

## ANALYSIS OF THE LABOR MARKET AND DIRECTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SECURITY IN UKRAINE

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*У статті визначено, що основним завданням ринку праці є раціональне використання наявних трудових ресурсів, зниження рівня безробіття та забезпечення зростання добробуту населення. Проаналізовано динаміку безробіття в Україні, показники ринку праці за період 2000–2023 рр., визначено вплив на економічну ситуацію в країні. Розраховано кількісні параметри трудового потенціалу та враховано структуру зайнятості населення за видами економічної діяльності. Аргументовано пропозиції щодо основних шляхів вирішення проблеми безробіття та доцільності активного підвищення рівня зайнятості населення України. Незважаючи на значний прогрес у вивченні українського ринку праці, це питання залишається актуальним. З початком повномасштабної війни поява нових загроз та адаптація до них основних суб'єктів національної економіки стали важливим завданням ринку праці. Також окреслено напрямки вдосконалення функціонування системи соціального захисту в умовах воєнного часу.*

**Ключові слова:** *безробіття, зайнятість, населення, попит і пропозиція, ринок праці, соціальний захист, соціальне забезпечення.*

**Formulation of the problem.** As a result of the full-scale war in Ukraine, as of 2023, at least 109 large and medium-sized enterprises with various forms of ownership have suffered direct losses, the total amount of losses is estimated at 13 billion dollars. According to experts' estimates, 19 (17 %) private and public enterprises from among large and medium-sized enterprises were completely destroyed, and another 90 (83 %) were partially damaged [1]. As a result of such destruction, the risk to work, the well-being of individuals and their families has increased. As a result of missile attacks, interruptions in the electricity and communication supply, the activities of small enterprises, which provide jobs for a significant part of the population of working age, have become more difficult. In November 2022, 12.4 % of small and medium-sized enterprises and 8 % of micro-enterprises completely ceased their activities, 24.6 % and 22.5 % of enterprises practically ceased their activities, and 33.2 % and 31.9 % of

enterprises partially ceased their activities, that is, only about 40 % of small and micro-enterprises work at full capacity [1]. This situation negatively affected the index of business activity, which decreased to 35 %.

In order to stay in the market during the war, companies are forced to regulate their costs, especially with regard to wages. Measures to optimize costs include transferring 0.5 % of employees, reducing the number of working hours and taking leave without pay. Thus, since the start of the full-scale war, 1,320,000 small and medium-sized workers (28 % of the total) have lost their jobs, 18 % have been furloughed, and wages have fallen by 22 %. According to official statistics, as of January 1, 2023, 186,500 people had the status of unemployed, with 21,200 vacancies. Thus, almost 9 officially registered applicants applied for 1 vacant position. At the same time, the number of officially registered unemployed people decreased as a result of the deregistration of persons who emigrated abroad and were mobilized into the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The given statistics also do not take into account those who are in the temporarily occupied territories. In addition, not all unemployed are registered with the state employment service. According to the estimates of the Ministry of Economy, at the beginning of 2023, the number of unemployed was 260,000 people, and according to the NBU estimates – from 420,000 to 480,000 people [2]. Undeclared employment is also a distinctive feature of unemployment in Ukraine. During the war, Ukrainians who work unofficially are not registered. According to the State Bureau of Statistics, by 2022–2024, the number of people employed informally was 300,000, of which 170,000 were unregistered entrepreneurs [3]. According to the assumptions of the Ministry of Economy, during the war the number of persons employed unofficially increased. The presence of an informal employment sector complicates the assessment of real unemployment.

