



Inovantage

Reading the workforce DNA of Eastern Europe,
Middle East and North Africa



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Editor's note

Dear reader,

There is no better time to recognise that we are continuously learning and that we are bound to be wrong from time to time. Such a moment is now.

The past five years have been defined by growth and bright predictions for what is yet to come. AI and machine learning, green jobs, automation, disruptive economies, wonder drugs, human colonisation of Mars, urban farming and so many other subjects have been keeping our newsfeeds and chit-chat time busy.

Our hopes and dreams, predictions and plans opened our wings to such an extent that we rivalled the ambitions of Icarus. But like our Greek hero, we flew too high, too fast. The optimism and wonder that defined this period has made the shock of the pandemic more profound. Suddenly, from employees to multinational companies, we became humble and vulnerable.

Soon we rediscovered the essentials: the health of our families and friends, a place to live and feel safe, and the importance of employability.

And somehow, we pulled through.

Our stubbornness and resilience kept us going and with the rapid development of vaccines, there is hope in sight.

At the end of this unique year we are discovering what helped us battle all these challenges and what to keep in mind for 2021. A deeper

dive in the markers of the countries we live and work in might shed light on how to react in the future.

This is important because we find ourselves at a crossroads. What decisions we take today will define the evolution of generations to come. We have the knowledge to make things right from the beginning. The huge amount of innovation in tech, digital and ecology are definatory for the times we live in and they can make a difference.

If we learned anything so far, it's that flexibility, enhanced learning capabilities, speed and bold decisions are the key to survive in this ever-changing social reality.

In this sixth edition of the Inovantage Report we decided to look at the defining traits of our region's workforce, and to read its strengths so that we can grasp its opportunities.

We wish this report to be useful to all labour market stakeholders when thinking about the future of work. From university graduates, to CEOs, from HR managers to business analysts, we invite everyone to embark with us in reading the workforce DNA of our region.

Enjoy your reading!

Sincerely yours,

**Angelo Lo Vecchio, Head of Adecco
Eastern Europe & MENA**

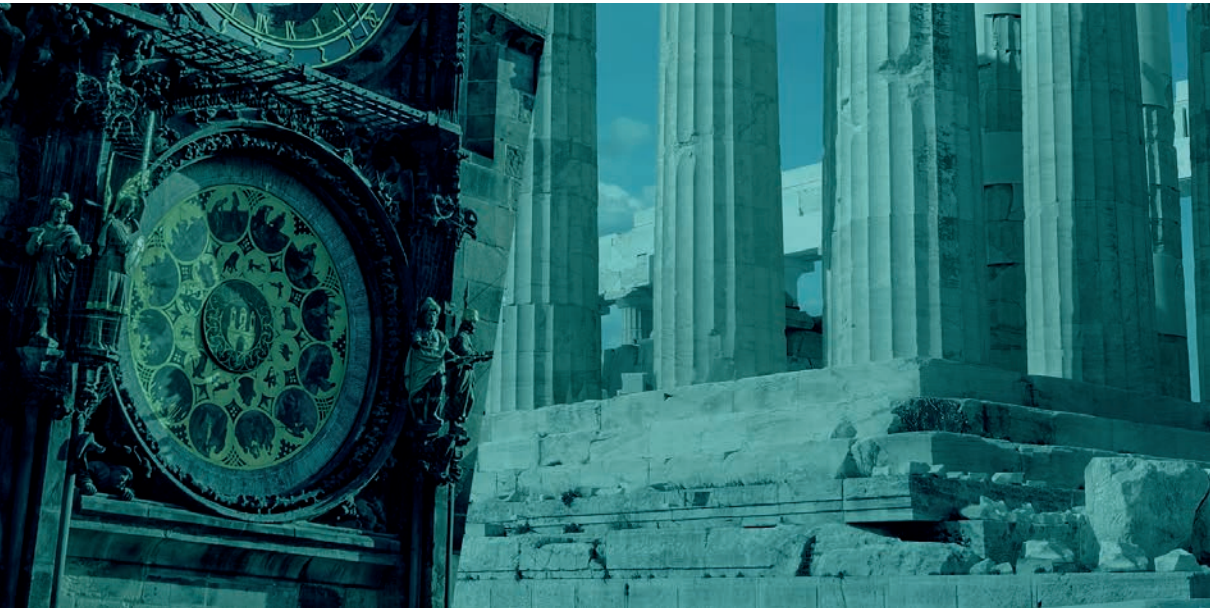


Editor's Note





Executive summary



Executive summary

The workforce disruption and pending economic recession caused by the Covid-19 pandemic are causing daily uncertainties that will stretch well into the coming years.

The acceleration of automation and need for digital solutions, even for basic day-to-day chores, are undermining trust in what people knew and were familiar with.

Something is certain though: local economies found resources from within and rose to the challenges they were facing in the first quarter of this year. So far, a combination of actions, inherited social traits and workforce resilience has helped countries from Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa to successfully manage the crisis.

This year-end edition of Inovantage lays in front of us, like a deconstructed DNA sample, those traits that define the region's workforce landscape.

The report aims to clarify: 1) what pre-pandemic conditions eased each country's efforts in fighting the crisis and what accelerated their failings; and 2) what key learnings public and private stakeholders can learn and apply in the following years.

The report analyses global trends in workforce development and participation, but it focuses on the Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa regions (Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Turkey, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates).

The report's key findings include:

- ▶ **The best prepared countries to tackle workforce challenges are the ones with good social mobility and widespread vocational and technical skills.** Gender parity, ethnic minority integration and workforce inclusiveness play a key role in assuring work transitions in challenging times.
- ▶ **Enhanced ICT infrastructure and digital skills are fundamental to tackle any future disruptions in labour markets.** Countries with both public and private digital infrastructures and a tech-savvy workforce had better results in managing the disruptions caused by initial lockdowns.
- ▶ **Government social measures and relatively lower interdependency with the globalised economy helped Eastern European countries bounce back easier.** The local political responses towards labour markets were initially timid and poorly communicated. Most countries announced more support measures after the Cohesion Policy Response to the Covid-19 crisis was released by the EU.
- ▶ **The future of work in EEMENA belongs to an ever-learning and digitally skilled workforce.** With a vigorous but ageing population, countries in the region must offer more growth opportunities and up-to-date lifelong learning experiences to upskill their citizens.

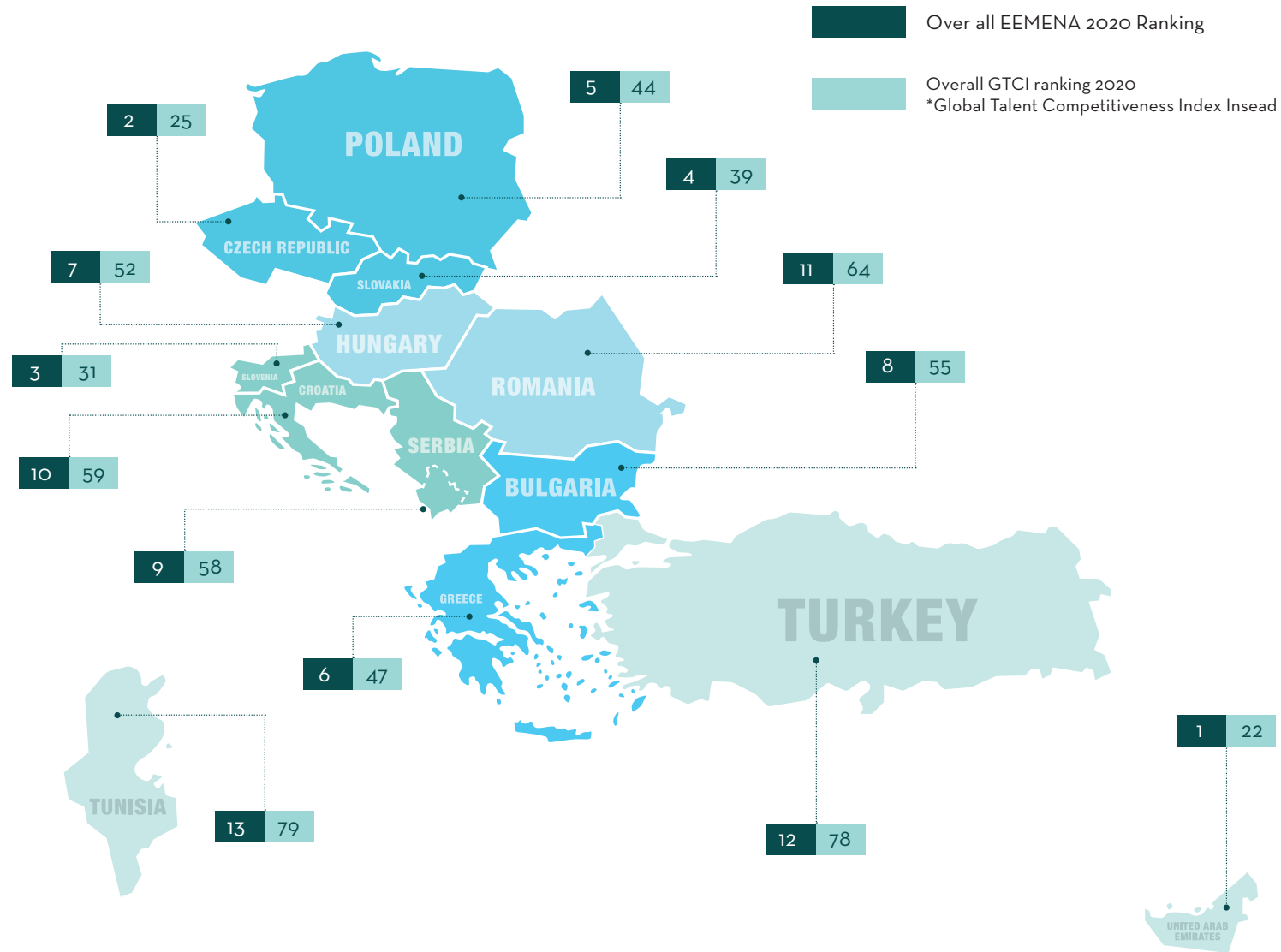
Cristian-Andrei Panțir
Executive Editor Inovantage



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The Bigger Picture



Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa (EEMENA) is one of the most dynamic and diverse regions in the world. With a total population of over 221 million people and a surface of 2 million km², in terms of size EEMENA is comparable with France, Germany, Italy and Spain put together (CW Europe); or Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia put together (SE Asia).

These two comparisons (due to proximity and due to the global perspective) are the best ways to understand the particularities of EEMENA and validate any general trends.

