



EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK (ESPN)

# Access to social protection for young people

## Montenegro

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young people  
Montenegro**

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## SUMMARY

The youth population of Montenegro is facing high levels of unemployment. In 2020, the youth unemployment rate (15–29) stood at 30.7%, significantly higher than the unemployment rate for the older population (30–64) of 14.6%.

Young people in Montenegro are eligible for contributory unemployment benefits, and there is no difference between them and other age groups with regard to their contributions record. Unemployed people (also self-employed, trainees or apprentices) who are actively seeking a job may claim. Also, the calculation of this benefit is the same for all age groups.

Age is not a criterion for sickness benefit, and everyone who is employed or self-employed is eligible for this benefit. The Montenegrin healthcare system covers the entire population and provides very broad benefit packages. The benefit package does not include dental care for those over 18 years of age, unless they are students or are without parents (up to the age of 26). No contributions record is required for healthcare benefits.

Maternity, paternity and parental benefits do not depend on age. Those employed full time and part time receive full salary compensation from the employer, while compensation to the employer from the state depends on contributions history. The self-employed are refunded according to the same criteria. Students and the unemployed receive cash benefits. Fathers and parents are offered paid leave. No gaps and obstacles exist for young people.

Young people are also beneficiaries of the family material support, and age is not a criterion for this benefit. Unemployed persons have access to the benefit if they are actively seeking a job. There are other conditions for claiming this benefit (income, ownership status, other social support), but they are the same for all age groups.

Housing benefits are not provided in Montenegro. However, one good practice has been a housing programme for young people, through which the government subsidises a proportion of the interest payable on the purchase of a residential apartment. Four rounds of this program have been organised, the most recent in 2020/2021.

Changes in social policy since 2015 have focused on developing social services and increasing the minimum wage. There have been no changes that particularly target young people. Youth access to social protection is not a part of the national debate on social policy. Debates regarding young people mainly focus on educational reforms and the efficient transition from school to work, as well as on efficient integration into the labour market through different programmes, such as the development of entrepreneurship.

# 1 KEY FIGURES ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 Distribution of young people (aged 15–29) by main activity status

**Table 1a: Main activity status of people aged 15-29 and 30-64 (2015-2020, EU-27 and Montenegro, % 15-29 and 30-64)**

	MONTENEGRO											
	15-29						30-64					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EMPLOYMENT RATE*	33.2	35.2	35.7	35.9	39.7	31.3	59.8	59.7	61.2	63.2	63.4	59.0
Paid employment**	89.8	88.4	89.0	90.9	89.7	89.7	77.3	76.7	76.1	76.3	77.8	76.8
Self-employment**	:	:	6.2	:	5.9	8.4	17.7	18.2	18.4	19.0	17.4	21.0
Contributing family work**	:	:	4.8	:	4.4	:	5.0	5.1	5.5	4.7	4.8	:
UNEMPLOYMENT***	29.2	28.8	26.5	26.0	22.2	30.7	14.3	14.4	13.1	12.3	13.2	14.6
INACTIVITY****	53.1	50.5	51.4	51.5	48.9	54.9	30.2	30.2	29.5	27.9	27.0	31.0
	EU-27											
	15-29						30-64					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EMPLOYMENT RATE*	45.0	45.9	46.9	47.7	48.2	46.1	71.4	72.4	73.5	74.5	75.3	74.9
Paid employment**	91.8	92.2	92.4	92.6	92.8	92.5	83.0	83.3	83.7	84.0	84.1	84.2
Self-employment**	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.4	14.6	14.5	14.3	14.2	14.2	14.1
Contributing family work **	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.7
UNEMPLOYMENT***	17.3	15.8	14.2	12.8	11.9	13.3	8.5	7.7	6.9	6.1	5.6	5.8
INACTIVITY****	45.6	45.4	45.3	45.3	45.3	46.8	22.0	21.6	21.0	20.6	20.2	20.5

Notes: (\*) The employment rate is expressed as a share (%) of the total population in the age group. The 3 categories of employment (paid employment [i.e. employees], self-employment and contributing family work) are expressed as a share (%) of the population in employment in the age group. Contributing family work is a form of labour (generally unpaid, although compensation may come indirectly in the form of family income) that supports another member of the family to run an agricultural holding or another business. (\*\*) The unemployment rate is expressed as a share (%) of the active population, i.e. the population that is either in employment or unemployed (not the total population), in the age group. (\*\*\*) The inactivity rate is expressed as a share (%) of the total population in the age group. ':' indicates statistically unreliable data.

Reading note: In 2020, in Montenegro, 31.3% of people aged between 15 and 29 were in employment, compared to 59.0% of those aged 30-64. In the EU-27 as a whole, these figures were 46.1% and 74.9%, respectively. The share of people unemployed in the active population in Montenegro was 30.7% of the 15-29 age group and 14.6% of the 30-64 age group (EU-27 average: 13.3% and 5.8%). The shares of people economically inactive in Montenegro in the 15-29 and 30-64 age groups were 54.9% and 31.0%, respectively (EU-27 average: 46.8% and 20.5%).