The problems caused by the development of a full-scale war became an important task for the further growth of the national economy of Ukraine. Other destabilizing factors include long-term socio-economic instability, forced migration of the working-age population, significant disparities in the labor market, a large number of internally displaced persons in need of employment, and the active spread of remote informal employment. Such aspects will make it possible to emphasize the priority ways of implementing the tasks of a comprehensive study of the current state of the domestic labor market and overcoming existing problems, as well as a positive trend in the restoration of the national economic complex. In addition, the importance of conducting research in this area is due to the fact that the labor market is the starting point of the formation and development of a modern socially oriented economy. Since the specificity and effectiveness of its functions affect the degree of use of the main resources of Ukraine's wealth - its human abilities, labor and human capital.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Many outstanding foreign and domestic scientists were engaged in researching the functioning of the labor market, problems of its development, details of reforms and state regulation, unemployment and various aspects of population employment, such as: D. Ricardo, P. Samuelson, I. Chernega, M. Koroteev, N. Zabuta, O. Balakireva, S. Bandura, V. Bliznyuk, D. Dmytruk, L. Yarova, L. Halkiv, L. Yasynchuk, Yu. Marshavin, T. Kitsak,

V. Kyrylyuk. However, in order to reflect the current state of the Ukrainian labor market, additional research is needed, as well as an assessment of the statistical indicators of the employment of the population of Ukraine in wartime conditions.

**The aim of the article** is to determine the essence of the labor market and its position in the national economy, to study the dynamics of the number of employers and the unemployed, to identify modern problems in the labor market in conditions of active hostilities and aggression from the Russian side.

**Research methodology.** Empirical (observation, description) and theoretical (analysis, synthesis, abstraction, generalization, induction, deduction), as well as systemic, functional, specifically sociological, were used when writing the article.

**Research results.** The labor market is one of the most important and complex socio-economic institutions of the market economy, the functions of which depend on various processes occurring in society. In a more general way, the labor market is «an economic space in which sellers of labor services interact with buyers of these services» [4]. The formation and development of the labor market takes place in rather complex conditions, which, on the one hand, are determined by the processes taking place in the social, economic, political and other spheres of society, and on the other hand, become important parameters affecting the achievement of the well-being of the population, the efficiency national economy and its competitiveness. That is why we share the scientific position that the labor market is «an element of the modern economic system on which the pace and vector of the macroeconomics, the well-being of the population and the state of many other social processes depend» [5]. As a result, the labor market plays an important role in market transformation and innovative redesign of the domestic economy.

One of the main tasks of the labor market is the rational use of available labor resources, increasing the efficiency of labor relations, reducing unemployment, bringing it closer to the natural level, and steadily increasing the welfare of the population. In addition, the domestic labor market allows creating new innovative segments of the national economy, reviving basic industries, thereby achieving social stability and increasing the competitiveness of the Ukrainian economy at the global level. Among the factors that determine the situation on the labor market (volume of supply, demand for labor and its ratio), it is worth highlighting:

- socio-economic factors (dynamics of macroeconomic indicators, structural changes in the economy, the volume and structure of production, inflation and investment income, the length of the working day and the possibility of creating new jobs);

- demography (age structure of the number and gender of the working-age population, natural reproduction of the population, mortality and birth rate, mobility of the population and its territorial and sectoral distribution);

- the environment;

- organizational factors (level of organization of labor and production, functions of employment services, training / retraining of employers and the unemployed);

- social-psychological factors (motivation, work regime and possibility of rest, availability of a social protection package);

- legal factors (development of the legislative framework for regulating relations between employers and employees);
- social and innovative factors.

The main indicators reflecting the development of the labor market are the number of employed and unemployed (Table 1).

