



# Characteristics of the labour force and growth

Do the labour force characteristics influence economic growth? The EUKLEMS database of the Federal Planning Bureau provides an answer to this question.

## Labour force composition?

When people work more, value added increases. However, not all working hours are the same and therefore do not generate the same amount of value added. The characteristics of the people that work these hours influence the quantity of the generated value added.

Three characteristics are measured in the database:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Gender</b>          | Male<br>Female  |
| <b>Age group</b>       | Youth: 15-29 years<br>Median: 30-49 years<br>Elderly: 50+   |
| <b>Education level</b> | Low: lower secondary education or less<br>Medium: upper secondary and post-secondary education<br>High: starting from bachelor's degree |

## How have these characteristics evolved since 2000?

**Feminisation:** women increasingly work more hours. In 2000 women made up 37% of the total hours worked, whereas that number has risen to 41% in 2018.

**Ageing:** people over 50 increasingly work more hours. In 2000 this age group represented 19% of the total hours worked and this number has risen to 30% in 2018. Over the same period the median category (30-49 years) decreased from 59% to 51%,

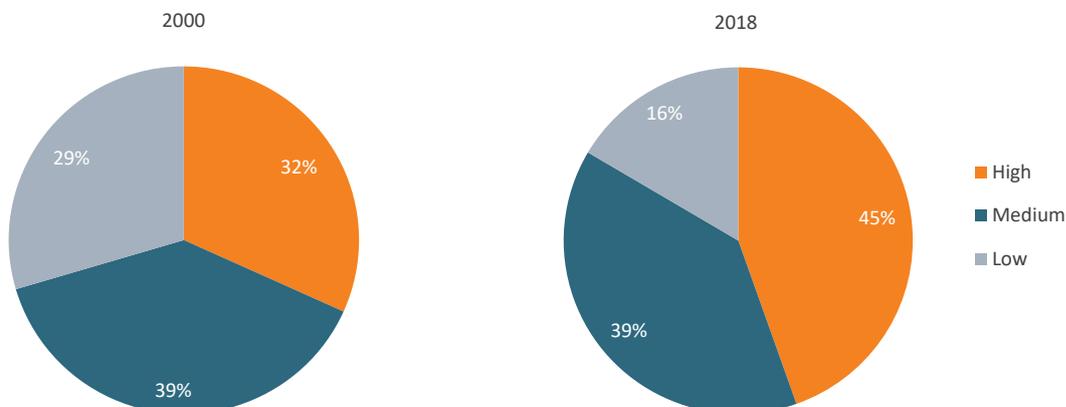
whereas the share of young people under the age of 30 dropped from 23% to 19%.

**Qualification:** people with at least a bachelor's degree increasingly work more hours. In 2018 this group of qualification represents 45% of the total hours worked, compared with only 32% in 2000. The share of the hours worked by people in the group of medium qualification has remained stable over the period and represents, just as in 2000, 39% of the total hours worked. Logically the share of hours worked by people with the lowest education level decreased from 30% in 2000 to 16% in 2018.

## Impact on value added and its growth?

Only the global impact of the evolution of labour force characteristics can be measured. Between 2000 and 2018, the changes in the labour force composition have always had a positive impact on value added, thereby contributing to its growth. This impact amounts to 0.17% per year on average for a value added growth of 1.6%. This means that 11% of the value added growth between 2000 and 2018 is due to the labour force characteristics changes.

Share of hours worked by education level  
% of total hours worked



Source: EUKLEMS database, file Belgium\_Labor\_input\_June20, <https://www.plan.be/databases/data-24-en-euklems+databank>  
<https://www.plan.be/databases/data-23-en-qualitative+employment+data+for+belgium+1999+2018>