Within the Adecco Group the EEMENA countries are clustered together in the following format:

- ▶ Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia
- ▶ Hungary and Romania
- ▶ Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia
- ▶ Bulgaria and Greece
- ▶ Turkey, UAE and Tunisia

Figure 1 EEMENA Countries and GTCI rankings

Strong cultural and ethnic bonds among the countries, and which precede the Industrial Revolution, are facilitating cross-border cooperation. The region is diverse in terms of geography and competitiveness. Most of the Eastern European countries compete amongst themselves for foreign investments and are simultaneously trading partners within the European Union. The United Arab Emirates and the Czech Republic are leading the way, and in many ways outperform most of the other high-income countries in the region. Transport infrastructure is generally good but intra-region connectivity still needs improvement (especially for fluvial, rail and road transport). All countries thrive on stable macroeconomic conditions, even though good financing initiatives are still driven by the private sector.

The best way to understand the region is to benchmark the countries according to quantitative and qualitative labour market indicators. The Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) offers a great opportunity to do so. GTCI overviews national and organisational indicators and generates insightful conclusions. The study is conducted yearly and is based on feedback and further analyses from previous editions of the report. This year's index includes 70 indicators. It covers 132 national economies, across all groups of income and levels of development.

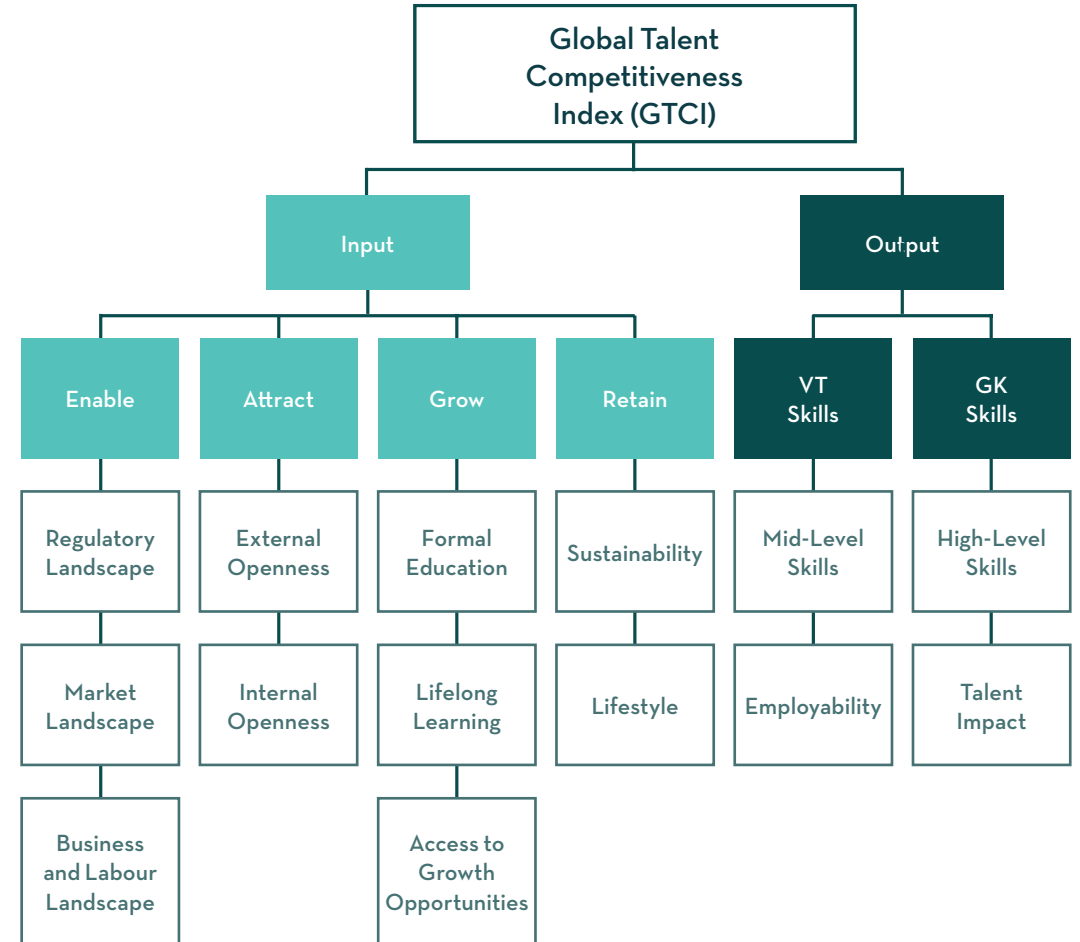
The GTCI is a complex index, relying on a simple but robust Input-Output model. It is built on six pillars, with four on the Input side and two on the Output side. The four Input pillars – **Enable, Attract, Grow and Retain** – focus on actions for policymakers and business leaders, while the two Output pillars benchmark national performances in

Technical/Vocational and Global Knowledge skills, respectively. Looking at the topic of Global Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, this seventh edition of GTCI explores how the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing the nature of work and pushing towards a re-evaluation of workplace practices, corporate structures and innovation ecosystems (Lavin & Monteiro, 2020).

Looking at the bigger picture based on the general GTCI score (Figure 2), the three comparable regions are ranked in the following order:

- ▶ CW Europe, 67.71
- ▶ EEMENA, 59.37
- ▶ SE Asia, 55.20

Each sub-pillar is relevant to our study because it offers a pre-pandemic overview of market conditions. GTCI was released in January 2020. This, together with the large number of indicators, makes it the perfect context for an in-depth evolution study of the local markets during this year's challenges. The purpose of this comparison is to show that EEMENA as a region bears the same trends of competitiveness as its next door and further neighbours.



The current pandemic uncovered and aggravated countries pre-existing structural weaknesses – both economic and socio-political.

Central-Western European countries started the year with an overall higher GTCI score than the next two regions (Figure 2). Similarities existed in both high and low scored pillars. Pre-pandemic strengths like strong regulatory and market and business landscapes (Enable pillar) absorbed the initial shock of the corona crisis. However, regional output still plummeted in the first half of 2020. Growing domestic outbreaks and intermittent lockdowns caused domestic demand to decrease, disrupted supply chains and stopped (either partially or fully) manufacturing and services activity. The decline in remittance inflows accounts for roughly 10% of GDP in the region.

The hardest hit were those countries with strong trade or value chain linkages to the Euro area, and those heavily dependent on tourism or energy and metals exports. The countries that were slower to take restrictive actions reported more widespread outbreaks, higher death rates, and steeper declines in activity than economies that did so more rapidly. (World Bank, 2020)

Countries in **Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa** had a similar story. The difference here was that by not being so internationally connected they had the chance to take faster and more decisive actions. GDP impact wasn't as severe as in the West, with most countries closing 2020 on quarterly positive trends. With a consistent mid-levelled skilled workforce (VT Skills pillar) and good adaptability of local businesses, countries have temporarily reversed the effects on the econ-

omy. Growth is projected to recover in 2021, but the pace of recovery is highly uncertain and depends on the duration of the pandemic, the availability and distribution of a vaccine, and the degree of improvement in trade and investment.

With the second wave of Covid-19 infections sweeping Europe, the recovery could be weaker than expected, particularly if the pandemic worsens.

South-East Asian countries have suffered a triple shock since the beginning of the year: the pandemic itself, the economic impact of containment measures, and reverberations from the global recession brought on by the crisis. High external openness scores (Attract pillar) reflect a high dependency on foreign investments and dependency on global supply chains. The region has recorded continuous growth for the past two decades, leading to a dramatic poverty decrease. The rapid growth in household incomes amongst developing countries, along with low unemployment, public transfers (pensions, cash transfers, unemployment insurances etc), and public investments have strengthened the economies, but also exposed their vulnerabilities (World Bank, 2020).

