



# RURAL NEETS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



2009/2019  
OVERVIEW



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines in detail the situation of rural Youths Neither in Employment, nor in Education or Training (NEET) aged between 15 and 34 years old, over the last decade (2009–2019) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To do this, the report utilised indicators of: youth population; youth employment and unemployment; education; and, NEETs distribution. The characterisation of all indicators adopted the degree of urbanisation as a central criterion, enabling proportional comparisons between rural areas, towns and suburbs, cities and the whole country. These analyses are further divided into age subgroups and, where possible, into sex groups for greater detail.

The statistical procedures adopted across the different selected dimensions involve: descriptive longitudinal analysis; using graphical displays (e.g., overlay line charts); and, the calculation of proportional absolute and relative changes between 2009 and 2013, 2013 and 2019, and finally 2009 and 2019. These time ranges were chosen to capture the indicators evolution before and after the economic crisis which hit European countries. All data was extracted from ILOSTAT explorer public datasets.

The analyses show that between 2009 and 2019 youth population in both rural and urban areas decreased. In general, a strong decline in youth population was observed within all categories, with the most significant decrease within the age group 25–29 (21.57%) and 15–19 (20.35%). Youth employment has tended to decrease overall, and the decrease is stronger within rural regions. Interestingly, youth unemployment has also tended to decrease, and a significantly higher share of unemployed youth is from rural regions. A somewhat similar trend is observed in the field of education where the number of those enrolled significantly decreased during the observed period for all education levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ESLET rate tended to decrease, while the proportion of the female population tends to have higher ESLET levels compared to the male population. However, the ESLET rate is still below the 10% target defined by the Europe 2020 strategy. Finally, the proportion of NEETs in Bosnia and Herzegovina is higher in rural areas, while in general the tendency has been for it to decrease during the observed period.

## SAŽETAK

Ovaj izvještaj opisuje položaj mladih u Bosni i Hercegovini za period 2009–2019. godina životne dobi od 15 do 34 godine u ruralnim sredinama koji nisu zaposleni, ne obrazuju se niti usavršavaju (eng. Not in Employment, nor in Education or Training – NEET). Kako bi ispunili navedeni cilj, neophodno je prikazati pokazatelje poput pokazatelja populacije mladih, nivoa/stope zaposlenosti i nezaposlenosti mladih, edukacija i pokazatelj NEET distribucije. Kao centralni kriterij za sve pokazatelje je uzet kriterij urbanizacije, omogućujući poređenje između ruralnih i urbanih regija i čitave zemlje. Detaljnije, gdje je moguće analiza uključuje različite dobne skupine i spolnu strukturu.

Primijenjena statistička procedura kroz različite posmatrane dimenzije uključuje deskriptivnu longitudinalnu analizu, korištenjem grafikona kao i preračunom apsolutnih i relativnih promjena u 2009. i 2013. godini, 2013. i 2019. godini, te na kraju između 2009. i 2019. godine. Ove vremenske serije su odabrane kako bi posmatrali promjene unutar pokazatelja prije i nakon ekonomske krize koja je pogodila europske zemlje. Svi podaci su preuzeti sa ILOSTAT baze podataka.

Analize pokazuju da populacija mladih, u ruralnim i urbanim područjima se smanjuje u periodu 2009–2019. godina. Generalno, snažan pad u populaciji mladih je zabilježen u svim posmatranim dobnim skupinama, a najveći pad je zabilježen u kategorijama mladih 25–29 (21.57%) i 15–19 (20.35%). Zaposlenost mladih ima tendenciju pada, a snažniji pad u zaposlenosti mladih je zabilježen u ruralnim regijama. Interesantno je da nezaposlenost mladih također ima tendenciju pada, a značajno je viši postotak mladih nezaposleno u ruralnim regijama. Sličan trend je zabilježen i u polju obrazovanja, gdje je broj učenika i studenata koji su upisani značajno smanjen, za sve nivoe obrazovanja. ESLET pokazatelj ima tendenciju pada, a ženska populacija ima nešto viši udio onih koji prijevremeno napuštaju obrazovanje. Međutim, ovaj pokazatelj ima vrijednosti koje su niže od 10%, a koja je definirana kao cilj od strane EU strategije za 2020. godinu. Finalno, postotak mladih u NEET kategoriji je viši u ruralnim regijama, a generalno ima tendenciju smanjenja u posmatranom periodu.

## INTRODUCTION

This report proceeds three sections. It starts with an introductory contextualisation with the most relevant information about Bosnia and Herzegovina's social, economic and political situation in the last three decades and key youth policies based on a relevant literature review. A methodological note explains the database used and the statistical operations carried out. The most extensive part of the report refers to the analysis carried out, with a specific focus on young people, by degree of urbanisation and concerning four main topics: population; employment; education; and, NEETs.

The report ends with a brief conclusion which highlights the main results regarding the topics explored.



## 1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Bosnia and Herzegovina is located in South-eastern Europe, in the western Balkan Peninsula. A largely mountainous country encompassing the central Dinaric Alps, it has borders with Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and a small Adriatic Sea coastline. Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the most rural European countries (UNDP, 2013:4), with more than 50% of households situated in rural areas (BHAS, 2017).

Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the six Republics constituting the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Following its disintegration in 1991, the majority of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina voted for independence via a referendum in 1992. War began soon after and lasted until December 1995, when the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Agreement, was signed. According to the Dayton Agreement, the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) consists of two entities, Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), with a third administrative unit, the Brčko District (BD), governed under a local administration. The FBiH is composed of 10 cantons which are further divided into 79 municipalities. RS is administratively divided into five regions and further into 62 municipalities. The territory of BD, which was subject to arbitration, became neither a possession of the FBiH nor the RS. The official languages in BiH are Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian with two scripts being used (i.e., Latin and Cyrillic). The total population is 3.3 million, with 64.92 people per sq. km of land area (WB, 2020).