Source: Eurostat, ESPN Network Core Team calculations based on LFS indicators [lfsa\_eegais], [lfsa\_egaps], [lfsa\_pganws] and [lfsa\_igan]. Data downloaded on 17 July 2021.

<sup>1</sup> Except if and where otherwise specified, the indicators presented in Section 1 of this report were computed by the ESPN Network Core Team on the basis of data coming from two data sources coordinated at European level by the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>): European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) and European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). These indicators were computed for all the 35 ESPN countries for which the data needed were available. All these ESPN countries' estimates are presented in Annex B of the following Synthesis Report: Dalila Ghailani, Stéphanie Coster, Ramón Peña-Casas and Pietro Regazzoni (2021), "Access to social protection for young people. An analysis of policies in 35 countries", European Social Policy Network (ESPN), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. This Synthesis Report can be downloaded [here](#).

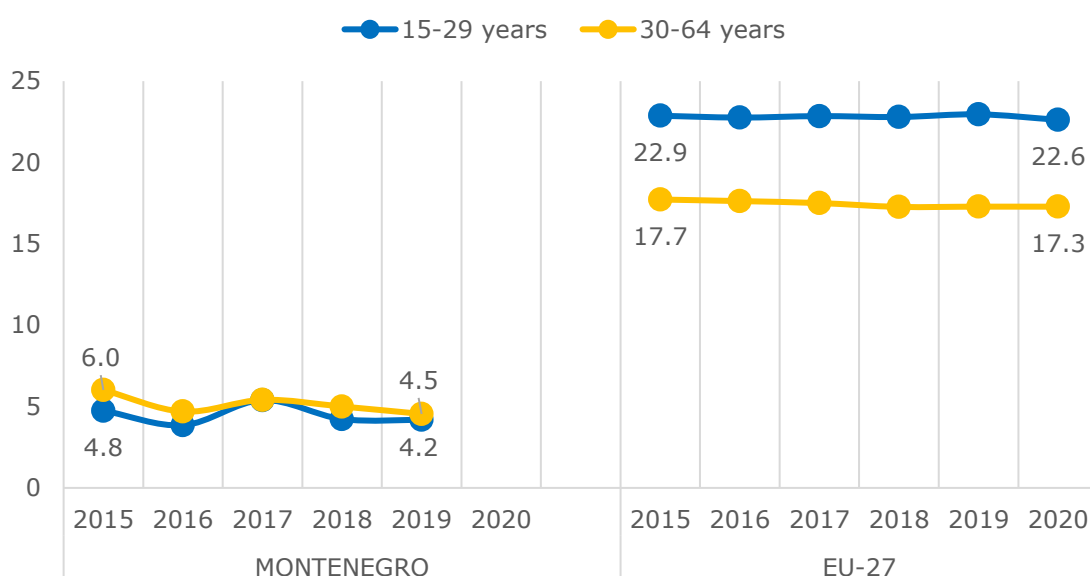
**Table 1b: Main activity status of people aged 15-29 and 30-64 (2015-2020, EU-27 and Montenegro, ratios 15-29/30-64)**

	MONTENEGRO						EU-27					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EMPLOYMENT RATE*	0.56	0.59	0.58	0.57	0.63	0.53	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.62
Paid employment**	1.16	1.15	1.17	1.19	1.15	1.17	1.11	1.11	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10
Self-employment**	:	:	0.34	:	0.34	0.40	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.38
Contributing family work**	:	:	0.86	:	0.91	:	1.21	1.20	1.21	1.24	1.24	1.20
UNEMPLOYMENT***	2.04	1.99	2.03	2.12	1.68	2.10	2.04	2.06	2.06	2.09	2.10	2.29
INACTIVITY****	1.76	1.68	1.74	1.85	1.81	1.77	2.07	2.11	2.16	2.20	2.24	2.29

Notes: To obtain the ratio of 15-29 to 30-64, the 15-29 percentage is divided by the 30-64 percentage: a value below (above) 1 in a given activity status therefore means that 15-29-year-olds are proportionally less (more) numerous in that activity status than 30-64-year-olds. See also Notes to Table 1a above. ':' indicates statistically unreliable data.

Reading note: In 2020, in Montenegro, 31.3% of people aged between 15 and 29 were in employment compared to 59.0% of those aged 30-64 (see Table 1a) – i.e. a 15-29:30-64 ratio of 0.53. In the EU-27 as a whole (see table 1a), these figures were 46.1 and 74.9% respectively (ratio 0.62).

Source: See Table 1a.