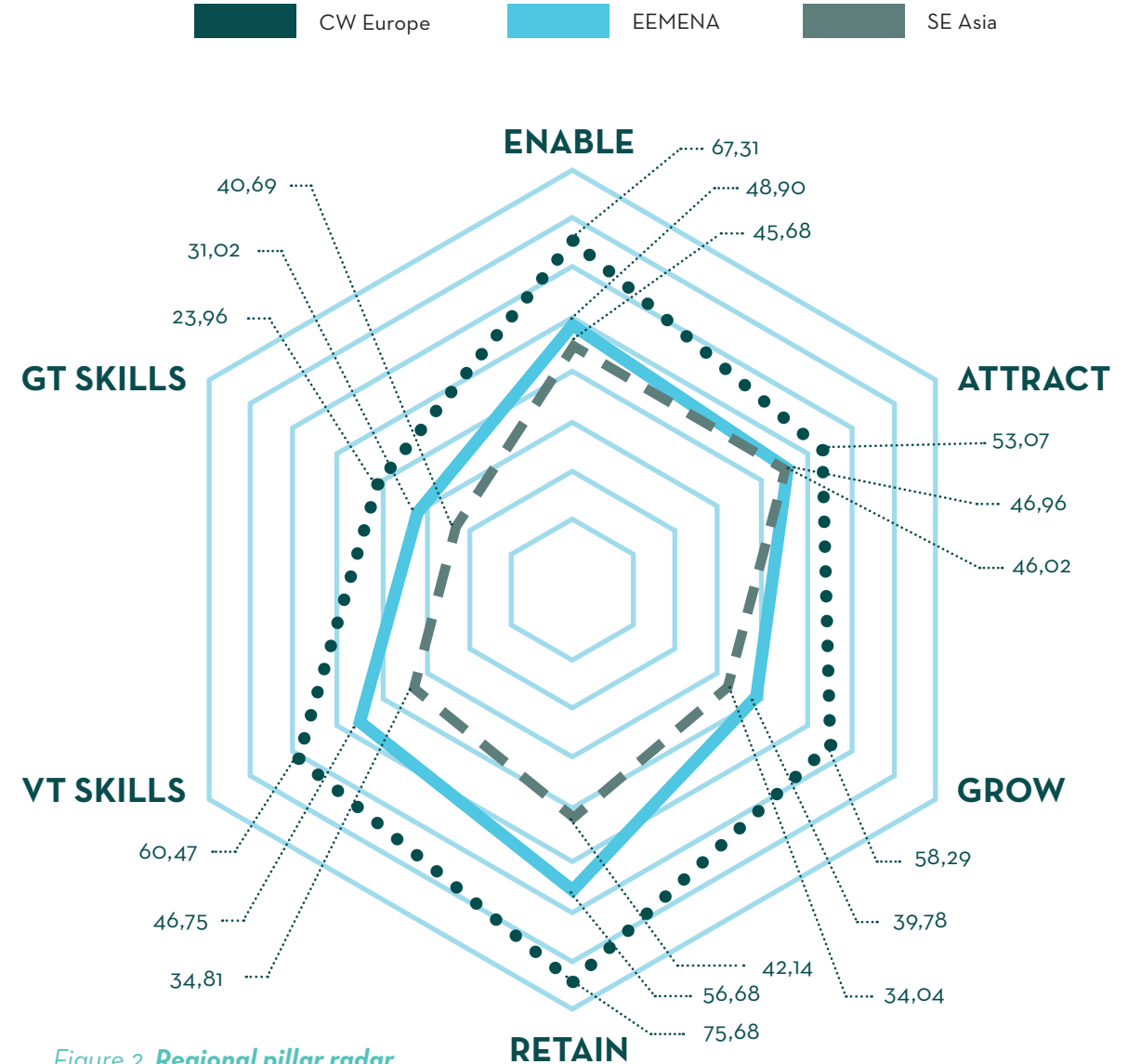


Figure 2 Regional pillar radar



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Readiness for Work

Figure 3 **Readiness for work heatmap (GTCI 2020)**

COUNTRY	Over all EE-MENA 2020 Ranking	Overall GTCI ranking 2020 *Global Talent Competitiveness Index Insead	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-Level Skills	Talent impact
United Arab Emirates	1	22	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2
Czech Republic	2	25	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1
Slovenia	3	31	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
Slovakia	4	39	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	4	2	2
Poland	5	44	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	2
Greece	6	47	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
Hungary	7	52	2	3	2	4	3	3	2	1	4	2	2
Bulgaria	8	55	3	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	3	2	2
Serbia	9	58	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Croatia	10	59	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	1	4	2	2
Romania	11	64	4	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	4	3	2
Turkey	12	78	4	4	1	4	3	2	2	2	4	3	2
Tunisia	13	79	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2

1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED

2ND QUARTILE - MIXED READINESS

3RD QUARTILE - LESS WELL POSITION

4TH QUARTILE - LOW READINESS

Work readiness is the term used to describe the process of equipping oneself with all the skills, perseverance and open-mindedness needed to look for and find a suitable

job, as well as seize better opportunities should they arise, or bounce back more easily in times of crisis, such as the current pandemic. Work readiness is essentially a personal

resilience that an individual should become more in control of, ideally as early as high school and into the study and work spheres (Kate Campell, 2019). In our research effort

we will scale this definition to the entire active population of the region.

We will be looking into the Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2020 in order to determine and define the work readiness of the country's workforce. This will be defined by four of the GTCI pillars (Attract, Grow, VT Skills and GT Skills) with a focus on their sub-pillars and a highlight on the global quartile where they rank (Figure 3). Unsurprisingly the first five best ranked countries in the general GTCI Rank (UAE, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia and Poland) are well positioned and score well on almost all sub-pillars. The heatmap shows some clear trends in terms of talent and work readiness. UAE and the Czech Republic seem well positioned to face future disruptions. These countries are adapting better to the fourth industrial revolution with cities like Dubai, Prague and Bratislava becoming magnets for entrepreneurs and business angels.

On the other side, countries like Romania, Turkey or Tunisia do not seem to have the right educational or employment policies in place. Despite robust foreign investment over the past few years, all three countries are mediocre in terms of FDI and technology transfer. Figure 3 offers a view on areas where countries are lagging and where they can improve. However, we must keep in mind that this is a general overview of the countries ranking and not a detailed status. If we were to zoom into a single particularity, such as the percentage of young people neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETS), we would find validations of the heatmap. Turkey, Serbia, Greece and Romania are well above the European average in terms of young people, with less chances for a promising future in the labour market (Figure 4).

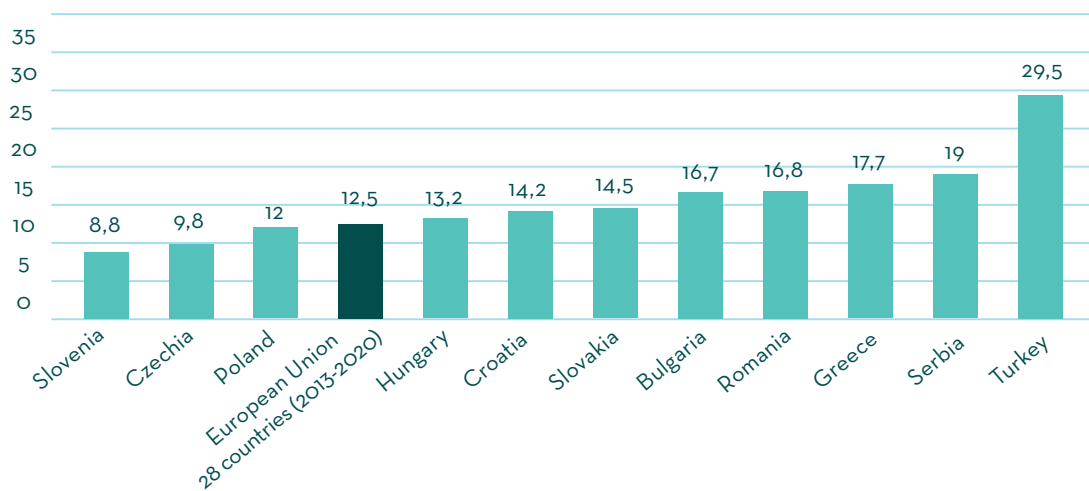
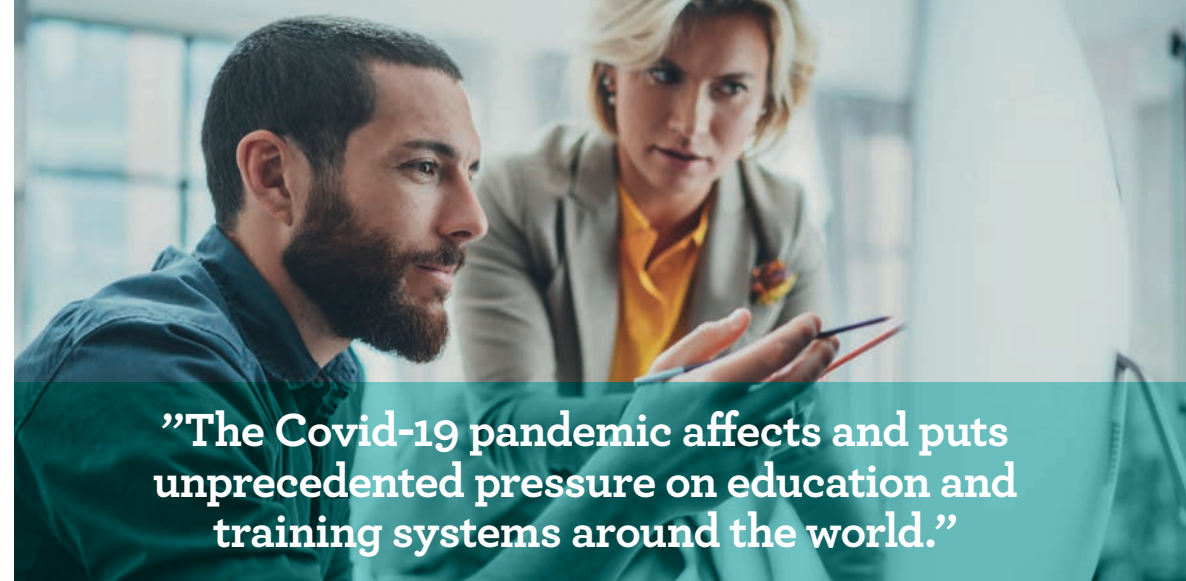


Figure 4 NEETS levels in the region % (EUROSTAT 2019)



“The Covid-19 pandemic affects and puts unprecedented pressure on education and training systems around the world.”

It is causing major changes to learning, teaching, communication and collaboration within and between our learning communities. Learners, their families, teachers, trainers, institutional leaders, and the general public are all affected. Since the beginning of the pandemic, educational institutions in Poland have made significant efforts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of learners and staff, and to continue learning and teaching in order to protect the right to education. In response to this exceptional situation, there were, among other things, decisions on the general physical closure of educational institutions, while at the same time quickly launching alternative solutions and support, in particular digital solutions, to enable learning and distance learning. This shift has created a variety of challenges for education and training

systems, as well as being a valuable learning experience and further accelerating the digital transformation of educational institutions. In these extraordinary circumstances, there is remarkable collaboration between universities, showing solidarity and mutual support in times of crisis by regularly exchanging information on challenges and measures and plans envisaged or already implemented, and where possible by openly sharing educational resources. This is certainly a factor in our local market that helps manage the Covid-19 crisis.

**Ludwikowska Katarzyna Ph.D.,
Kazimierz Wielki University, Poland**

Employability seems to be a big issue in the region. There is a wide gap between well ranked formal education systems and the relevance of their output. Almost all the countries in the region struggle to find skilled employees because of the mismatch between the education system and the practical skills required by the labour market. This is a sign that companies are one step ahead of the educational systems, which should ideally help the education sector focus on a more pragmatic curriculum in the near future.

The education of adults and **lifelong learning policies** don't seem to be a priority for policy makers or for private investors. In more than half of the cases, countries are falling in the second half of the quartile. This may happen because the region still has a stable mixed median age structure. As such, the effects of an ageing population have not yet been fully felt. Gradually this will happen and all stakeholders will have to invest more in skilling and reskilling people.

Another indicator that readiness for work is an issue is the **External openness** low scores in most of the countries. This sub-pillar accounts for how countries rank in terms of: FDI and technology transfer; brain gain; migrant stock; international students; and the prevalence of foreign ownership.

There is an active competition between countries for external capital and direct investments. However, the same cannot be said about efforts to attract foreign talent or for integrating immigrants. With a few exceptions (such as UAE and the Czech Republic), in almost all cases there are no visible efforts to do so. This is also because generally wages are still lower than in Central Western Europe and immigrants prefer these countries instead.

Social mobility between social strata in the region is moderate. The way individuals, families, households, or other categories change social status is boosted in the region by good formal education infrastructure and an improvement in people's lifestyle. Additionally, EEMENA countries have a social-cultural heritage that cherishes secularism, meritocracy, mass education, women's rights and emancipation. This (at least in theory) ensures that labour markets are flexible and predictable. With the fall of communism, a middle-income class has started to shape up in most of the countries. Encouraged by a higher and stable income, people wanted higher value products and services. The change in consumer behaviour, among other things, triggers societal changes that slowly but surely widen the gaps between social strata.

