasons) or due to flexible working hours that facilitate their studies, and iv. (To a lesser extent) they approach their precarious work as a transitional stage between their studies and their professional development.

Nevertheless, many young people seem to accept precarious working conditions and consequently have accepted or even almost "normalized" inappropriate and/or irregular working conditions, behaviors and attitudes of both clients and, above all, employers and superiors. And, in many cases, this condition-state seems to be a forced informal norm and a "common secret" among employees, which, many times (out of necessity) employees conceal, due to the danger that lurks to be fired from their work: *“I.: [...] the employee let's say in a small local community, like here, if he is not happy with the job or he receives a lot of “black” money or he is being exploited ... very simply if he speaks, ... he will be found out. So the next business, in which he will turn for a job, will not bother to hire him [...] So, you get blackened directly you become the scapegoat, so you do not speak. [...] Because of fear. [...]”* (A.I.2, Georgia).

6. Results and Key Findings of the Qualitative Research II

Regarding the effects of precarious work on the life course of young people, **it seems that precarious work in all its forms affects young people's life course, either to a greater or lesser extent:** *“I.: There may be a month when I will not spend any money, that is, at such a level. There may be a month that I will need for personal reasons 200 euros or 100 euros, [...].But it can also be much lower, that is to say 50.”* (B.I.6, Stathis).

Precarious work functions either as a “last resort” given the economic situation of Greece and, consequently, the difficulty of finding a job, or (less) as a temporary professional way out, to improve both professional prospects and the quality of standard of living.

It is worth noting that (based on the research finding) **there is a high degree of correlation between the income resulting from the work of young people and their life course.** Specifically, **“the Greek family with the special coherence and support that characterizes it”** (Papadakis, 2016: 40), seems to contribute decisively to the livelihood but also the survival of several young people (whose financial earnings from their precarious work are not sufficient to meet their obligations), by supporting them financially and providing them housing: *“I.: [...] It is unfortunate at the age of 25 to depend on your parents' contribution to, say, livelihood, but it is also a Greek reality, isn't it? [...]”* (C.I.6, Konstantinos).

Family, acts, in essence, on the one hand as a deterrent to the further widening of the precariousness of young people in their life course and on the other hand as a factor in reducing the risk of young people moving into trajectories of social vulnerability and impoverishment.

In addition, in several cases of young people, **there seems to be a strong correlation between their precarious work and the burden of their psychology, showing high levels of generalized stress and insecurity in their daily lives due to the high risk of dismissal and because of their low financial earnings, which in some cases has led them to despair over their livelihood prospects.**

Regarding the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the employment status of young people, as the research findings show, both the pandemic and the measures that were inevitably imposed to address the health crisis, e.g. lockdown, had an impact on the majority of young people and particularly on the ones who are underemployed, affecting both their working terms and conditions and, consequently, lowering their standard of living: i. Either due to a reduction in their working remuneration { *“I.: My work was affected [...],initially with suspension and then when I returned to work with reduced earnings. [...]The working hours remained the same, yes»* (C.I.5, Giannis)}, ii. Or due to transition to unemployment, suspension of work or non-payment of wages by employers.

6. Results and Key Findings of the Qualitative Research III

The growing tendency of flexibility of labour relations in the private sector, seems to result in either the unilateral abuse by the employers, or the forced "informal" agreement-consensus between employers and employees: *“I.: [...]That is, I do not think that someone who would have a different choice would go into some form of precarious work. We are all forced to do so because we either have no choice or it is a matter of survival or in any case of a dignified life, so? [...].”* (C.I.5, Giannis).

The abovementioned are framed by established, chronic, pathogens of the Greek labour market, that were expanded during the economic recession of the previous decade (European Commission, 2017) and the financial crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (INSETE/Ikkos & Koutsos, 2018; Kanelleas et al., 2020), and have led to an evolutionary disengagement of labour relations, especially in the private sector, from the existing regulatory framework.

In conclusion, it turns out that a new labour market dualization is formed, a new norm, which concerns young people who are precarious workers: *insiders* can be considered precarious workers who are employed in a more structured and less flexible working regime, with more "normal" terms of employment. *Outsiders* are young people, who are precarious workers and are employed with "flexible" working conditions, and with an increased risk of experiencing the "phenomenon (of) terror" (according to Lodovici & Semenza, 2012: 7).