**Figure 1: Part-time employment as a share of the population in employment - comparison of the 15-29 and 30-64 age groups (2015-2020, EU-27 and Montenegro, %)**

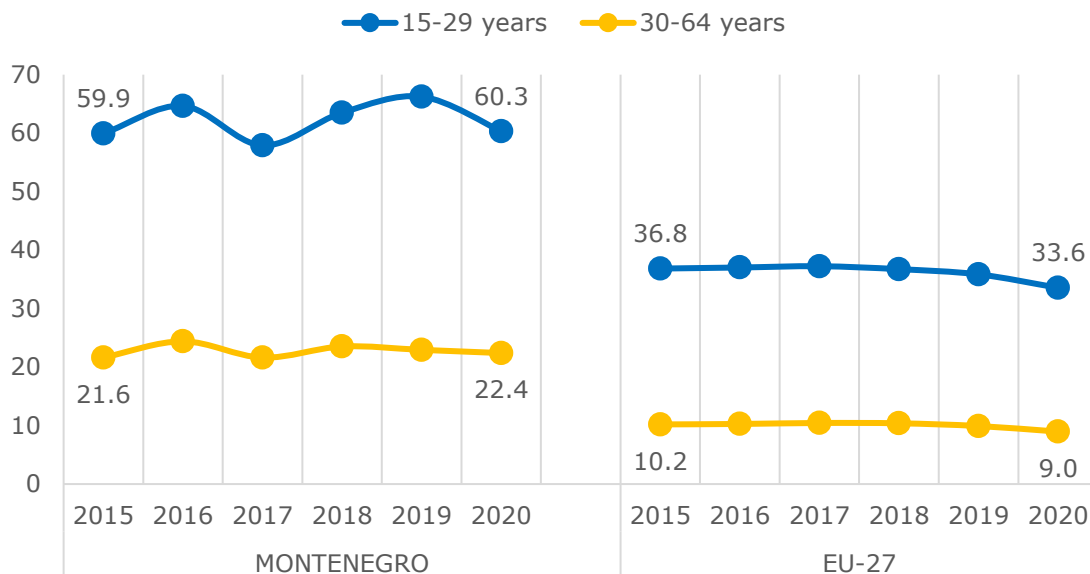
Note: No data for Montenegro in 2020.

Reading note: In 2019, in Montenegro, the share of part-time employment in total employment was 4.2% for the 15-29 age group and 4.5% for the 30-64 age group. For the EU-27 as a whole, these shares were 23.0% and 17.3%, respectively.

Source: Eurostat, ESPN Network Core Team calculations based on Eurostat LFS indicator [lfsa\_epgn62]. Data downloaded on 17 July 2021.



**Figure 2: Temporary employment as a share of population in paid employment - comparison of the 15-29 and 30-64 age groups (2015-2020, EU-27 and Montenegro, %)**

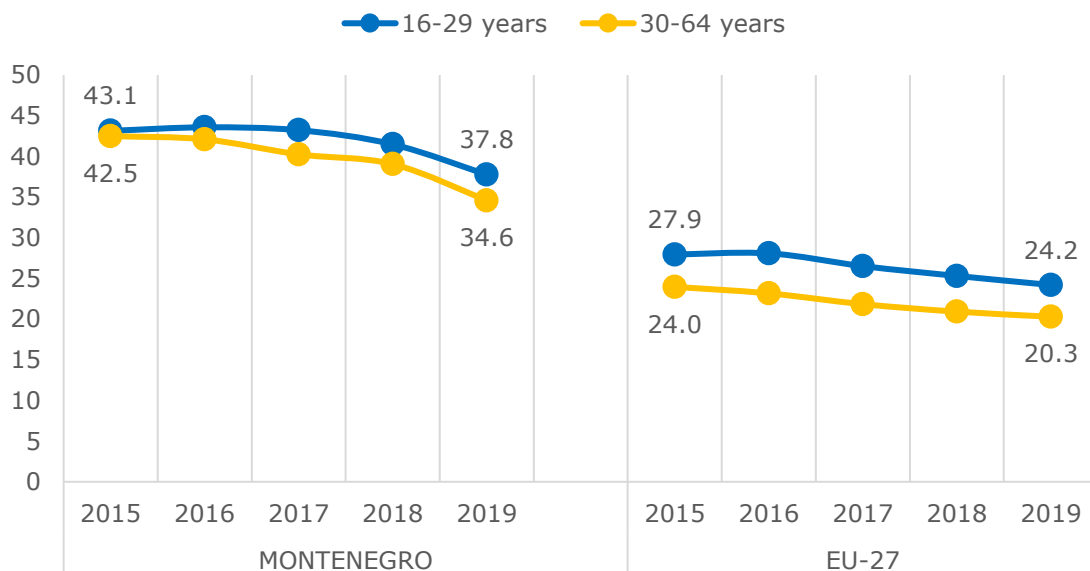


Reading note: In 2020, in Montenegro, the share of temporary workers among employees was 60.3% for the 15-29 age group and 22.4% for the 30-64 age group. For the EU-27 as a whole, these shares were 33.6% and 9.0%, respectively.

Source: Eurostat, ESPN Network Core Team calculations based on Eurostat LFS indicators [lfsa\_epgn62] and [lfsa\_egaps]. Data downloaded on 17 July 2021.