The complex political situation alongside a very complicated institutional set-up continues to be a major burden for more progressive and intensive economic growth within the country. As evidence, BiH is ranked 103 out of 137 countries according to the Global Competitiveness Index in 2016 (WEF, 2020) and the overall unemployment rate is 15.7%, and 34% among youth in 2019 according to the ILO report (ILO, 2020). The negative trend of “brain drain” has been present ever since the 1990s, because of the war, but the second wave began almost ten years ago, whereby tens of thousands of the working-age population have left the country (Vracic, 2018; Čičić et al., 2019). Apart from out-migration, the rural-to-urban movements (de-ruralisation) within the country also continue. This threatens the biological sustainability of the countryside that had not been affected by forced migration during the war.

Persistent low fertility (TFR has been predominantly below 1.3 children per woman ever since 2002). This contributes to making the demographic prospects of Bosnia and Herzegovina pessimistic in all regards (Vracic, 2018; Čičić et al., 2019). All aforementioned factors, highlights the importance and necessity to improve the current socio-economic situation regarding the status of young people. The young population is a vulnerable social group, being affected by many factors; therefore special attention should be paid to the analysis of their interests, attitudes, problems and obstacles during their transition into adulthood. In particular, the category of young people Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training (NEET) is important to follow. The importance of this indicator/category of young people is widely recognised, as it is included in Sustainable Development Goals to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” as a sole youth-specific target (Elder, 2015).

Since the State entities are competent for majority areas, there is no youth<sup>1</sup> policy at the State level. Consequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a national youth strategy. As for its various entities and districts, neither the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>2</sup> nor Brčko District have a youth strategy. Republika Srpska adopted the Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska for 2016–2020. Several strategies toward youth have been developed at the Cantonal and Municipality levels. The aforementioned strategy(ies) focus(es) on various domains such as: employability; active participation; healthy lifestyles; excellence; and, leisure time. Furthermore, several non-governmental organisations work to improve the position of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Education in BiH is organised as follows: (i) Preschool education and care is intended for children from 6 months old until they start with primary education; (ii) compulsory Primary education, starts at age of 6 and lasts 9 years; (iii) Secondary education is not compulsory and it is available to everyone under equal conditions, in line with law and the ability of an individual. General secondary education lasts 4 years and vocational secondary education lasts 3 or 4 years; (iv) Higher education is organised in three cycles, Bachelor degree (180 or 240 ECTS), Master degree (60–120 ECTS), and Ph.D. degree (180 ECTS). To establish

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1 The Law on Youth Organisation of the Republika Srpska (Zakon o omladinskom organizovanju Republike Srpske (Službeni glasnik RS 98/04, 119/08, 1/12) and the Youth Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Zakon o Mladima Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine (Službene novine Federacije BiH 36/10) defines the age limits for youth as a target group as from 16 (15) to 30. Brčko District adopted Youth Law in 2017 but not define age limit for youth category.

2 Initially Youth Strategy for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016–2020 was drafted but never adopted.





basic principles and standards of higher education following the principles of the Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Recognition Convention, BiH adopted in 2007 the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EACEA, 2020). Several other strategic documents were developed to improve the education system in BiH, such as Strategic Development of Higher Education and Qualification Standards” (a joint EU/CoE project funded by IPA), Strategic directions for the development of higher education in the FBiH from 2012 to 2022, Strategy of educational development of RS for the period 2015–2020 and Adoption of Priorities for Higher Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2016–2026 (EACEA, 2020). Mobility for students is available from a wide range of programs and funds, such as Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, CEEPUS, MEVLANA, DAAD, FULBRIGHT, VISEGRAD FUND, MARIE SKLODOWSKA–CURIE and numerous other opportunities as a result of multiple bilateral agreements.

Legal adulthood age is 18 (except in some cases, i.e., getting married or becoming a parent) according to the Law<sup>3</sup>, and the same rule applies to work conditions. Youth employment/unemployment is reflected in the complex political and administrative structure explained above. In 2018, 8.2% of young people aged between 15–24 years are unemployed, while 16.6% of them are inactive (BHAS, 2019). There are multiple federal/cantonal programs focused on youth employment. Some of the programs include “Opportunity for all”, co-financing programs for employment of people under 35 years old, programs for interns and also programs for additional training and obtaining different qualifications. However, consistency and transparency of funds remain a big issue. The aforementioned programs still represent the main sources of funding for the youth sector.

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<sup>3</sup> The Family Law of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Porodični zakon FBiH, Sl. novine FBiH, broj: 35/05 i 41/05.), The Family Law of Republika Srpska (Porodični zakon RS, Sl. glasnik RS broj: 54/O2 i 41/O8), Family Law of Brčko District (Porodični zakon BDBiH, Sl. glasnik BDBiH, broj: 23/07)



## 2. METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The Bosnia and Herzegovina national report uses information gathered by Alen Mujčinović, WG1 member of the Rural NEET Youth Network from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) database (ILOSTAT explorer). The main data presented and analysed in this report are from the following ILO database:

- Population Statistics: POP\_2POP\_SEX\_AGE\_NB\_A and POP\_2POP\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A;
- Employment/Unemployment Statistics: EMP\_3EMP\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A, UNE\_2UNE\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A, UNE\_TUNE\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A;

Selected indicators were extracted from the different databases according to two criteria:

- Time range: the previous decade (2009–2019) to have a sufficiently long period to capture the main changes and continuities in young people's trajectories in education, training and employment. The analysis mainly covered 3 dates – 2009–2013–2019 – in order to capture the impact of the economic and financial crisis that hit Europe and that, in most countries, reached its peak in 2012/2013.
- Age group: age group range varies according to the data available in each indicator (15–24; 15–29; 15–34; and 15–39). Whenever possible, the age range also covered young adult's data (30–34 and 35–39) in order to capture the extent of crisis impact on these age groups.