7. The impact on young people's political behavior and public trust.

All of the above reflect an expanded devaluation of political institutions and consequently a serious major crisis of confidence in conjunction with the ongoing de-escalation of public trust among young people.

With regard to the existing labour legislation and regulatory framework for the protection of workers employed in precarious forms of work, the research findings show the severe implementation gaps, regarding the actual implementation of the labour law, in combination with the shortcomings observed in relation to the frequency of inspections, by the competent bodies for compliance with labour legislation: *“I.: [...] In the companies I have been working for two and a half years, that nothing is right, inspection does not come. [...]”* (A.II.2, Roxanne).

The following are also found: i. **The intense dissatisfaction, frustration and distrust they feel for the political system and the political staff of Greece but also for the institutions (even for the institution of justice)**: *“I.: [...] It is not my best opinion. [...] Wrong policies, policies that inflate problems. [...] Some serve specific interest groups and not society as a whole. [...] My confidence in the institutions is a bit shaky [...]. Justice. I see things I do not like. [...]”* (C.I.7, Vangelis).

ii. **Young peoples' frustration with the Welfare State, the structures and policies implemented** (see Papadakis et al 2016): *“I.: No. [...]. I believe that at the moment, it is possible for peoples' living standards to fall so much that they reach indecent conditions. And then they probably give some help, [...] but the world has just become very poor. [...]”* (C.I.8, Eleni).

All of the above reflect an expanded devaluation of political institutions and consequently a serious major crisis of confidence in conjunction with the ongoing de-escalation of public trust among young people.

8. Conclusions- Discussion I

Undoubtedly, the prolonged (ten-year) economic recession in Greece brought about a series of dramatic changes in the fields of economy and employment and a tremendous impact on the society.

The above are related to the (borne out) rapid expansion of the phenomenon of precarious work and the (qualitative and quantitative) increase of precarious forms of work in Greece, to which the new generation necessarily turns quite often, in the absence of alternatives.

In short, a new condition has been created in the labour market, whereby forms of work characterized by precariousness and “flexibility” such as part-time work, shift work, seasonal work, undeclared work, etc, are intensified (especially for youth).

It seems that the tectonic transformations in the labour market of the last decade, combined with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the labour market, have trapped young people in a necessarily precarious irregular work "normality“ (see Rubery et al 2018), which tends to transform in a social construction in the direction of forming a new (dislocated) "labour *habitus*". Its main characteristics are the persistent work precarity and the consequent vulnerability of young workers, towards the formation of a new “precariat”, consisting of the “insiders” and “outsiders” precariously working young people (see above).

Another division is traced between “normal” patterns and increasingly legitimized “pathological ones” (see also Canguilhem, 1978). The latter are feed-backed by the gradual disjoining of the labour market.

The above mentioned emerged work “normality”, in the context of which young people are (often) forced to consent for livelihood reasons, in parallel with a frequent violation of their labour rights, seem to have formed a newly “work ethics” and a newly labour discourse, framed by irregular labour relations and an enforced “law of silence” among employers and employees, to which the latter quite often consent either for survival reasons or due to a lack of employment alternatives.

This new “normality” affects key determinants of young peoples’ political behavior. An increasing frustration and “delegitimation” of the political system and personnel, as well as the Welfare State, seem to result in the collapse of public trust among young people.

8. Conclusions- Discussion II

Summing up, the emerging, expanded and (often) forced, newly built work "normality" (with the frequent violation of the labour rights of precariously working young people and consequently the serious impact on labour relations) seems to lead to a reconstruction of "work ethics", with (irregular) labour norms prevailing.

These are framed by an enforced "law of silence", both on the part of employers and employees, to which the latter (out of necessity) often consent for reasons of livelihood and survival and in the absence of alternatives.

The abovementioned seem to have led to the creation of a new kind of "precariat" (see Standing, 2014), having as its main components insecurity, uncertainty and social vulnerability, but also the gradual weakening of the "standard framework of biography" (Alheit & Bergamini, 1998: 122) of young people, essentially turning it into a precarious framework of biography.

These implications may be decisive and far-reaching for social cohesion, and the need for a paradigm shift in the labour market constitutes a persistent challenge for the whole public policy complex.

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