Impacted by this social change are countries with large rural populations (Romania, Croatia, Greece), large national/racial minorities (Turkey, UAE, Slovakia, Hungary) and countries with underperforming healthcare systems.

Gender parity is an excellent development marker to better understand the region. The relative equality in terms of numbers and proportions of women and men is often viewed as fundamental for social progress and stability. In terms of **female graduates** (for tertiary education graduates especially) countries in the region have a good track record. Even though the overall percentage of tertiary education graduates (aged 25-64) is lower than in western countries, the percentage of female graduates is higher than men in most Eastern European countries. This is visible in countries like Poland, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania or Serbia.

How much less do women earn than men?

Difference between average gross hourly earnings of male & female employees. (as % of male earnings)

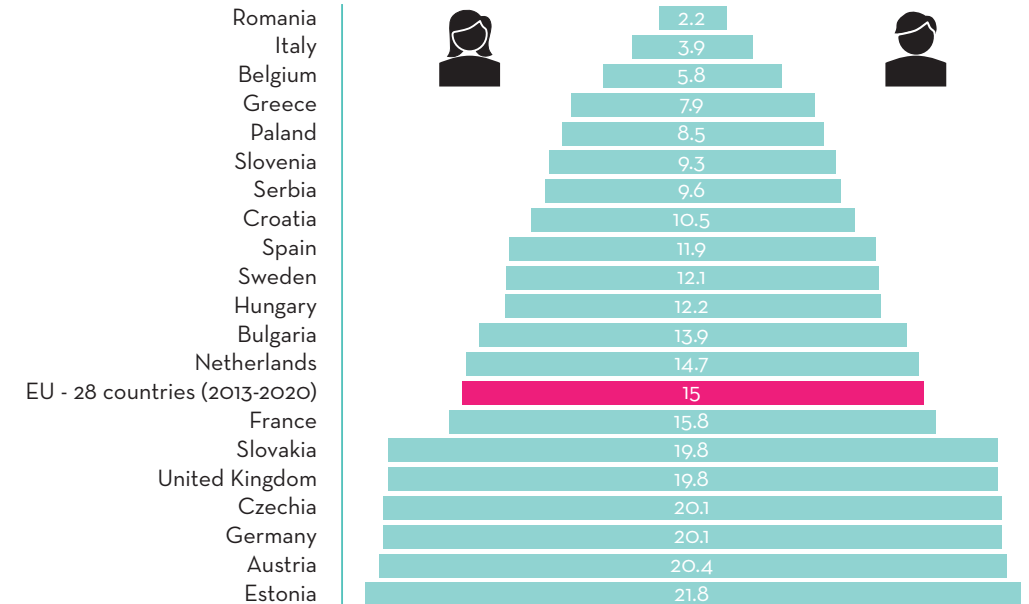


Figure 5 Gender pay gap

source: EUROSTAT 2018

Gender development gap scores are high (with few exceptions) and above 80 points. This is happening in all the Eastern European countries, with clear insights coming from indicators like gender pay gap. Almost all the countries have lower values than the European average (Figure 5), which means that in countries like Romania, Greece or Poland

the wage difference between a woman and a man is very low. Still, equal pay isn't all that counts for gender parity. **Leadership opportunities for women**, or even workforce percentages, are significantly fewer and lower for women across EEMENA.



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The labour market landscape

The labour market landscape

The new jobs of the future are reflecting a different organisational context than that of the last century. Business models used to change slowly, and changes affecting them were considered revolutionary. Today, developing a new and disruptive business model has become the name of the startup game. With technology-fuelled forces such as connectedness, modularity (ie the ability to slice processes and tasks) and an accelerating shift from input control to output orientation (with less reliance on authority), the 20th century norm of salaried employment is giving way to a patchwork of alternative work models that challenge traditional social conventions. People engaging in crowd work globally would receive more than a third of their income using online platforms (Lanvin & Rodriguez-Montemayo, 2017).

The Enable pillar of GTCI evaluates this environment by combining measures of the regulatory landscape (eg government effectiveness, rule of law, political stability, corruption etc), the Market landscape (eg competition intensity, ease of doing business, R&D expenditure, ICT Infrastructure etc) and the Business landscape (eg tertiary educated unemployment, active labour market policies, etc). The business landscape is lagging (see Figure 6). While the performance of public sector practices is lower than in other regions (including governance effectiveness and corruption), there are market elements, such as the development of clusters, competition intensity and ease of doing business, that are picking up pace.

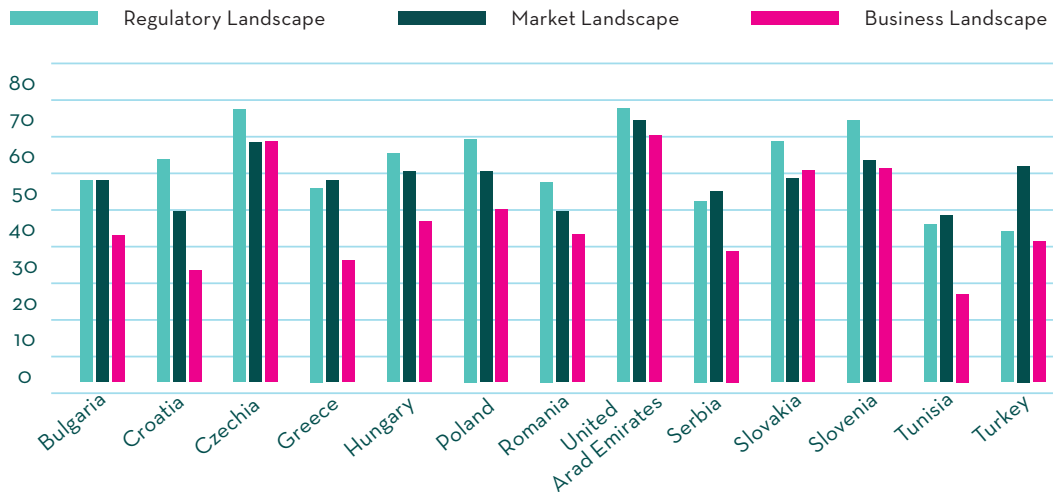


Figure 6 Performance of countries in Enable sub-pillars (GTCI 2020)



“...the Greek workforce demonstrated high resilience and adaptability levels...”

Greece has been used as an example for the successful handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially last spring, during the first months of the outbreak. Apart from the successful management at a central level (ie governmental), the Greek workforce demonstrated high resilience and adaptability levels, following unanimously the scientists’ and government’s guidelines.

Also, many organisations demonstrated increased HR capacity levels, taking early necessary steps such as work-from-home initiatives and flexible working patterns, despite the fact that both had a very small take-up rate in Greece before the pandemic compared to the rest of the European Union. The challenge however was, and still is, that since the Greek economy largely consists of small and

medium sized enterprises, many companies faced major difficulties, or they simply couldn’t implement technology-oriented solutions and technology-based work, and this had an impact on their sustainability. The same difficulties were also observed in some public sector institutions.

A typical example is the public education system, where most elementary and high school teachers faced major difficulties in adapting to remote teaching, whereas universities proved to be better prepared to maintain students learning continuity during this period.”

Dr. Ioannis Nikolaou, Associate Professor in Organisational Behaviour at the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB)

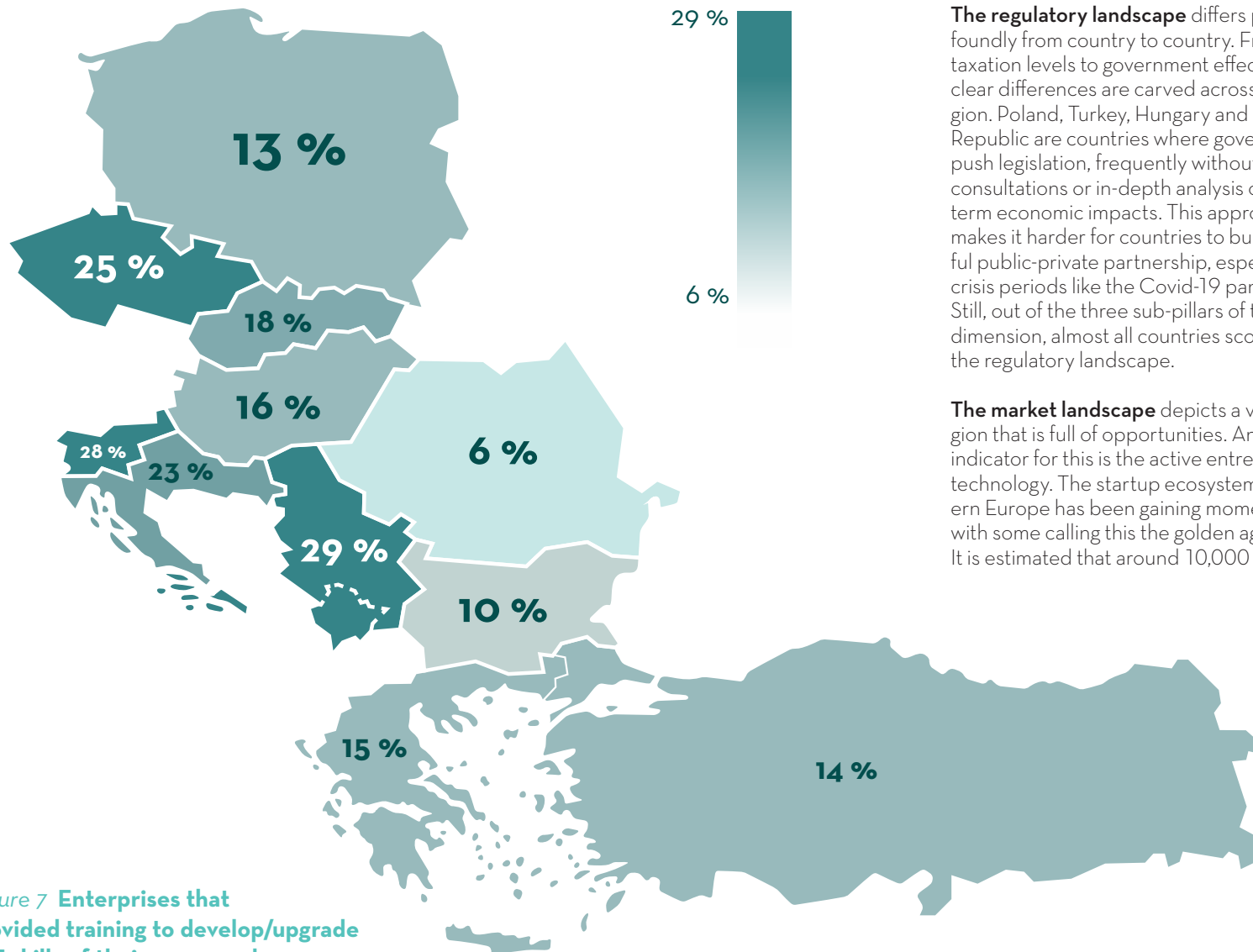


Figure 7 Enterprises that provided training to develop/upgrade ICT skills of their personnel

The regulatory landscape differs profoundly from country to country. From work taxation levels to government effectiveness, clear differences are carved across the region. Poland, Turkey, Hungary and the Czech Republic are countries where governments push legislation, frequently without social consultations or in-depth analysis of long-term economic impacts. This approach makes it harder for countries to build a trustful public-private partnership, especially in crisis periods like the Covid-19 pandemic. Still, out of the three sub-pillars of the Enable dimension, almost all countries score high in the regulatory landscape.