In addition to a descriptive analysis, in order to compare data to see main changes and continuities in different periods, absolute and relative change were calculated considering the three main time points that were selected – 2009, 2013 and 2019. Absolute change refers to the simple difference in the indicator over two periods in time and is expressed in percentage points (pp). Relative change expresses the change of a value of an indicator in an earlier period and is expressed in percentage terms.

- Additional data used in the report – The report also includes an introductory con-



textualisation part with the most relevant information about Bosnia and Herzegovina's social, economic and political situation in the last three decades based on relevant sources (e.g., reports from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, United Nations Development Program and, World Economic Forum).

- Data availability – For several observed indicators, it was not possible to find data from ILO explorer; hence, some substitute indicators were provided to give insight on a specific area (e.g., instead of the number of young people by educational attainment level, the available data was for the number of students and pupils enrolled at different educational levels, or for early school leavers where other relevant sources were used). Data was extracted from reports such as the report from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the case of educational attainment level, and for early school leavers it was extracted the European Commission report supplemented by the Labour Force Survey report.
- Non-Eurostat data – Most of the data was extracted from ILO Database (ILOSTAT explorer) and the majority of outputs are absolute numbers that need to be converted into relative numbers (e.g., for total youth employment, only absolute values are provided and relative numbers were calculated. Specifically, to calculate the relative number of total youth employed the absolute number of total youth employed  $\times 100$  / total working population of the country was used. For age groups, the absolute number of youth age 15–19  $\times 100$  / total youth employed was used. The same applies to other age groups as well as for the degree of urbanisation where data was available).



## 3. DATA ANALYSIS

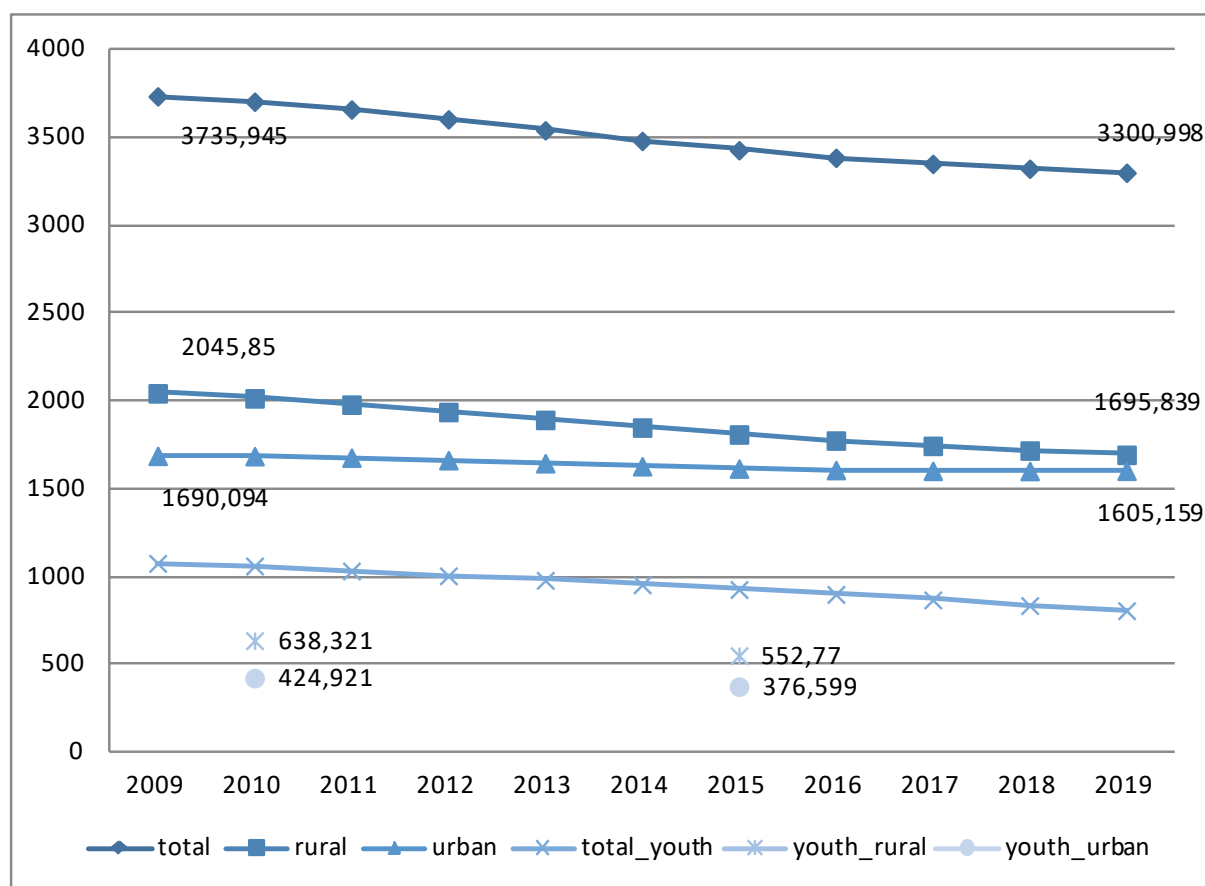
### 3. 1. Population and youth population

According to the last census (conducted in 2013), the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was 3.53 million. However, the recent trend of migration from rural to urban areas as well as the natural decrease and prominent trend of leaving the country highly influence the number of inhabitants and its spatial distribution. Chart 1 summarises the change in population size, the number of total youth population aged 15–34 years old and for different degrees of urbanisation levels, between 2009 and 2019 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

According to the data all observed groups decline, while the decline is stronger for the rural population. The same trend is evident for both female (518.430 in 2009, 479.110 in 2013, and 394.090 in 2019) and male groups (552.350 in 2009, 502.660 in 2013, and 414.660 in 2019). Available data for youth population by the degree of urbanisation shows that in the period 2010 – 2015, the total youth population decreased by 12.59%, in rural regions by 13.40%, and in urban regions by 11.37%. A similar trend is observed for both rural and urban regions for different age groups. Regarding the rural regions, the strongest negative trend is observed within the age group 20–24 (26.03% decline). It is followed by age group 25–29 (14.41%), age group 15–19 (8.64%), and age group 30–34 (3.55%). The situation within the urban region is almost identical, where the strongest decline is evident within the age group 20–24 (24.36%), followed by age group 25–29 (12.58%), age group 15–19 (6.26%), and age group 30–34 (2.62%).