## 1.2 Young people (aged 15–29) at risk of poverty or social exclusion

**Figure 3: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion - comparison of the 16-29 and 30-64 age groups (2015-2020, EU-27 and Montenegro, %)**

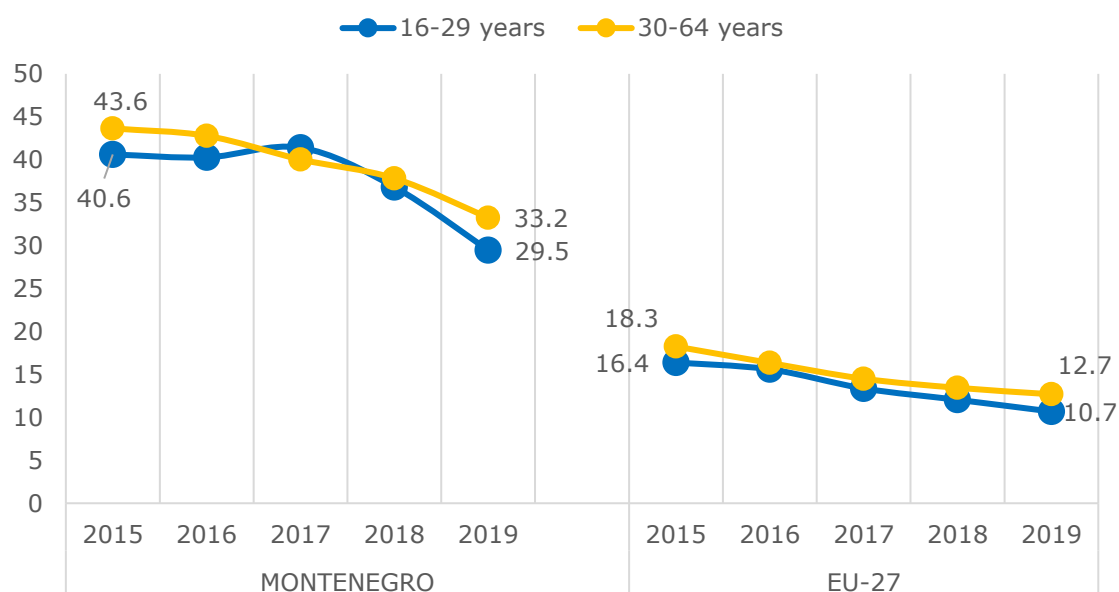


Reading note: In 2019, in Montenegro, 37.8% of the 16-29 age group were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (i.e. they were living in a household that was at risk of poverty and/or severely materially and socially deprived and/or (quasi-)jobless according to the EU definition of these indicators) compared to 34.6% of the 30-64 age group. For the EU-27 as a whole, these figures were 24.2% and 20.3%, respectively.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC ad hoc extraction - indicator [ilc\_peps02]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

### 1.3 Young people (aged 15–29) materially and socially deprived

**Figure 4: People materially and socially deprived - comparison of the 16-29 and 30-64 age groups (2015-2020, EU-27 and Montenegro, %)**

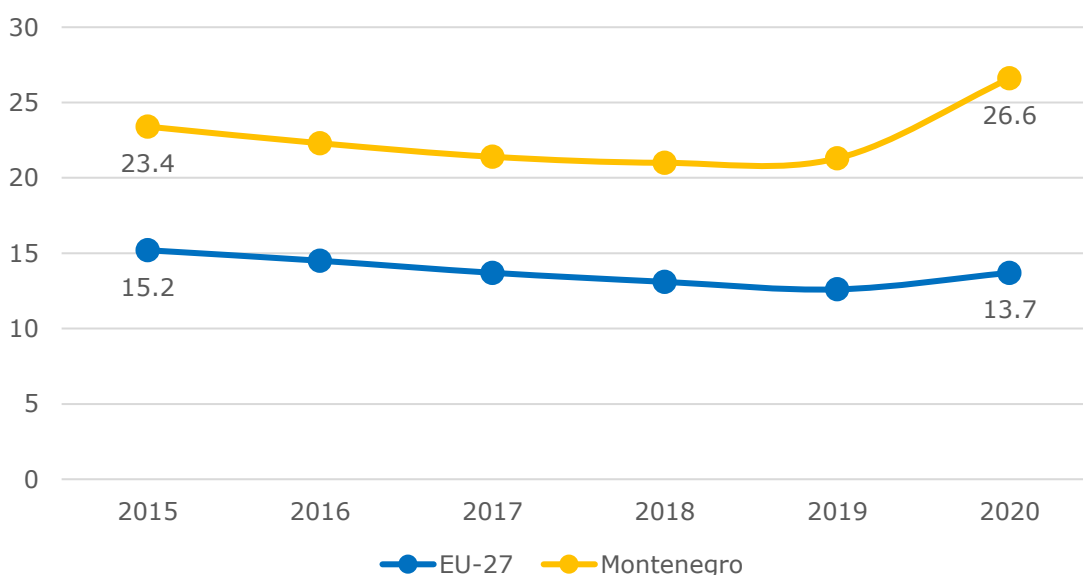


Reading note: In 2019, in Montenegro, 29.5% of the 16-29 age group were materially and socially deprived (according to the EU definition of this indicator) compared to 33.2% of the 30-64 age group. For the EU-27 as a whole, these figures were 10.7% and 12.7%, respectively.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC ad hoc extraction - indicator [ilc\_mdsc]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