The market landscape depicts a vibrant region that is full of opportunities. An excellent indicator for this is the active entrepreneurial technology. The startup ecosystem in Eastern Europe has been gaining momentum, with some calling this the golden age of tech. It is estimated that around 10,000 Eastern

European entrepreneurs have raised their first rounds of funding in the past five years. More than 10 unicorns were created in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region, with a combined value of €30bn, and in 2018, investment in CEE startups hit €700m. Considering CEE startups that migrated later on to the US or UK, that number reaches to €1.3bn (Billboe, 2020). The validation of these developments is achieved by the good positioning of the countries according to the Market Landscape sub-pillar (more than half are in the two first quartiles).

Business Landscape shows how economies are managing employment aspects, productivity and enhancement through technology. Out of the landscape perspective this is the one all countries lack the most (eg. Romania, Serbia, Tunisia, Hungary and Bulgaria). The combination of low technology utilisation, robot density and low Investment in emerging technologies is widespread. This, together with modest active labour market policies, condemns the labour markets to a dependency on a mid-level skilled workforce. The space for improvement is clear and this responsibility lies with state and private stakeholders alike.

Figure 7 shows the percentage of enterprises that provided training to develop/upgrade ICT skills of their employees in 2019, according to EUROSTAT. Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Turkey and Hungary invested the least in skilling employees.

source: EUROSTAT 2019



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Pandemic Recovery

The pandemic recovery

The Covid-19 pandemic gradually affected all countries in the world, without exception. The fact that some countries were impacted more and some less was due to a combination of pre-pandemic local socio-economic conditions. They will also determine the way countries recover.

During the initial months of the pandemic, due to public health concerns, most countries in the region took swift lockdown measures. These measures were followed by social bumpers and implied limited economic halt. This explains the lower contraction of their economies compared with Central Western European Countries.

One key element that will change the work environment forever is the rapid adoption of remote working, particularly as productivity wasn't affected and, in fact, grew in some sectors. Raw estimates show that half of the active workforce can practise their work remotely. Companies are expected to invest in shaping up new organisational cultures and tackle the wellbeing issues posed by the shift to remote work. As discussed in previous sections, countries in EEMENA are not exempt from these future employment trends.

Most Eastern European EU member states performed better in the recovery efforts. With a second pandemic wave already sweeping across Europe, it is still open to debate how

things will look by the end of the year, but still the performances were notable.

Eastern European countries are less internationally connected than their Western peers and, on average, are less dependent on vulnerable industries. The levels of inequality are lower than in Western countries. This along with strong macroeconomic fundamentals, plus active financial sectors, gave local governments their resilience and flexibility.

Although the national health systems aren't as strong as Western peers, demographic-related health risk factors are lower.

Unsurprisingly, while countries were similarly impacted by the pandemic, a higher GDP better equips countries to recover more quickly. Good governance, well developed skills, and stable financial markets, amongst other things, act as enablers for the post-Covid recovery. At the same time, wealthier countries have more resources to manage the pandemic, such as a higher number of intensive care units or a better digital infrastructure.

Absorptive capacity is not always linked with income and is based on factors that differ within income groups. These include: the degree of dependence on vulnerable industries; measures to ensure food security; or social security safety nets (Drzeniek, Tambourgi and Marchese, 2020).



“...local authorities reacted very quickly to provide timely ad hoc solutions to support business.”

One of the key factors of the successful lockdown was that Bulgaria has one of the best internet infrastructures in Europe. This allowed a very big proportion of companies to shift to remote working, flexible work patterns and digital solutions. Home office has always been stigmatised by local employers as a synonym of additional paid leave and low efficiency. Surprisingly, the reality has proved the opposite.

The Bulgarian employment legislation is very traditional and hardly recognises flexibility. However, local authorities reacted very quickly

to provide timely ad hoc solutions to support business. Last but not least, the Bulgarian mentality is individualistic, not collectivistic and, further to the government measures, people have been looking for alternative ways to maintain their income and yet remain safe and healthy.

Irina Yoncheva, PhD, Chartered MCIPD at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

In the Recover, (Re)build: Exploring Country Capacity Post-COVID report all the EEMNEA countries rank in the first 60 countries of the index (except for Tunisia):

COUNTRY	Rank in the Recovery Index
Slovenia	15
Czech Republic	23
Poland	30
Slovakia	33
Croatia	34
Hungary	35
United Arab Emirates	36
Romania	41
Turkey	44
Serbia	45
Greece	53
Bulgaria	55
Tunisia	102

Figure 8 Recover, (Re)build: Exploring Country Capacity Post-COVID Index

The fact that almost all the countries are in the first two quartiles of the index is a positive sign (Figure 8). With the current pandemic still unfolding, future evolutions are uncertain. What is sure now though is that countries in the region have acted with a combination of rapid lockdowns and social legislation (in the first stage of the pandemic at least). This helped save lives and jobs.

The extent of each action differed from country to country and it is becoming clear that predetermined market conditions have helped ease or accelerate the effects of the pandemic.

Digital economies defined by extensive ICT Infrastructure and consistent R&D investment had a faster transition to remote working practices and limitation of non-necessary in-person contact between seller and client, between citizen and public institution. Digital signatures, online fiscal infrastructure, good internet speed and digitally skilled workers all made a difference in the way economies functioned. Most of the countries had good digital market infrastructure and performed well during the first months of the crisis, with United Arab Emirates, the Czech Republic and Slovenia all leading the way.

Workforce adaptability, fostered by wide social mobility, was another indicator that eased the effects of the crisis. Countries in the region have well established welfare systems that allowed individuals to benefit from remote working legislation, special childcare leave, welfare and even new jobs opportunities. All countries in the region have good track records in terms of

the gender development gap.

State financial assistance (social bumpers) for impacted sectors of the economy were a successful measure to help businesses stay active and retain employees. But bailout strategies differed. Some countries offered financial help only after a clear quarterly business impact analysis (eg Poland), while others were giving support unconditionally across all sectors (private and state) of the economy. This support came in the form of technical welfare paid by the state (Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia). All countries (especially EU members) enhanced and adapted their bailout strategies as the crisis developed.

Most countries announced more support measures after the Cohesion Policy Response to the Covid-19 crisis was released by the EU. Within the framework of investment initiatives, the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) and the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+) has seen around €13.5bn of Cohesion Policy funds mobilised to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Governments have had a relatively free hand in distributing these funds, which have been used to support social services, employment retention and helping vulnerable groups. For example, support was offered for: short-time work arrangements; supplementary wage for healthcare personnel; IT equipment; personal protective equipment; increased access to services for people in vulnerable situations; support for the self-employed; and distance education and training (European Social Fund News, 2020).



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Forecast for the new normality

Forecasts for the new normality

A key element that will forever change the work environment is the rapid adoption of remote working, particularly as work productivity wasn't affected and, indeed, grew in some sectors. Raw estimates show that half of the active workforce can practise their work remotely. Companies are expected to invest in shaping up new organisational cultures and tackle the wellbeing issues posed by the shift to remote work. As the pandemic lingers through winter, managers are reporting that employees show signs of depression and fatigue. As depicted in previous sections, countries in EEMENA are not exempt from these future employment trends.

Immediate job transitions (the next 6 months).

As important as remote working is, it does not solve the challenges for all sectors – a large part of the workforce will face displacements and layoffs. The mix between the pandemic and the ongoing automation process increases the pressure on

education, manufacturing, logistics, hospitality and entertainment jobs.

This is starting to impact the most displaceable work categories, namely older workers and young people. The timing of this could not be worse, with youth unemployment in the region already high. Countries like Greece, Croatia, Turkey, Tunisia and Romania have unemployment rates above the European average.

There are jobs in the affected sectors of the economy that can transition easily to sectors with high demand and that young people can access easily (Figure 9). For instance: a young restaurant office assistant who lost their job could fill a position as a sales associate in a bank; a cleaner at a hotel could transition to a private hospital for a registered orderly job. The list could go on but, despite the grim work perspectives, hiring opportunities arise from sectors that have been stressed by the pandemic (such as the healthcare sector) or that have not been heavily impacted by it (such as information technology and services).

AFFECTED SECTOR	In risk jobs	Alternative job	IN DEMAND SECTOR
Restaurants	Office assistant → Staff manager →	Sales associate	Financial & Accounting
Hospitality		Cleaner →	
	Marketing specialist →	Sales representative	Healthcare and Pharmaceutical
Culture and Entertainment	Performance artist →	Content manager	Education management
	Event manager →	Account executive	Marketing & Media
Education & Training	Debutant Teacher →	Trainer	NGO management
	Social worker →	Program manager	

Figure 9 Young workers jobs transitions

Shifting job demand (next year).

For some time now we have been witnessing an accelerated change in economies, industries and even in the way business is conducted. Impacted by the pandemic, aviation or tourism businesses, for example, are shrinking while others, such as the digital economy or healthcare, are expanding. Businesses are reshaping strategies, are investing in automation and are exploring new work methodologies. Employees, however, are more pessimistic about their job security and need to pick up new skills, now more than ever (Future of Work post-Covid, 2020). 2021 will not bring fundamental changes in the trends of high demand and increasingly redundant jobs. Across the region there will be an accelerated need for **highly specialised personnel** in:

- AI and machine learning
- Big data
- Internet of things
- Social media
- Material engineering

On the other hand, jobs that involve repetitive actions and crowded places for human interaction will continue to be increasingly redundant. Next

year will mean **lesser interest for employing personnel** in:

- Manual data entry
- Financial analysis
- Manufacturing and production
- Accounting and auditing
- Office management

Skills to be nurtured (the next 5 years).