Chart 1. Total population and youth population 2009–2019 by degree of urbanisation (in thousands)



Source: calculation is done using data from ILO modelled estimates (Population by sex and age -- UN estimates and projections, July 2019 (thousands) – Annual, POP\_2POP\_SEX\_AGE\_NB\_A; Population by sex, age and rural/urban areas -- UN estimates, July 2019 (thousands) – Annual, POP\_2POP\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A), data extracted on 12.06.2020.

\*NOTE – data was extracted from ILO Database and the total young population is a sum of age groups 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34. Data for the degree of urbanisation for the youth population was available only for the year 2010 and the year 2015.

*A strong decline in the youth population is evident in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the most prominent decline is observed in rural areas and within the 25–29 age group.*



When we look more closely, and with a longer observed period (but without the degree of urbanisation) similar trends were observed. According to Table 1, the ratio of the youth population in the total population has been declining for almost all age groups, for the observed period. Two categories are of special focus, the age group 15–19 where decline for 2015–2019 was 22.66%, and for the period 2011–2019 was 20.35%. A similar situation is evident within the age group 25–29 where the decline for 2015–2019 was 15.20% and for 2011–2019 was 21.57%. The situation is not better within two remaining age groups, for the age group 20–24 decline for the period 2015–2019 was 9.40%, and for the period 2011–2019 was 8.82%. For the age group 30–34, the decline for the period 2015–2019 was 8.01%, while for the period 2011–2019 it was 2.68%. Small increases were evident for age group 15–19 (+2.97%) and age group 30–34 (+5.79%) for the period 2011–2015, and also for age group 20–24 (+9.40%) for the period 2015–2019.

**Table 1. Ratio of youth population by age subgroups and absolute and relative change in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011–2015, 2015–2019 and 2011–2019)**

	2011	2015	2019	Absolute change 2011–2015 (Relative change 2011–2015)	Absolute change 2015–2019 (Relative change 2015–2019)	Absolute change 2011–2019 (Relative change 2011–2019)
Overall						
15 – 19	6.58%	6.77%	5.24%	0.20pp (2.97%)	-1.53pp (-22.66%)	-1.34pp (-20.35%)
20 – 24	7.26%	6.05%	6.62%	-1.21pp (-16.65%)	0.57pp (9.40%)	-0.64pp (-8.82%)
25 – 29	7.38%	6.83%	5.79%	-0.56pp (-7.52%)	-1.04pp (-15.20%)	-1.59pp (-21.57%)
30 – 34	7.04%	7.45%	6.85%	0.41pp (5.79%)	-0.60pp (-8.01%)	-0.19pp (-2.68%)

Source: calculation is done using data from ILO modelled estimates (Population by sex and age -- UN estimates and projections, July 2019 (thousands) – Annual, POP\_2POP\_SEX\_AGE\_NB\_A; Population by sex, age and rural/urban areas -- UN estimates, July 2019 (thousands) – Annual, POP\_2POP\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A), data extracted on 12.06.2020



## 3. 2. Employment and Unemployment

### 3. 2. 1. Youth employment

According to Table 2, at the State level, there has been a strong decline in youth employment between 2009 and 2019 (-23.52%). Surprisingly, for both age groups (i.e., age group 15-19 (+59.06%) and age group 20-24 (+26.26%)) they have shown a strong increase in youth employment in relative numbers at the country level. The strongest decline is evident for the age group 25-29 (-17.97%) followed by age group 30-34 (-5.76%). A similar trend is evident for the observed period 2013-2019, where an even stronger increase in employment is evident for the age group 15-19 (+128.45%), and age group 20-24 (+57.53%). Interestingly, in comparison with the period 2013-2019 and 2009-2019, during the observed period 2009-2013 decline in youth employment is evident for age groups 15-19 (-30.37%) and 20-24 (-19.85%), while in the same period increase in youth employment is evident for remaining age groups. Specifically, 30-34 (+11.30%) and 25-29 (+4.54%).

A similar trend is evident in rural and urban regions, where a stronger decline in total youth employment is evident within rural regions (28.72%), compared to the urban regions (13.77%) in the observed period 2009 and 2019. In rural regions, the age group 15-19 shows a strong increase in youth employment (35.90%), as well as age group 20-24 (35.90%). On the other hand, the age group 25-29 and the age group 30-34 show a decline in youth employment (16.45% and 14.30%). The same applies for the observed period 2013-2019 where the strongest increase in youth employment of age group 15-19 and age group 20-24 is evident. The opposite, that is a decrease for the same age groups, is observed during the period 2009-2013.

The situation regarding youth employment in urban regions shows that age group 15-19 has a remarkably strong increase in employment during the observed period 2009-2019 (+203.98%) and even stronger for the period 2013-2019 (+379.84%). At the same time, the decline is evident only within the age group 25-29 (20.87%) for the period 2009-2019. The observed period 2009-2013 shows a decline in youth employment for all age groups, except for age group 30-34 where an increase in youth employment is evident (+16.83%). A decrease in youth employment is strongest within the age group 15-19 (36.65%) followed by age group 20-24 (22.06%) and age group 25-29 (3.78%).