**Table 1. Main indicators of the labor market for 2000–2023**

Year	Total population, K of people	Economically active population, K of people	Employed population, K of people	Unemployed population, K of people	Unemployment rate, %	Registered unemploye, K of people
2000	48923,2	21150,7	18520,7	2630,0	12,40	1178,7
2001	48457,1	20893,6	18453,3	2440,3	11,70	1063,2
2002	48003,5	20669,5	18540,9	2128,6	10,30	1028,1
2003	47622,4	20618,1	18624,1	1994,0	9,70	1024,2
2004	47280,8	20582,5	18694,3	1888,2	9,20	975,5
2005	46929,5	20481,7	18886,5	1595,2	7,80	891,9
2006	46646,0	20545,9	19032,2	1513,7	7,40	784,5
2007	46372,7	20606,2	19189,5	1416,7	6,90	673,1
2008	46143,7	20675,7	19251,7	1424,0	6,90	596,0
2009	45962,9	20321,6	18365,0	1956,6	9,60	693,1
2010	45778,5	20220,7	18436,5	1784,2	8,80	452,1
2011	45633,6	20247,9	18516,2	1731,7	8,60	505,3
2012	45553,0	20393,5	18736,9	1656,6	8,10	467,7
2013	45426,2	20478,2	18901,8	1576,4	7,70	487,6
2014	42928,9	19035,2	17188,1	1847,1	9,70	458,6
2015	42760,5	17396,0	15742,0	1654,0	9,50	461,1
2016	42584,5	17303,6	15626,1	1677,5	9,70	407,2
2017	42386,4	17193,2	15495,9	1697,3	9,90	352,5
2018	42153,2	17296,2	15718,6	1577,6	9,10	341,7
2019	41902,4	17381,8	15894,9	1486,9	8,60	338,2
2020	41588,4	16917,8	15244,5	1673,3	9,90	459,2
2021	41167,3	16666,8	14957,3	1709,5	10,30	295,0
2022	41167,3	12975,4	11300,4	1899,6	14,60	186,5
2023	33254,3	12874,5	11199,5	2000,5	15,50	96,1

After analyzing the dynamics of the number of employers and the unemployed in Ukraine from 2000 to 2023, it was established that the number of employed people is gradually decreasing, and in 2023, compared to 2000, it decreased by 7321.2 thousand people. While the number of unemployed, on the contrary, is growing. A small recovery is likely in 2018–2019, but the Coronavirus crisis and significant quarantine restrictions, which led to a decrease in the rate of economic growth, became destabilizing factors, and in 2021, the employment level of the population in Ukraine

decreased by 4,483.9 thousand people compared to 2000. It should be noted that the reduction in the number of the employed population is observed in all age groups. But the largest share falls on the economically active population - the younger age group. In addition, most scholars suggest that «Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the employment rate of men and women, leading to an increase in gender inequality».

Preservation of labor potential is currently the most important element of the labor potential management system. The essence of the process of supporting the potential of the labor force is the need to develop and implement measures to prevent a decrease in quantitative parameters and improve qualitative characteristics, in particular, employment of the population. The analysis of employment of the population by types of economic activity for the studied period of 2000–2023 is systematized on the basis of information from the State Statistics Service (Table 2).

**Table 2. Employment of the population by types of economic activity  
2020–2023, %**

Types of economic activity	Year					
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2023
Agriculture	6,1	5,8	5,4	4,9	4,3	4,1
Industry	24,3	22,9	20,4	18,2	16,3	15,7
Building construction	5,5	5,3	5,1	4,8	4,4	4,2
Transport	8,2	7,9	8,1	7,4	6,9	6,6
Trade	13,1	12,4	11,9	11,4	10,9	10,5
Services	17,1	18,3	19,3	20,3	21,4	21,6
Public administration	4,2	4,1	4	3,9	3,8	3,7
Education	7,4	7,3	7,2	7,1	7	6,9
Health care	6,2	6	5,8	5,6	5,4	5,2
Social services	5,4	5,2	5,1	5	4,9	5
Other sectors	2,5	2,2	2,1	2	1,9	1,8