### 1.4 Young people (aged 15–29) neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs)

**Figure 5: People aged 15-29 neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs) (2015-2020, EU-27 and Montenegro, %)**

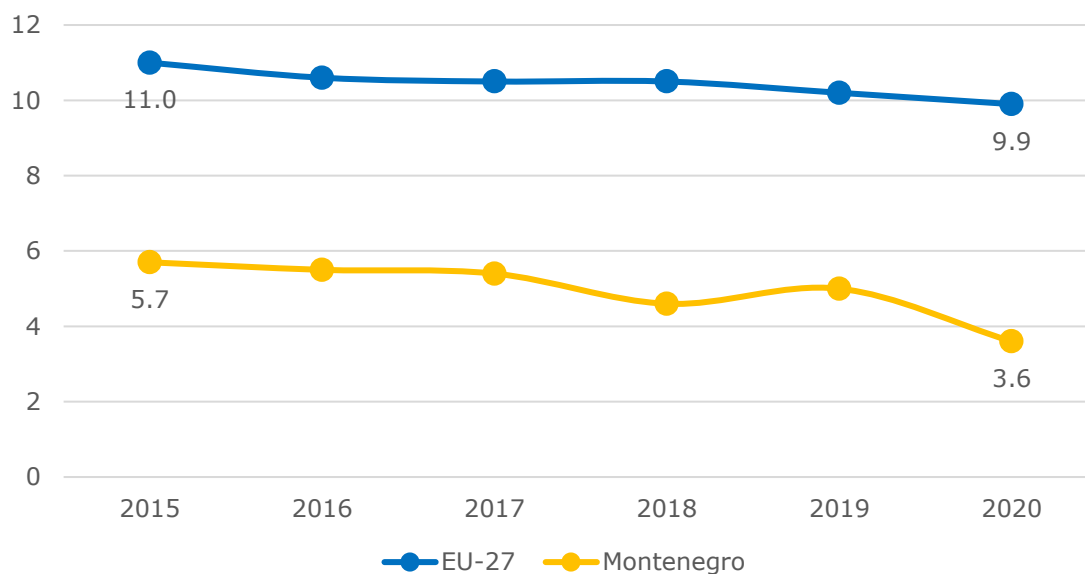


Reading note: In 2020, in Montenegro, 26.6% of the 15-29 age group were neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) compared to 13.7 for the EU-27 as a whole.

Source: Eurostat, LFS - indicator [lfse\_20]. Data downloaded on 17 July 2021.

## 1.5 Early leavers (aged 18–24) from education and training

**Figure 6: Early leavers from education and training for the 18-24 age group (2015-2020, EU-27 and Montenegro, %)**

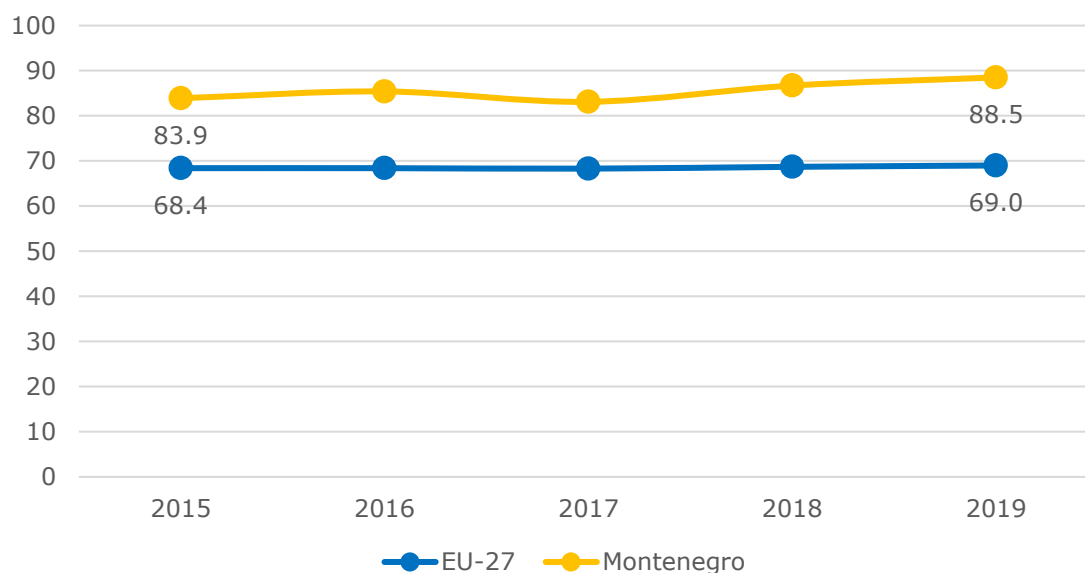


*Reading note:* In 2020, in Montenegro, 3.6% of the 18-24 age group were early leavers from education and training – i.e. they had completed, at most, lower secondary education and were not in further education or training. For the EU-27 as a whole, this figure was 9.9%.

*Source:* Eurostat, LFS - indicator [edat\_ifse\_14]. Data downloaded on 17 July 2021.