Table 2. Youth employment (%), absolute and relative change by age groups

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009-2013 (Relative change 2009-2013)	Absolute change 2013-2009 (Relative change 2013-2019)	Absolute change 2009-2019 (Relative change 2009-2019)
<b>Country</b>						
Overall	30.59%	27.40%	23.40%	-3.19pp (-10.43%)	-4.01pp (-14.62%)	-7.20pp (-23.52%)
age 15 - 19	3.67%	2.55%	5.83%	-1.11pp (-30.37%)	3.28pp (128.45%)	2.17pp (59.06%)
age 20 - 24	23.82%	19.09%	30.08%	-4.73pp (-19.85%)	10.98pp (57.53%)	6.26pp (26.26%)
age 25 - 29	34.77%	36.35%	28.53%	1.58pp (4.54%)	-7.83pp (-21.53%)	-6.25pp (-17.97%)
age 30 - 34	37.74%	42.00%	35.57%	4.26pp (11.30%)	-6.44pp (-15.33%)	-2.17pp (-5.76%)
<b>Rural</b>						
Overall	32.81%	28.15%	23.38%	-4.65pp (-14.19%)	-4.77pp (-16.94%)	-9.42pp (-28.72%)
age 15-19	4.74%	3.68%	6.43%	-1.05pp (-22.18%)	2.75pp (74.63%)	1.70pp (35.90%)
age 20-24	25.10%	20.89%	34.25%	-4.20pp (-16.74%)	13.36pp (63.92%)	9.15pp (36.47%)
age 25-29	33.63%	36.98%	28.00%	3.35pp (9.95%)	-8.98pp (-24.27%)	-5.63pp (-16.74%)
age 30-34	36.54%	38.44%	31.31%	1.91pp (5.22%)	-7.13pp (-18.54%)	-5.22pp (-14.30%)
<b>Urban</b>						
Overall	27.16%	26.47%	23.42%	-0.68pp (-2.52%)	-3.05pp (-11.54%)	-3.74pp (-13.77%)
age 15-19	1.66%	1.05%	5.04%	-0.61pp (-36.65%)	3.99pp (379.84%)	3.38pp (203.98%)
age 20-24	21.43%	16.70%	24.60%	-4.73pp (-22.06%)	7.90pp (47.31%)	3.18pp (14.82%)
age 25-29	36.91%	35.52%	29.21%	-1.40pp (-3.78%)	-6.31pp (-17.76%)	-7.70pp (-20.87%)
age 30-34	40.00%	46.73%	41.15%	6.73pp (16.83%)	-5.58pp (-11.95%)	1.15pp (2.86%)

Source: calculation is done using data from ILO modelled estimates (Youth employment by sex, age and rural/urban areas (thousands) – Annual, EMP\_3EMP\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A), data extracted on 12.06.2020

\*total\_youth employment in relative numbers calculated as a ratio of total youth employed and total work population in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

\*\*age groups employment in relative numbers calculated as a ratio of total age group x and total youth employed;

\*\*\*total\_youth employment in rural regions in relative numbers calculated as a ratio of total youth employed in rural regions and total work population in rural regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

*A strong decline in youth employment in Bosnia and Herzegovina is evident, while there are some positive signs of an increase in employment of youth within the age groups 15-19 and 20-24. In both rural and urban regions the aforementioned age groups show an increase in employment and an especially high increase is evident within the age group 15-19 in urban areas.*





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Modeling the risks underlying rural  
NEETs social exclusion

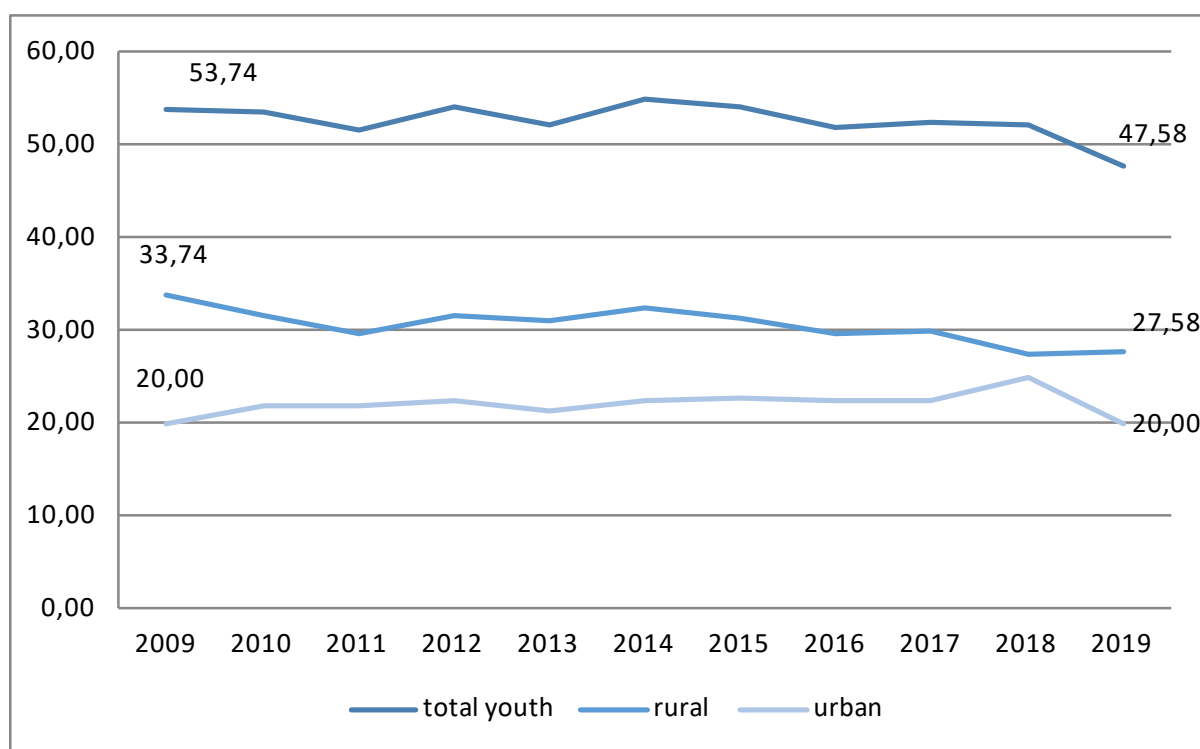
A similar trend of decline in employment is evident for both females (56,940 employed in 2009, 4,750 in 2013, and 41,680 in 2019) and male (106,720 employed in 2009, 84,830 in 2013, and 79,360 in 2019) group . It can be seen that in general, the female population is less employed overall than the male population.