According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, we present a table of employment dynamics by types of economic activity in Ukraine from 2000 to 2023. Analyzing the employment of the population revealed a tendency to decrease in almost all types of activities. The increase in the number of employed persons for the years 2000–2023 was observed only in the service sector by 4.5 percentage points. Employment steadily decreased during the studied period: in agriculture from 6.1 % in 2000 to 4.1 % in 2023, in industry it also decreased from 24.3 % to 15.7 %, in construction and transport remains quite stable, respectively, fluctuating between 4.8% and 5.5 % and from 7.4 % to 6.9 %, in trade it increased by 13.1 % to 10.5 %, in the service sector increased from 17.1 % to 21.6 %, in public administration slightly decreased from 7.4 % to 7.0 %, in the field of education and health care it remains stable, fluctuating between 5.8 % and 5.6 % and between 6.2 % and 5.4 %, respectively,

in social services slightly decreased from 5.4 % to 4.9 %, in other sectors also decreased from 2.5 % to 1.9 %.

Among the main reasons for the increase in the number of unemployed in the country, the following can be distinguished:

- 1) provision by the employer of a rather low level of remuneration; 2) an imbalance in the labor market itself, i.e. an excess of labor supply over demand [6]; 3) discrepancy between the needs of the labor market and the existing programs of training/retraining of specialists; 4) dissatisfaction with existing working conditions; 5) reduction of incentive payments and the package of social protection of employees; 6) limited career growth, lack of incentives, opportunities for professional development or professionalism.

However, one of the most influential factors in the labor market is the course of political and economic events taking place in the country. The development of a full-scale war in 2022 had a significant impact on all sectors of the national economy, among which the labor market was no exception. Thus, according to the State Employment Center, the number of officially registered unemployed in 2023 was 2,000.5 thousand people. The unemployment rate in 2023 increased by 3.1 percentage points in comparison with 2000 [7]. The main factors that caused the imbalance in the labor market are:

- general decline in economic activity;
- internal migration of the population from the territory of the temporarily occupied front line, the employment structure of the western and central regions is significantly different from the eastern region, where the emphasis is on heavy industry, so such immigration creates an additional burden on the labor market;
- reducing the demand for labor and increasing competition between labor suppliers in the areas most affected by military operations.

In particular, the external migration of highly qualified workers has become an important problem for the domestic labor market. However, the remote work experience that took place during the spread of the Coronavirus allowed about 23 % of immigrants who continued to perform their official duties abroad to keep their jobs.

One of the important tasks of the post-war recovery should be the stabilization of the labor market, which we recommend considering as a separate section of the State Program for Economic Recovery. It is possible to solve the existing problems that prevent the normal functioning of the labor market, especially with the help of actions aimed at balancing:

- 1) ensuring public safety and preventing future military operations;
- 2) restoration of social infrastructure and housing, which will allow thousands of displaced persons to return home;
- 3) take a number of measures to reduce inflation and restore the country's economic development;
- 4) to support small and medium-sized enterprises that suffered as a result of the full-scale invasion of Russia and completely limited or stopped their activities. As a result, tax revenues have significantly decreased, and the number of unemployed has increased;

5) provide support to vulnerable sections of the population and create employment bases for workers with disabilities;

6) adaptation of the market of educational services to the needs of the labor market «implementation of a set of strategic forecasts and plans regarding potential graduates and their state support»;

7) increase the efficiency of labor distribution, reduce income differentiation, increase the minimum wage and minimum self-sufficiency.

The causes of unemployment in Ukraine are diverse and include structural, economic, political and social factors. At the same time, the consequences of unemployment have a profound negative impact not only on the well-being of individual citizens, but also on the economic development of the country as a whole, creating additional burdens on the state budget and provoking social tension in society (Table 3).