## 1.6 Young people (aged 16–29) living with their parents

**Figure 7: Young people aged 16-29 living with their parents (2015-2019, EU-27 and Montenegro, %)**



*Reading note:* In 2019, in Montenegro, 88.5% of the 16-29 age group were living with their parents, compared to 69.0% for the EU-27 as a whole.

*Source:* Eurostat, EU-SILC - indicator [ilc\_lvps08]. Data downloaded on 24 May 2021.

## 2 ACCESS TO UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The 2019 Law on Employment Intermediation and Benefits during Unemployment (Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 024/19) defines the rights to unemployment benefits. An unemployed person is a person aged between 15 and 67 years who is a Montenegrin citizen, or else a foreigner with approved permanent residence, temporary residence for stateless persons, a temporary residence permit for humanitarian reasons or family reunification, recognised refugee status or approved supplementary protection.

In order to receive unemployment benefit, the person must be registered at the Employment Agency of Montenegro, must be capable (or partially capable) of work, must be actively seeking employment and must be available for work. The minimum period for which unemployment benefit may be paid is 3 months and the maximum is 12 months. The duration of the period depends on the person's insurance record:

- 3 months for an insurance record of 9 months to 5 years;
- 6 months for an insurance record of 5 to 15 years;
- 9 months for an insurance record of 15 to 25 years;
- 12 months for an insurance record of 25 to 35 years;
- until re-employment, or until some of the conditions for termination of the right have been met, for an insurance record of over 35 years.

An insured person who has part-time employment is entitled to receive financial compensation if, after the redistribution of working hours, the above conditions are met.

According to the law, unemployment benefit amounts to 120% of the calculated value of the coefficient determined by the law and other regulations, or €108.

### 2.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements

The unemployment benefit scheme in Montenegro is contributory. The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Montenegro, as far as young people are concerned, are the following:

#### a) Age

The unemployment benefit is available to people aged between 15 and 67 years.

#### b) Activity status requirement

Any unemployed insured person whose economic activity has been terminated without his/her consent may be a beneficiary (provided the dismissal was not for misconduct). This applies to the self-employed and to workers on all forms of work contract, including temporary contract, part-time contract, trainee contract or probation (trial) period. To be a beneficiary, the person has to be registered with the Employment Agency of Montenegro and must be able (or partially able) to work, be actively seeking employment and be available for work.

#### c) Contributory history required to access the scheme

The right to unemployment benefit is granted to an insured person who, at the time of termination of employment, has an insurance record of at least 9 months – either continuous or intermittent – over the last 18 months. An insured person who has not been employed full time also enjoys this right, if, on a full-time equivalent basis, the conditions are met.

There are no differences regarding contributory history based on a beneficiary's age.

#### d) Waiting period

No waiting period is required.

**e) Replacement rate/benefit level**

According to the law, unemployment benefit amounts to 120% of the calculated value of the coefficient determined by the law and other regulations, or €108 in 2021. The calculation for young people is the same as for older groups.

**f) Duration**

The minimum period for which unemployment benefit may be paid is 3 months (for someone with an insurance record of between 9 months and 5 years), while the maximum is 12 months (for someone with an insurance record of from 25 to 35 years). For someone with an insurance record of over 35 years, unemployment benefit is paid until re-employment.

**2.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people**

The main gaps and obstacles in access for young people identified for this scheme in Montenegro are the following:

**a) Main gaps in access for young people**

One of the conditions for the benefit is activity status in the labour market. Someone who is inactive, cannot claim the benefit. This applies to all age groups. The self-employed<sup>2</sup> also have to pay mandatory insurance against unemployment.

**b) Main obstacles in access for young people**

There are no specific obstacles to access for young people.

**3 ACCESS TO SICKNESS AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS****3.1 Sickness benefits**

All employed and self-employed persons have to pay compulsory health insurance. Compulsory health insurance guarantees: the right to health care; the right to salary compensation during temporary incapacity for work; and the right to reimbursement of travel expenses related to the use of health care.

**3.1.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements**

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Montenegro, as far as young people are concerned, are the following:

**a) Age**

Age is not a criterion for the sickness benefit.

**b) Activity status requirement**

The beneficiary has to be employed. This includes workers on all types of work contract, including a probationary work contract, a permanent contract, a fixed-term contract, a part-time contract and a trainee contract. It also includes the self-employed.

**c) Contributory history required to access the scheme**

An insured person must have had health insurance from employment for at least 2 months without interruption (or 4 months with interruptions) in the last 12 months. All employers and self-employed persons have to pay this contribution; they may not pay a salary without paying contributions.

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<sup>2</sup> Self-employment is much less frequent in the age group 15–29 (5.9%) than in the age group 30–64 (17.4%) (see Section 1).

**d) Waiting period**

No waiting period is required.

**e) Replacement rate/benefit level**

The calculation for young people is the same as for older groups. Salary compensation during temporary incapacity for work is calculated and paid by the employer. The Health Fund reimburses the employer a minimum of 70% of the compensation base, up to an amount that cannot exceed the previous year's average wage in Montenegro.