During 2020 the Adecco Group conducted a survey that aims to find out more about workforce transformation. Future of Work post-Covid: Bridging divides for shared prosperity 2020 sheds light on a series of aspects that are defining the way work relationships, perceptions and practises are starting to look like. Among the surveyed population there are differences in perception of the skills that will be in high demand in the next five years (Figure 10). Business leaders put emphasis on data analytics and data science, resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility. On the other hand, workers consider AI and machine learning, digital marketing and time management to be more in demand in the near future.

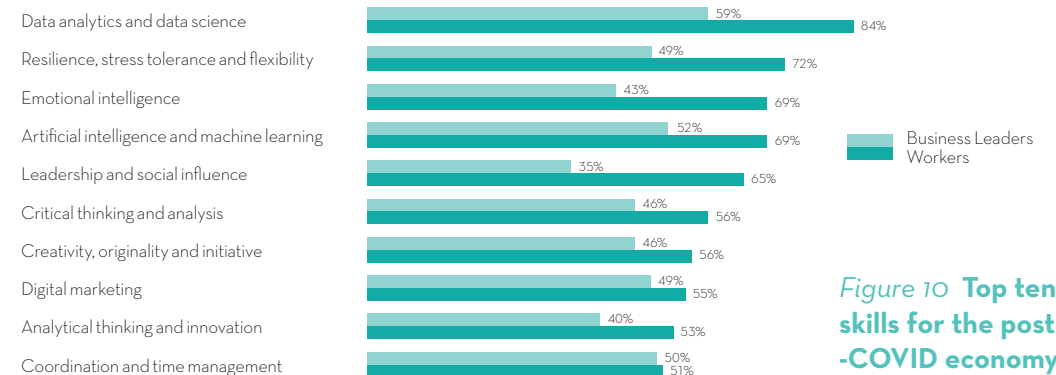


Figure 10 Top ten skills for the post-COVID economy



THE ADECCO GROUP

Country profiles

Bulgaria

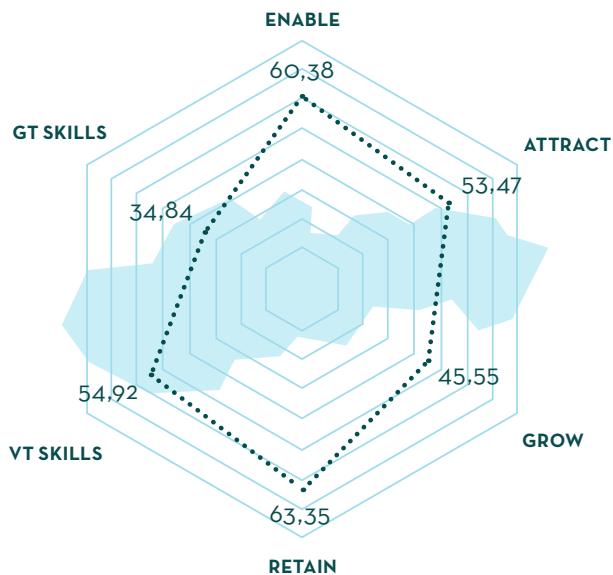
In GTCI 2020, Bulgaria is ranked 55th. The country's main strength relates to the pillar Retain, especially the sub-pillar Lifestyle. The greatest scope for improvement, meanwhile, is in the pillar Attract, where External Openness is the weakest sub-pillar. Over the past thirty years, Bulgaria has been experimenting with fundamental changes. From a highly centralised, planned socialist economy it gradually changed to an open, market-based, upper-middle-income country. Accessing the EU increased social stability and a sense of security in the market. Structural reforms advancement accelerated in the late 1990s, and together with the expectation of EU accession unleashed a period of exceptionally high economic growth and improved living standards.

COUNTRY	Overall GTCI ranking 2020	Regulatory Landscape	Market Landscape	Business Landscape	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-level Skills	Talent impact
Slovakia	39	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	4	2	2
Greece	47	2	2	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
Bulgaria	55	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	3	2	2

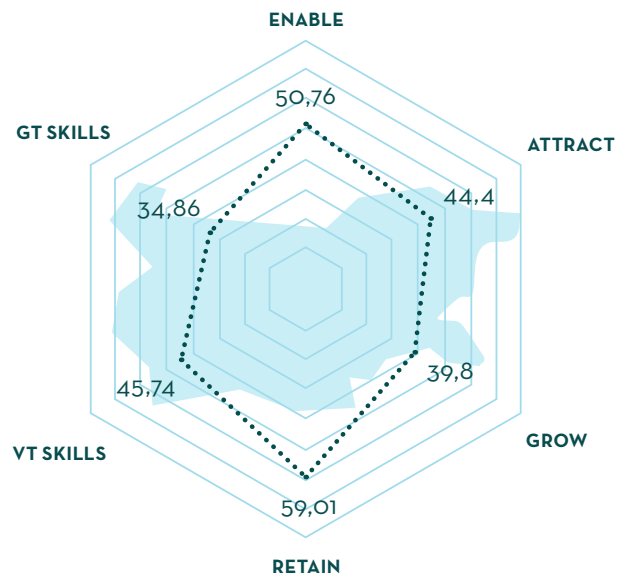
■ 1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED
 ■ 2ND QUARTILE - MIXED READINESS
 ■ 3RD QUARTILE - LESS WELL POSITION
 ■ 4TH QUARTILE - LOW READINESS

Private companies operate under stable macroeconomic conditions which are enhancing the Bulgarian economy's attractiveness, especially in the outsourcing, tourism and agriculture sectors. For outsourcing in particular, Bulgaria has become one of the most attractive destinations in Europe, having a leading position, particularly in the South-eastern part of the continent. In recent years, the country has developed sophisticated outsourcing services, such as BPO and ITO. More and more global companies are choosing Bulgaria to open their back-office, outsourced R&D and shared service centres, utilising the highly skilled workforce, especially in the IT sector (World Bank, 2020).

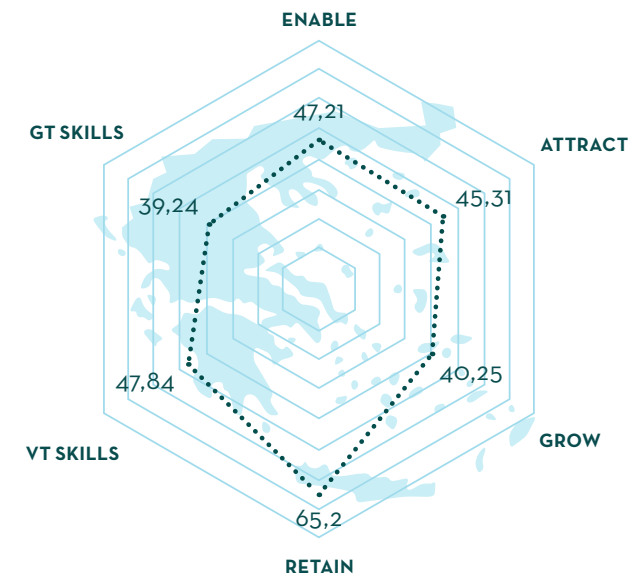
Slovakia Similar size country



Bulgaria

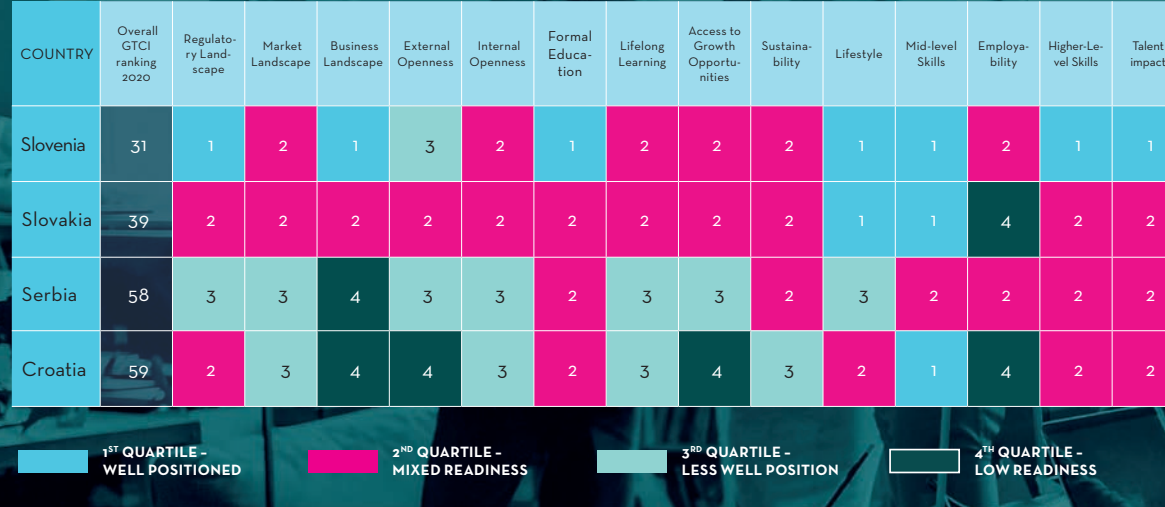


Greece Adecco clustered country



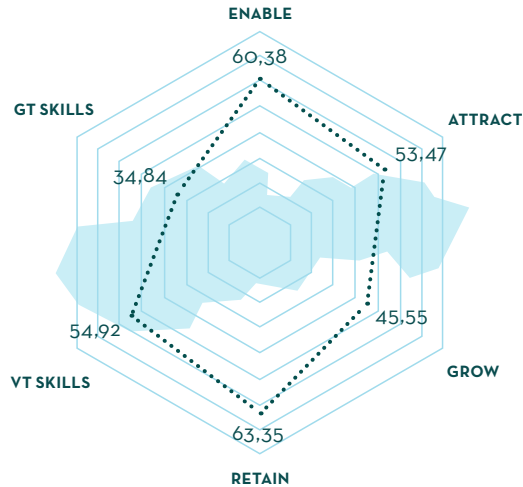
Croatia

The newest EU member ranks in the second quartile of the GTCI Report 2020. With a score of 43.53, and ranked 59th globally, Croatia distinguishes itself as a high-income economy that managed well the initial effects of the pandemic. Prior to the Covid-19 crisis, Croatia recorded a steady economic growth of close to 3%. A convergence to the European Union (EU) income average remained elusive, however. A severe economic recession triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic is reversing the income gains, poverty reduction, and fiscal sustainability that Croatia achieved during the past five years. In addition, the March earthquake in Zagreb and its environs has strained the functioning of public institutions and caused extensive

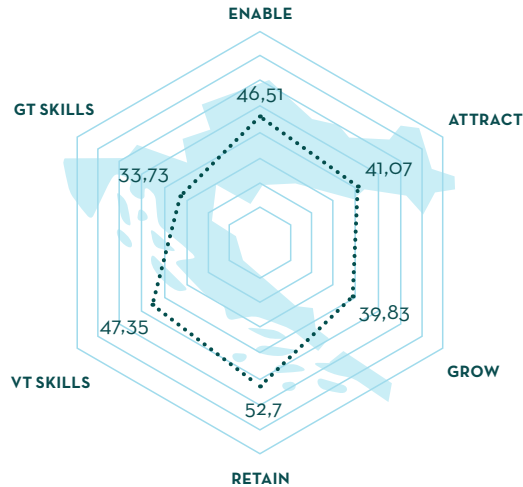


damage that will take years to repair. Although it is expected that the crisis will be short lived and the recovery will gain momentum in 2021, there remains a high level of uncertainty, and risks are tilted to the downside. A further worsening of the pandemic globally cannot be excluded, which might require the re-imposition of stringent social distancing measures (World Bank, 2020).