### 3. 2. 2. Youth unemployment

A strong unemployment rate within youth categories is evident from the following chart. A decrease in the youth unemployment rate is evident, going from 53.47% in 2009, reaching a peak in 2014 (54.98%), to 47.58% in 2019. Rural regions have a higher youth unemployment rate (27.58%) comparing to the urban regions (20%). The largest portion of the unemployed youth population in rural regions was in 2009 (33.74%), and in urban regions in 2018 (24.92%).

Chart 2. Unemployment age group 15–34 years old (%) by the degree of urbanisation (2009–2019)



Source: calculation is done using data from ILO modelled estimates (Unemployment by sex, age and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2019 (thousands) – Annual, UNE\_2UNE\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A; Unemployment by sex, age and rural/urban areas (thousands) – Annual, UNE\_TUNE\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A), data extracted on 12.06.2020

\*youth unemployment in relative numbers calculated as a ratio of a sum of youth unemployment within age groups 15–24 and 25–34 and total unemployment within the country;

*The youth unemployment rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is decreasing over the observed period, while overall, a higher percentage of the youth population from rural regions is unemployed.*



Looking more closely, the relative change in the ten years from 2009 to 2019 show a declining trend of the youth unemployment rate (1-1.47%). The decline is a result of a decrease in the unemployment rate of age group 25-34 (-2.92%), while on the contrary, for age group 15-24 the unemployment rate increased (+3.31%). The strongest increase in the unemployment rate was evident for the age group 15-24 (+11.63%) for the observed period 2013-2019 and the age group 25-34 for the observed period 2009-2013. At the same time, the strongest decrease in youth unemployment was evident for the age group 25-34 (-8.91%) for the observed period 2013-2019, and for the age group 15-24 (-7.46%) for the observed period 2009-2013.

Within rural and urban regions, a stronger decline in youth unemployment was evident in urban regions. The total youth unemployment rate in urban regions decreased within all observed periods. The strongest decline was evident in the period 2009-2019 (-16.51%), followed by period 2013-2019 (-13.18%), and 2009-2013 (-3.84%). Age group 15-24 shows the strongest decline in the unemployment rate within the period 2009-2013 (-13.28%) and the strongest increase within the period 2013-2019 (+11.27%). Age group 25-34 shows the strongest decline in the unemployment rate within the period 2013-2019 (-6.53%) and the strongest increase within the period 2009-2013 (+9.73%).

In rural regions, the youth unemployment rate decreased within all observed periods. The strongest decline was evident in the period 2009-2019 (-6.45%), followed by 2013-2019 (-4.72%), and 2009-2013 (-1.82%). Age group 15-24 shows the strongest decline in the unemployment rate within the period 2009-2013 (-3.27%) and the strongest increase within the period 2013-2019 (+12.46%). Age group 25-34 shows the strongest decline in the unemployment rate within the period 2013-2019 (-11.48%) and the strongest increase within the period 2009-2013 (+3.21%).



**Table 3. Youth unemployment (%), absolute and relative change**

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (Relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2009 (Relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (Relative change 2009–2019)
<b>Country</b>						
Overall	53.74%	52.16%	47.58%	-1.58pp (-2.94%)	-4.58pp (-8.79%)	-6.16pp (-11.47%)
age 15 – 24	46.87%	43.38%	48.43%	-3.50pp (-7.46%)	5.05pp (11.63%)	1.55pp (3.31%)
age 25 – 34	53.13%	56.62%	51.57%	3.50pp (6.58%)	-5.05pp (-8.91%)	-1.55pp (-2.92%)
<b>Rural</b>						
Overall	55.29%	54.28%	51.72%	-1.01pp (-1.82%)	-2.56pp (-4.72%)	-3.57pp (-6.45%)
age 15 – 24	49.59%	47.97%	53.95%	-1.62pp (-3.27%)	5.98pp (12.46%)	4.36pp (8.78%)
age 25 – 34	50.41%	52.03%	46.05%	1.62pp (3.21%)	-5.98pp (-11.48%)	-4.36pp (-8.64%)
<b>Urban</b>						
Overall	51.32%	49.34%	42.84%	-1.97pp (-3.84%)	-6.50pp (-13.18%)	-8.47pp (-16.51%)
age 15 – 24	42.30%	36.68%	40.81%	-5.62pp (-13.28%)	4.14pp (11.27%)	-1.48pp (-3.50%)
age 25 – 34	57.70%	63.32%	59.19%	5.62pp (9.73%)	-4.14pp (-6.53%)	1.48pp (2.57%)

Source: calculation is done using data from ILO modelled estimates (Youth unemployment by sex, age and rural/urban areas -- ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2019 (thousands) – Annual, UNE\_2UNE\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A; Unemployment by sex, age and rural/urban areas (thousands) – Annual, UNE\_TUNE\_SEX\_AGE\_GEO\_NB\_A), data extracted on 12.06.2020

\*data available only for age groups 15–24 and 25–34

*In general, the unemployment rate within the age group 15–24 increases, while for the age group 25–34 it decreases. When considering the unemployment rate within rural and urban regions it is evident that the unemployment rate within the age group 15–24 decreases in rural regions, while it increases in urban regions.*

A somewhat similar trend of decline in unemployment is evident for both female (42,400 unemployed in 2009, 47,500 in 2013, and 25.280 in 2019) and male (68,270 unemployed in 2009, 77.190 in 2013, and 31.660 in 2019) groups.