**f) Duration**

Up to 10 months of continuous incapacity for work, after which time the Health Fund is obliged to refer the employee to the competent authority for an assessment of his/her working capability.

**3.1.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people**

No gaps or obstacles in access for young people are identified for this scheme in Montenegro.

**3.2 Healthcare benefits**

The Montenegrin health system covers the entire population (there is universal health coverage) and provides a very broad package of benefits, including: health promotion; disease prevention; diagnosis, examinations and treatment, including measures for the early detection of illness and prevention of further deterioration; rehabilitation and specialised medical rehabilitation; continuous health care; dental care; emergency and urgent medical assistance; dialysis; transfusion medicine services; medications and medical devices and medical-technical aids.

**3.2.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements**

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Montenegro, as far as young people are concerned, are the following:

**a) Age**

No age requirements, except in the case of primary dental care, which is available to children up to the age of 18 years, and to young people up to 26 years of age, provided they are studying or do not have parents. Dental care at the secondary and tertiary levels is fully covered for all.

**b) Activity status requirement**

There are no activity status requirements.

**c) Contributory history required to access the scheme**

No contributory history is required, but a person has to have health insurance.

**d) Waiting period**

No waiting period is required.

**e) Replacement rate/benefit level**

The calculation for young people is the same as for older groups. Co-payment is required for: examination, treatment and diagnostics at the primary level of health care; medicines dispensed in pharmacies; examination, treatment and diagnostics at the secondary and tertiary levels of health care; hospital treatment; medical devices that are implanted in the human body; medical and technical aids; change of sex; specialised medical rehabilitation; treatment with hyperbaric oxygen therapy; non-urgent transport by ambulance; the costs of accommodation and meals for anyone accompanying a child

aged 15–18 in hospital, an institution for specialised medical rehabilitation and treatment abroad.

Co-payment for health care is determined in both absolute and percentage terms. For example, the absolute amounts are as follows: medications – €0.35 per prescription; laboratory services – €0.35 per service; hospital treatment – €0.35 per day, up until the 15th day.

In percentage terms, co-payment is determined as follows: for a specialist examination – 40% of the cost, according to a list of charges; for certain medical-technical aids – 40% of the cost of the aids; for specialised medical rehabilitation – 40% of the cost of rehabilitation, etc.

Certain population categories are not obliged to contribute to the costs: children up to 12 years of age; people aged 65 and over; pregnant women; and those people in receipt of social support measures, such as family material support.

#### **f) Duration**

There is no limit to the reimbursement period.

### **3.2.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people**

No gaps or obstacles to access for young people are identified for this scheme in Montenegro.

## **4 ACCESS TO MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND PARENTAL CASH BENEFITS**

Parents with a child have the right to paid maternity leave or parental leave for 365 days. Employed women are obliged to take maternity leave of 98 days: 28 days before the due date of birth and 70 days after the birth of the child. In the event of a multiple birth, 70 days' leave following the birth may be taken by both parents at the same time. Parental leave may be taken by the mother or the father, or they may choose to share it.

### **4.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements**

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Montenegro, as far as young people are concerned, are the following:

#### **a) Age**

Age is not a criterion for this kind of benefit.

#### **b) Activity status requirement**

Those employed full time or part time – whatever type of work contract they have (including a probationary work contract, a permanent contract or a fixed-term contract) – and the self-employed receive salary compensation that is reimbursed by the state; students and unemployed persons receive a cash benefit. Fathers are entitled to paid paternity leave; both parents are entitled to paid parental leave.

#### **c) Contributory history required to access the scheme**

For someone with an insurance record of 3 months, 30% of that person's average wage is reimbursed to the employer; for someone who has been insured for between 3 and 6 months, the reimbursement rate is 50%; and for someone who has been insured for between 6 and 12 months, the rate is 70%. For people who fall into these categories, the upper limit is one times the average monthly wage in the country. For someone who has been insured for at least 1 year, the person's full net average wage is reimbursed, up to the level of twice the average monthly national wage. However, the employer has to pay the full salary during the leave. No contributions record is required in the case of cash benefit for unemployed persons and students.

**d) Waiting period**

No waiting period is required.

**e) Replacement rate/benefit level**

The calculation for young people is the same as for older groups. The Health Fund reimburses the salary compensation paid by the employer to the tune of 100% of the compensation base. The amount of the cash benefit in the case of unemployed and student beneficiaries is €81.62 per month for a period of 1 year after the birth of the child. This may be claimed by either parent (the mother or the father), if he/she is unemployed and registered with the Employment Agency.

**f) Duration**

The maternity benefit is paid for 70 days and parental benefit for 365 days. The duration is same for young people as for other age groups.

**4.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people**

No gaps or obstacles to access for young people are identified for this scheme in Montenegro.