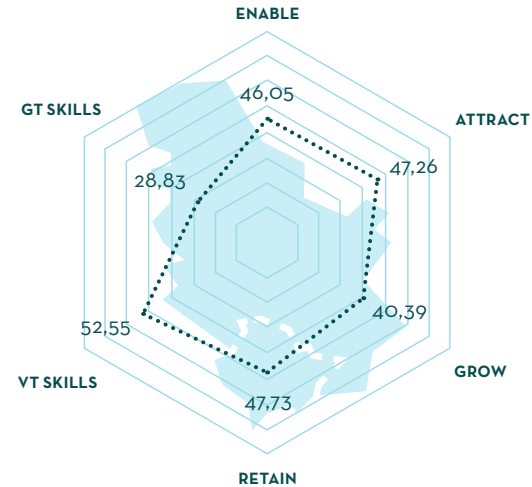
Slovakia Similar size country



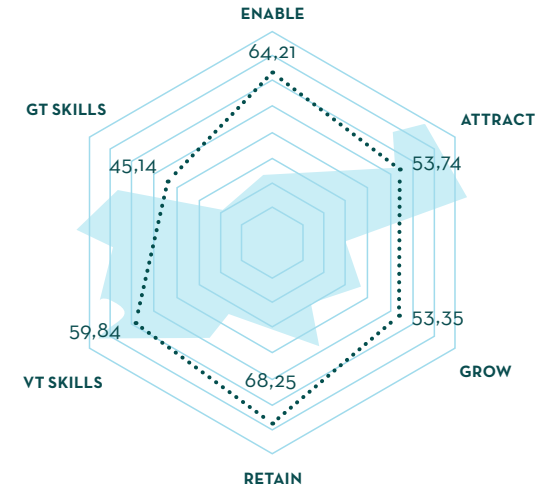
Croatia



Serbia Adecco clustered country



Slovenia Adecco clustered country



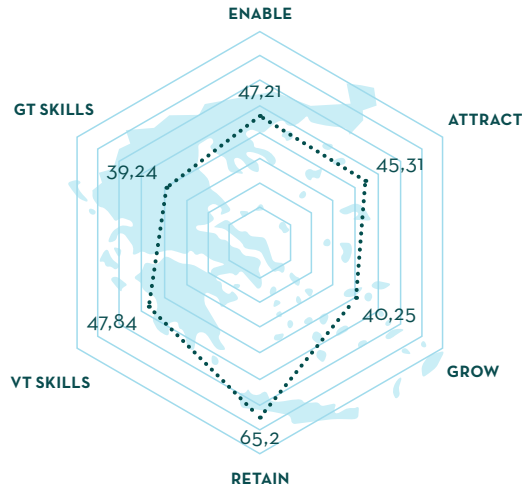
Czech Republic

With a score of 60.91 and the best rank out of all the Eastern European countries (25), the Czech Republic is surpassed only by the UAE in terms of talent competitiveness. With a strong infrastructure and well-connected economy to Central-Western European countries, the country registered a drop in GDP of 10.7% in the second quarter of 2020. After suffering a severe recession this year due to the Covid-19 blow, the economy is seen rebounding strongly next year as domestic and foreign demand recover. Fiscal and monetary measures are expected to provide further support. Key downside risks remain. These include the prolongation of the health crisis and disrupted European automotive supply chains.

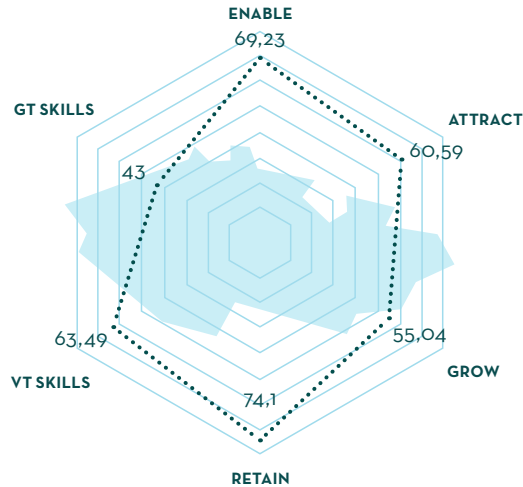


Due to a severe second wave of Covid-19 infections, the government declared a state of emergency and renewed strict containment measures in early October. The worsening health situation risks derailing the incipient recovery, as suggested by flagging business and consumer confidence in October. The Czech government has recently extended part of its short-term work scheme and approved a relief plan for the hardest-hit businesses (FocusEconomics, 2020).

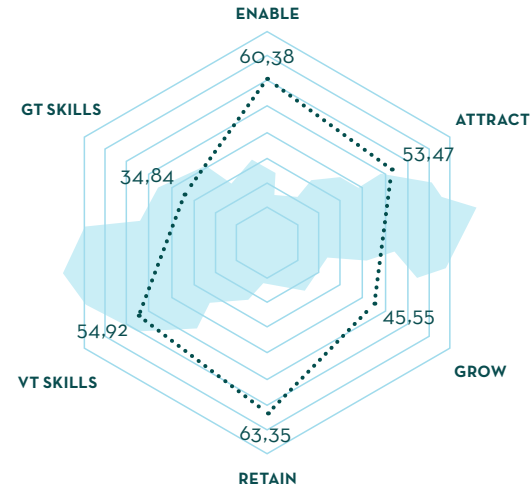
Greece Similar size country



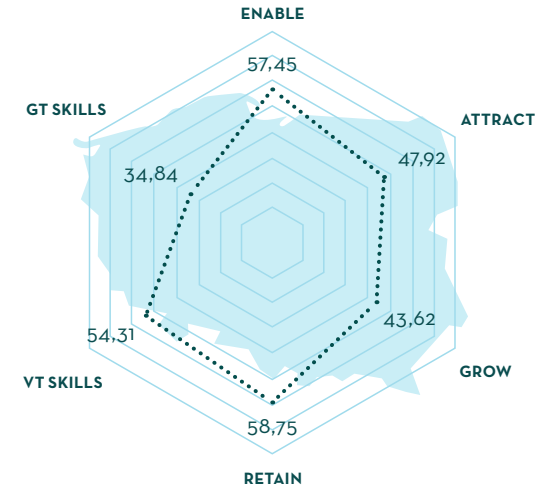
Czech Republic



Slovakia Adecco clustered country

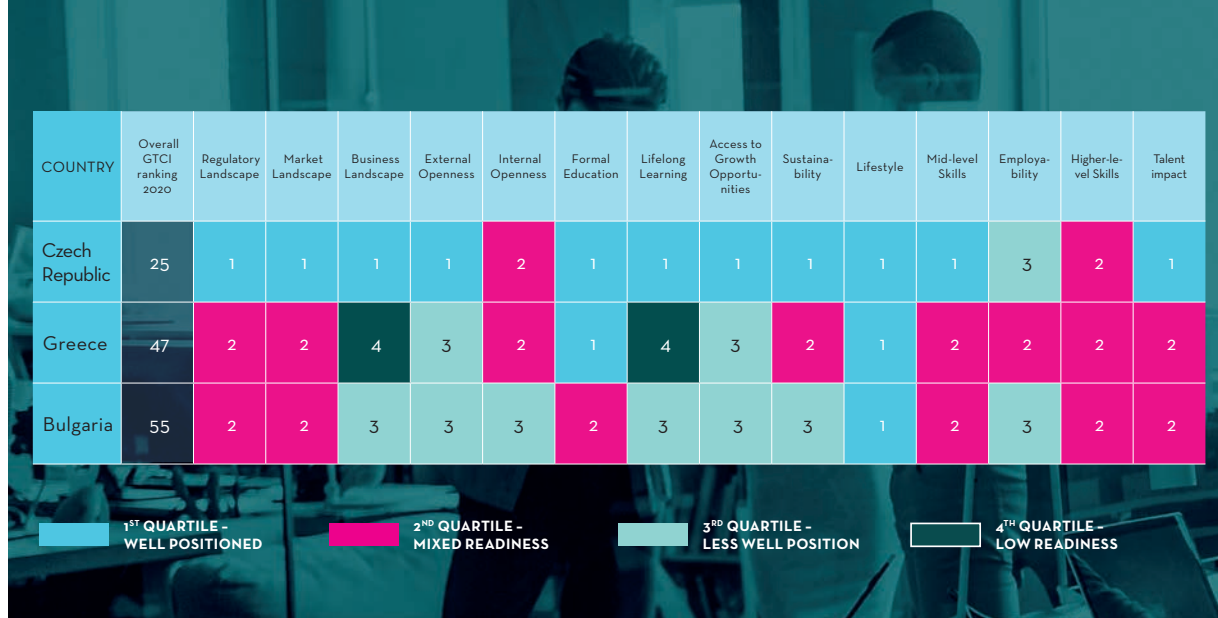


Poland Adecco clustered country



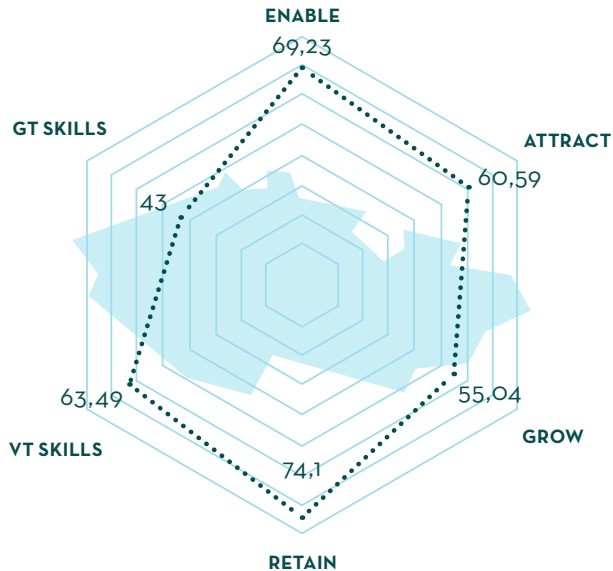
Greece

In GTCI 2020, Greece is ranked 47th. The country's main strength relates to the pillar Retain, especially the sub-pillar Lifestyle. The greatest scope for improvement, meanwhile, is in the pillar Attract, where External Openness is still a weak sub-pillar. The financial crisis of the late 2000s hit Greece particularly hard; and while globally the rest of the world started recovering, Greece fell into a long recession, culminating with the 2015 capital controls. After this long, hard period, and before the pandemic hit, the Greek economy had been expanding for almost three years at just below 2% average annual growth (OECD data 2020). Structural reforms, high primary budget surpluses and debt measures