### 3. 3. Education

#### 3. 3. 1. Population enrolled in education

A strong decline in population enrolled in education at all three levels is evident from Table 4. The number of students at ISCED 0–2 level decreased by 17.73% for the period 2009–2019. An even stronger decline is evident for ISCED 3–4 level where the number of enrolled students decreases by 23.75% for 2009–2019. A somewhat similar trend is observed for ISCED 5–8 level, where the number of enrolled students decreases by 24.18% for the 2009–2019 period.

Table 4. Number of students and pupils by education level

	2009	2013	2019	Absolute change 2009–2013 (Relative change 2009–2013)	Absolute change 2013–2009 (Relative change 2013–2019)	Absolute change 2009–2019 (Relative change 2009–2019)
ISCED 0–2	377533	322013	310605	-55520 (-14.71%)	-11408 (-3.54%)	-66928 (-17.73%)
ISCED 3–4	148100	164609	112933	16509 (11.15%)	-51676 (-31.39%)	-35167 (-23.75%)
ISCED 5–8	105358	113290	79886	7932 (7.53%)	-33404 (-29.49%)	-25472 (-24.18%)

Source: BHAS (2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020)

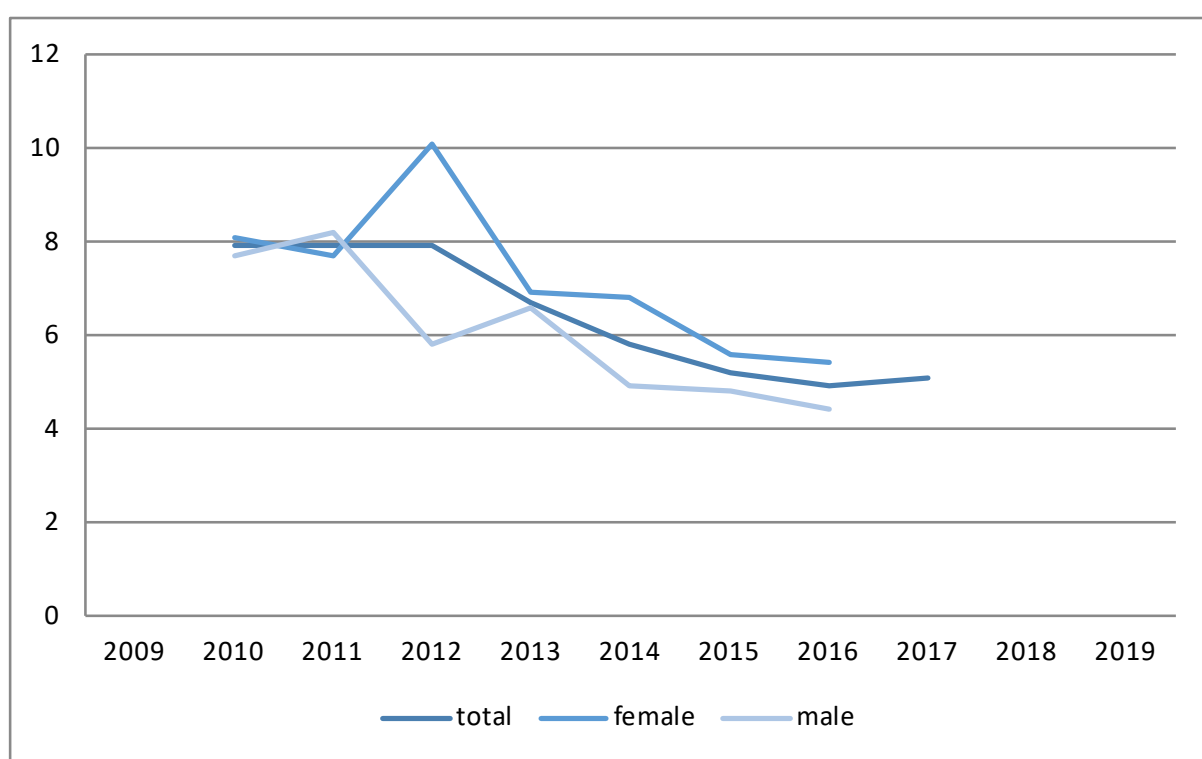
*The number of students and pupils by education level significantly decreased during the observed period for all education levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*



### 3.3.2. Early school leavers

Chart 3 displays the evolution of Early School Leavers from Education and Training (ESLET) from 2009 to 2019, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the country level, the ESLET rate declined from 7.9 to 4.9 with a similar trend observed for both female and male groups.

Table 4. Number of students and pupils by education level



Source: EC (2019), BHAS (2017)

\*early school leavers rate according to some reports have different and significantly higher numbers, there is no explanation on possible methodological changes. Some other authors also emphasise this issue.