**Table 3. Causes and consequences of unemployment in Ukraine**

Causes of unemployment	Consequences of unemployment
Structural disproportions in the economy	A decrease in the standard of living of the population
Low competitiveness of domestic products	Growth of poverty and social inequality
Imperfections of the professional education system	Changes in tax revenues to the budget
Insufficient support for small and medium-sized businesses	Growing social tension and protest moods
Political and economic instability	Loss of human capital due to migration
Seasonal fluctuations in certain sectors of the economy	The increase in costs for the payment of unemployment benefits
The material and technical base of enterprises is outdated	Decrease in economic activity and consumer demand
Insufficient investment in human capital development	Expansion of the shadow sector of the economy
Low labor force mobility	Increasing crime rate
Military conflict in the East of Ukraine	Deterioration of the psychological state of the unemployed

Overcoming the problems of unemployment in Ukraine requires a comprehensive approach that would take into account all the causes and minimize the negative consequences of this phenomenon. Only under the conditions of carrying out effective measures at various levels – from structural reforms in the economy to improving the system of social protection for the unemployed – it is possible to achieve a sustainable decrease in the level of unemployment and ensure economic growth and increase the welfare of the population.

Partial unemployment benefit can be received by persons who have an insurance status, namely employees at their main place of work, while part-time workers and self-employed individuals are not entitled to this benefit.

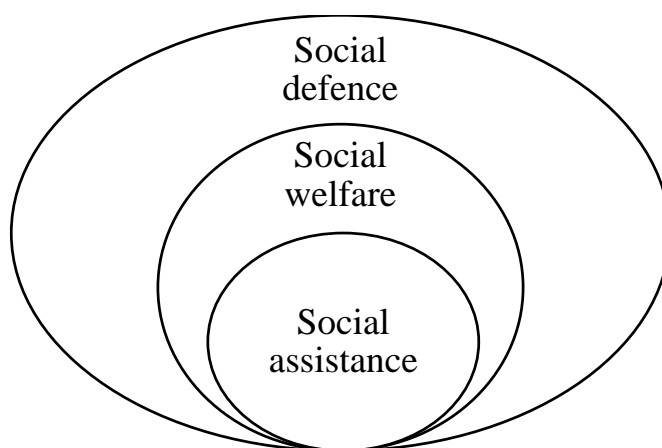
**Table 4. Basic reasons for receiving unemployment benefits in Ukraine**

Reasons	Details
Status	Officially registered as unemployed in the state employment service
Seniority	Minimum of 6 months of insurance experience in the last 12 months before unemployment
Reason for dismissal	Not dismissed on his/her own initiative without valid reasons or for violation of labor discipline
Readiness for employment	Willingness to start the recommended work
Re-registration	Regular re-registration in the employment service (every 30 calendar days)
Participation in events	Attending professional training, retraining, and professional development trainings offered by the employment service
Amount of assistance	Depends on the average salary for the last 6 months of work and insurance experience
Duration of payments	Payment can last up to 90 calendar days (for persons of pre-retirement age 58–59 years – 360 days)

It should be noted that there are also additional conditions for certain categories of unemployed, for example, graduates of educational institutions, those released from military service, persons near retirement age, etc. In 2023, the amount of partial unemployment benefits in Ukraine ranged from UAH 1,272.00 to UAH 3,464.00 per month.

State social security is an integral part of the social protection system and performs the function of accumulating and distributing social protection funds aimed at social assistance, payment of social insurance, etc. Social security includes pensions and various types of benefits. Thus, social security is interpreted as a means of material support of a person or family from the state or society. The social protection system should also include social standards—a minimum level of employment, scholarships and social security guaranteed by the state. The ratio of social protection, social security and social assistance is shown in fig. 1. The activity of the state, which regulates the sphere of social protection and social security, should be carried out in the following directions: organization of social assistance provision; distribution of social and incentive payments; regulation of procedures for social work and provision of social services; approval of state social programs; establishment of national social standards, guarantees and regulations; introduction of other social protection measures.





**Fig. 1. The relationship between social protection, social security and social assistance**

**Conclusion.** The changes caused by the full-scale armed attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine affect the functioning of the Ukrainian labor market as a whole and, in particular, its regional segment, exacerbate the problem of disparities and imbalances of instability. The level of recovery of the labor market in the region depends on a number of such factors: distance from the front line, relocation of businesses, changes in the capacity of the labor market in connection with entrepreneurial activity, the effectiveness of the policy on promoting employment and stimulating the development of the business environment, relocation of labor resources employees; such reserves as ensuring the stability of the labor market and labor mobility were formed in the region.