**5 GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME SCHEMES**

The family support allowance is a basic right in the field of social protection, and is determined according to the income and property of all family members. Any family member (or family) is entitled to family allowance, if they are unable to work or if they are able to work and are a) a pregnant woman; b) a single provider; c) a parent who supports a minor child or an adult child who is unable to work and whose incapacity to work occurred before the age of 18, or who has completed education as part of an education programme with customised performance and additional professional support, or under a special education programme; or d) a child without parental care up until the time he/she finds employment. The family needs to fulfil 15 criteria in order to claim family support allowance, including: a) average monthly income from the previous quarter must be below a defined threshold (since 2020, €68.30 a month for a single-person family); b) they do not own or benefit from business premises, residential premises, land or agricultural land; c) no family member has refused a job offer or vocational training; and d) no family member owns movable property. If all the necessary conditions are met, the amount of financial support received is €68.30 for an individual or a single-member household.

**5.1 Eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements**

The main eligibility conditions and benefit entitlements that apply to the scheme in Montenegro, as far as young people are concerned, are the following:

**a) Age**

Age is not a criterion for the benefit.

**b) Activity status requirement**

People in employment do not have access to this benefit (this refers to all types of work contracts, including trainees and apprentices). The unemployed have access, but they have to be actively seeking employment. Other people who have access include: a) a pregnant woman; b) a single parent who supports a minor child or an adult child who is unable to work or who has completed education as part of a special education programme (pertains to educational programmes for persons with special educational needs); and c) a child (up until the age of 18) without parental care, until he/she finds employment.



**c) Other eligibility conditions**

There are conditions relating to income level, property ownership, and rights to other social benefits, but these are no different for young people.

**d) Benefit level**

The level of the benefit is €68.30 for a single-person family a month (if monthly income is below this level; unemployment benefit is included in monthly income, but other benefits – such as disability allowance or maternity cash benefit for students – are not). The calculation is the same for young people as for other age groups.

**e) Distinctions between different groups of young people**

There are no distinctions between different groups of young people.

**5.2 Gaps/obstacles in access for young people**

No gaps or obstacles to access for young people are identified for this scheme in Montenegro.

**6 HOUSING BENEFITS**

Housing benefits are not provided in Montenegro.

**7 REFORMS, NATIONAL DEBATES AND RECOMMENDATIONS****7.1 Reforms implemented since 2015**

There have been no changes in young people's access to social protection as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis (e.g. reducing the qualifying or minimum working periods).

However, there have been some changes that have impacted all age groups, including youth.

These have mainly focused on the improvement of social services. One of the changes saw the minimum wage rise in 2019, from €193 to €222. This increase is important, as certain social benefits (such as family material support, which is partly linked to the average salary, which increased as a consequence of the increase in the minimum wage) are aligned with the minimum wage level.

**7.2 National debates**

Young people's access to social protection does not form part of the national debate in Montenegro. The current social debates focus on a minimum wage increase and changes in the conditions for receipt of child allowance. Other debates that concern young people usually focus on education policy, transition from school to work and other aspects of young people's lives, such as culture. The Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System for the period from 2018 to 2022 (Government of Montenegro, 2017) does not envisage any significant changes in social policies for young people. The document stated that a detailed analysis of the overall social protection system would be conducted, and changes made in line with its findings. This analysis, jointly commissioned by the ex-Ministry of Labour and UNICEF, has now been concluded and the road map has been finalised. It is expected that the ministry will adopt these documents and set about implementing their findings. It is also expected that these documents will soon be publicly available.

Also, the Youth Strategy of Montenegro (Ministry of Education, 2016) defines as its first outcome 'achieving economic and social security through improved access to the labour market and employment', while related measures are: removal of barriers in the labour market, support for the development of youth entrepreneurship, the establishment of an

integrated and holistic youth support system for transition to decent employment and a reduction in youth inactivity.

### **7.3 Good practices and recommendations**

Most of the policies that target young people (National Youth Strategy 2017–2021, National Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030, National Employment and Human Resources Development Strategy 2016–2020) focus on helping the young to achieve social and economic security, by facilitating access to the labour market and by supporting them to become active participants in society. Young people are not recognised as a special group within social policy, and the number of social programmes that target young people is very limited.

One example of good practice among policies that target young people is the '1000+ project' programme, which aims to provide housing support for the young population. Through this programme, the government subsidises a proportion of the interest on the purchase of a residential house/apartment. Young couples (below the age of 35) and those employed in the public sector (and certain other categories) are eligible, while priority is given to single-parent families, families who have a member with a disability, and victims of violence, among others. The project has consisted of four rounds: the first was implemented in 2010 and 2011; the second in 2016 and 2017; the third in 2018; and the fourth in 2020 and 2021. During the first three phases, a total of 470 vouchers were provided. The project is being implemented in cooperation with – and through a credit arrangement with – the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). However, this is not a permanent government programme, and its implementation depends on the contribution of CEB. Thus, there is a need for programmes and benefits that will, from different angles, target the young population permanently.

In order to encourage more programmes that will support the young population, there is a need for studies to explain their situation and social status and to anticipate the main social issues that they face, besides the lack of jobs.

**REFERENCES**

- Government of Montenegro (2017). Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System for the period from 2018 to 2022. <https://www.usp2030.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action;jsessionid=sM3IB0uNnVUeJv2V18c-RC6IPweoulojXjvIQbpwXG7jliuTUWbn!-1463413688?id=55821>
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