\*data available only from the year 2010, until 2016 for both sex groups, and in total for 2017

ESLET rate decrease for both female and male population in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

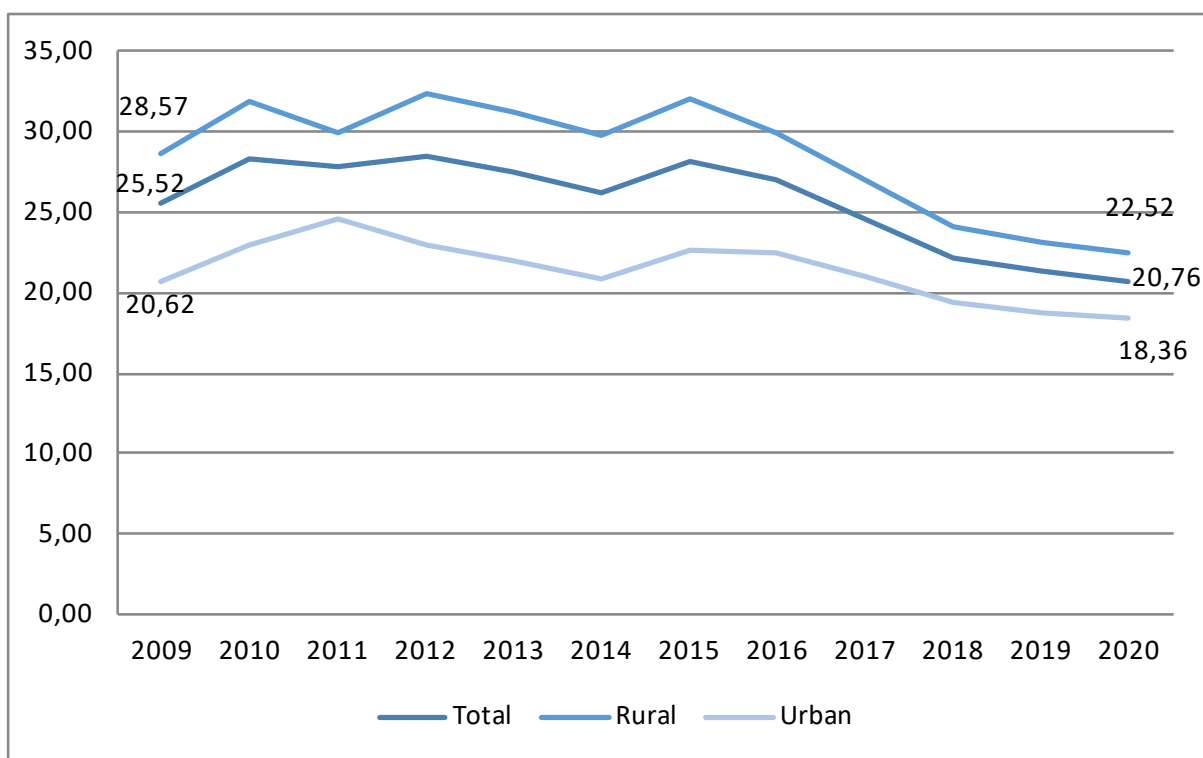


### 3. 4. NEET

#### 3. 4. 1. NEET rate

The following chart displays the overall evolution of NEETs proportion across the country and degree of urbanisation levels, between 2009 and 2019. According to the chart, the NEET rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina decreased from 25.52% in 2009 to 20.76% in 2019. A somewhat similar trend is observed for both urban (20.62% in 2009 to 18.36% in 2019) and rural (28.57% in 2009 to 22.52% in 2019) regions.

Table 4. Number of students and pupils by education level



Source: calculation is done using data from ILO modelled estimates (Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) by sex and rural/urban areas -- ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2019 (%), EIP\_2EET\_SEX\_GEO\_RT\_A), data extracted on 12.06.2020



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*NEET rate decreased overall in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the NEET rate is higher within the rural youth population.*

An almost identical decrease of NEET rate is evident between females (-16.26% for the 2009–2019 period) and male (-16.04% for 2009–2019 period) groups. Data were not available for different age groups.







## 4. CONCLUSIONS

**Youth population** | Both rural and urban areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina are facing a decline in the youth population due to migration and long-term downward trends in fertility. The strongest decline was evident for age groups 25–29 and 15–19, followed by 20–24 and age group 30–34. The youth population in Bosnia and Herzegovina are facing multiple problems while the strategic orientation of the country towards youth is still missing. Youth policy development is in initial phases, and stronger outputs are not yet visible.

**Youth unemployment** | Unemployment among the youngest share of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina is declining, in both rural and urban areas, but still has an enormous rate of almost 50% of the total youth population. Unemployment is higher in rural areas, where the most affected age group is 15–24, while the age group 25–34 shows signs of a decrease in the unemployment rate. A different trend is evident in urban areas regarding the unemployment rate of different age groups, where age groups 15–24 tend to decrease the unemployment rate, while the age group 25–34 increases. This can be strong evidence for policy development regarding the youth aged from 15 to 24 years in rural areas. The question remains as to the reason for the decrease of youth unemployment (youth employment also decreases)? A possible source could be migration as already mentioned in the introduction section. Furthermore, regarding youth employment, in general there is a strong decline in youth employment, but there is also a strong increase of the employment rate within the age group 15–19 in both rural and urban regions. This can be seen as a strong indicator of an increase in poverty and it should be further considered.

**Educational attainment** | Available data suggests that the number of students and pupils (regardless of the education level) is strongly decreasing within the observed period. Negative trends of migration, fertility rate, unemployment, poverty, etc., influence mostly groups ISCED 5–8, followed by ISCED 3–4, and ISCED 0–2.

**ESLET** | Available data suggests that the ELSET rate is decreasing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where a higher share of the female population is within this category.



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**NEET** | Share of the population who is not in education, employment nor training has decreased during the observed period in Bosnia and Herzegovina but it still retains a comparatively high rate. NEETs rates within the rural population is above the average of the total population and it can be used for further policy development. The NEET rate for different age groups and by the degree of urbanisation is missing, and this constitutes a huge obstacle for better policy development and identification of needs of different age categories.





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## 6. IMPORTANT LINKS

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