Further stabilization of the regional labor market in the conditions of the war and post-war recovery is needed: the implementation of a number of measures aimed at the recovery, development and modernization of the business environment; formation of workforce adaptability; training in the most competitive specialties, maximum involvement of internal specialists, displaced persons in the field of work; effective youth employment actions, using successfully implemented cases from other European countries; the creation of new enterprises and the already implemented increase in the number of new high-quality jobs due to the opening of new industrial parks to expand the scope of activities of developing industries; activation of business support centers; provision of consulting support to entrepreneurial initiatives; implementation of national business recovery programs and insurance mechanisms against military risks; approaches to public procurement, which contribute to combating structural unemployment, reducing the shortage of personnel.

Thus, the post-war recovery and resumption of economic growth of the national economy will require a significant labor force. However, significant human losses, both among military and civilian personnel, and reluctance to return from abroad among forced migrants may pose serious obstacles to recovery. Therefore, the development of the labor market is one of the urgent needs of post-war development. The key goal of social protection is the provision of socially vulnerable segments of the population and the primary protection of military personnel, internally displaced persons, victims, etc., who have the right to provision of full, partial or temporary incapacity for work, loss

of breadwinner, unemployment due to circumstances beyond their control, as well as old age and in other cases provided by law.

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### **Annotation**

#### **Sokolyuk S., Prokopchuk O., Cherneha I., Tupchiy O., Zharun E., Korotieiev M. Analysis of the labor market and directions for improving the system of social protection and social security in Ukraine**

*The changes caused by the full-scale armed attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine affect the functioning of the Ukrainian labor market as a whole and, in particular, its regional segment, exacerbate the problem of disparities and imbalances of instability. The level of recovery of the labor market in the region depends on a number of such factors: distance from front line, relocation of business, changes in capacity of the labor market in connection with entrepreneurial activity, effectiveness of the policy on promoting employment and stimulating the development of the business environment, the movement of labor resources employees; such reserves as ensuring the stability of the labor market and labor mobility were formed in the region. Further stabilization of the regional labor market in the conditions of the war and post-war recovery is needed: the implementation of a number of measures aimed at the recovery, development and modernization of the business environment; formation of workforce adaptability; effective youth employment actions, using successfully implemented cases from other EU countries; implementation of national business recovery programs and insurance mechanisms against military risks; approaches to public procurement, which contribute to combating structural unemployment, reducing the shortage of personnel.*

*The social protection is interpret as a multi-level system of economic, social and legal relations aimed at managing social risks in society, eliminating undesirable consequences and ensuring an appropriate standard of living. Social protection of the population as a system operating in wartime is a set of normative acts, forms, methods and actions: establishment of a regularly updated guaranteed minimum self-sufficiency provided for by the legislation of Ukraine. It defines the lower limits of wages, forms a system of pensions and benefits, guarantees housing and services in the communal and socio-cultural sphere; a discriminatory approach to different socio-demographic strata of the population depending on the degree of economic independence, capacity for work and opportunities to earn income; implementation of the right of all citizens to work and receive a guaranteed minimum income sufficient for the normal functioning of workers and their families; provision of various forms of support to the unemployed: unemployment benefits, organization of public works, retraining and obtaining new specialties for which there are vacant jobs, creation of conditions for opening one's own business; state guarantees of maintaining the necessary standard of living for low-income categories of the population; indexation of monetary deposits of the population in case of an increase in prices for goods and services; development and legislative regulation of a complex of measures representing the system of social protection of the entire population.*

**Key words:** *unemployment, employment, population, supply and demand, labor market, social protection, social security.*