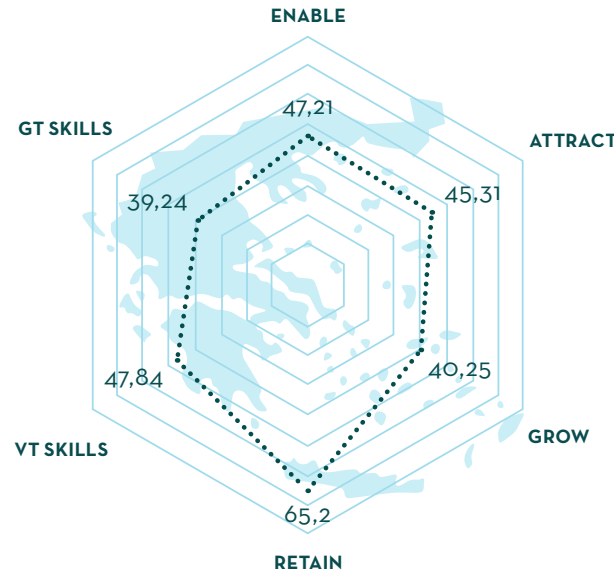


by European partners sustained Greece's recovery and rebuilt confidence. Rising goods and tourism exports had supported growth and jobs, reducing unemployment and buttressing private consumption (OECD Economic Surveys – Greece 2020). The development of the infrastructure in the country is enhanced by the attraction of new investments the past couple of years. The investment activity in the country originates mainly from companies of major markets, such as the EU, but also Chinese investments have been attracted lately. Greece is becoming a popular place for investment for shared services centres, mostly because of its highly skilled and multilingual workforce.

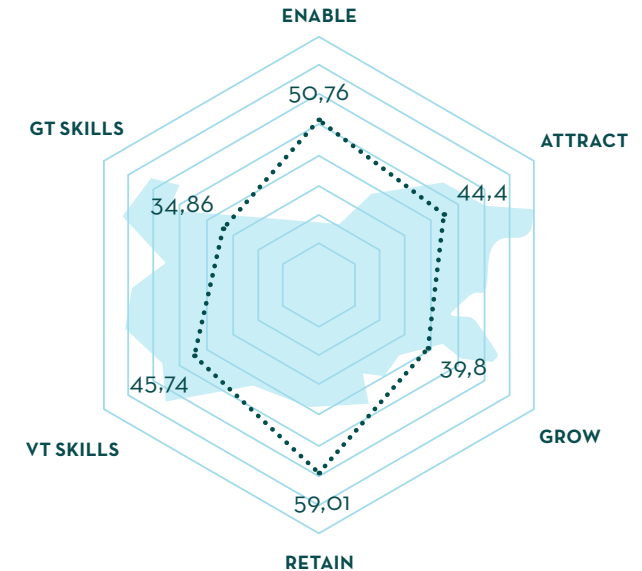
Czech Republic Similar size country



Greece



Bulgaria Adecco clustered country



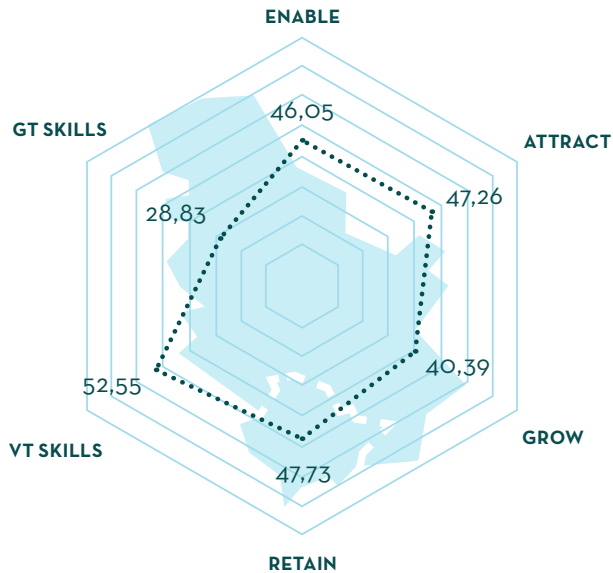
Hungary

With a year-on-year increase in GDP, Hungary stands out as one of the most dynamic economies in Eastern Europe. It ranks 52nd in the overall GCTI report and is one of the few European countries with effective demographic policies. Hungary was one of the strictest countries with imposing restrictions to contain the pandemic in early 2020. The Hungarian economy seemingly emerged from recession in Q3. Both industrial production and merchandise exports contracted at a notably softer pace in July-August compared to Q2. This points to an improving private sector activity. Moreover, stronger retail sales and less downbeat consumer sentiment in Q3 hint at recovering household spending.

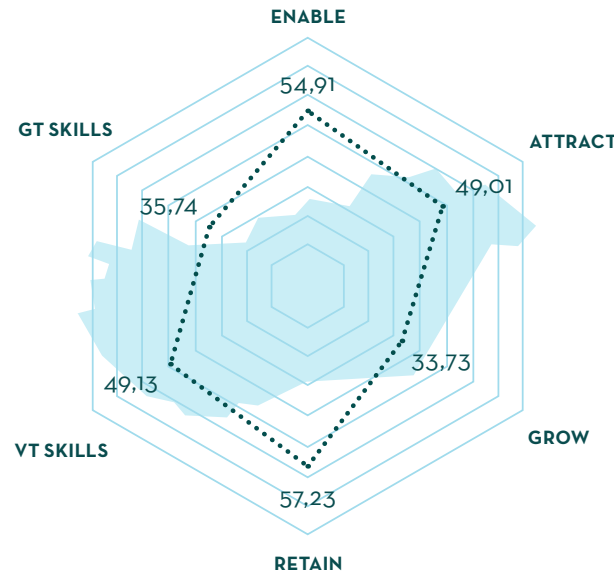


In Q4, economic indicators depict a mixed picture for the economy. Although business sentiment rose further in October, consumers turned more pessimistic in the same month, likely due to the sustained rise in new Covid-19 cases. At the same time, the Council of the European Union approved a €504m loan for Hungary. This is part of the EU's SURE program, aimed to protect jobs and sustain incomes amid the pandemic. Optimistic future predictions after the pandemic's fallout are fuelled by rebounding private spending (FocusEconomics, 2020).

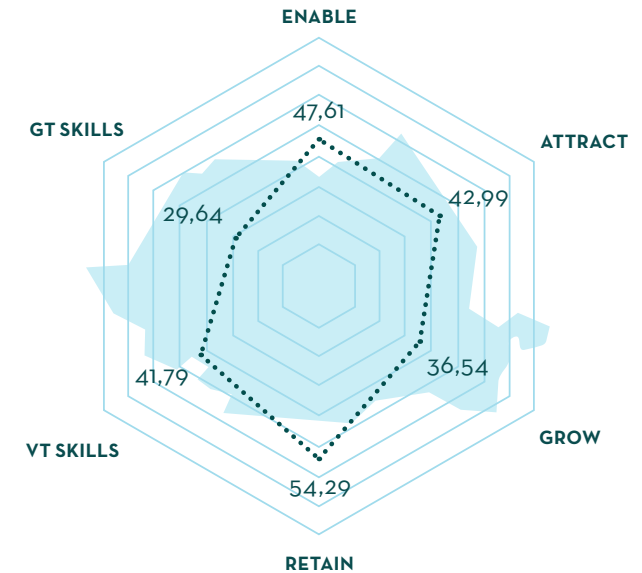
Serbia Similar size country



Hungary



Romania Adecco clustered country



Poland

With an overall score of 49.48, Poland ranks 44th in the GTCI Study 2020. The country's main strength relates to the pillar Retain (especially the sub-pillar Lifestyle) and Enable (especially the sub-pillar Tertiary-educated unemployment). The greatest scope for improvement, however, is in the pillar Grow, where use of virtual professional networks is still a weak sub-pillar.

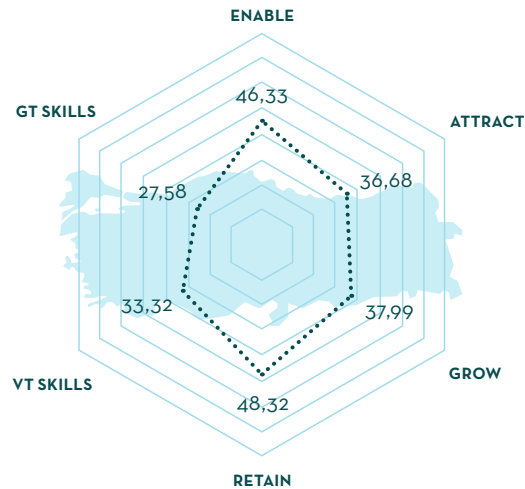
Poland was among the fastest-growing economies in the European Union (EU) before the coronavirus outbreak hit the global economy. Poland is trying to mitigate the social and economic impact of the pandemic, although the full impact of the virus remains uncertain. A prolonged outbreak would significantly curb

COUNTRY	Overall GTCI ranking 2020	Regulatory Landscape	Market Landscape	Business Landscape	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-Level Skills	Talent impact
Czech Republic	25	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1
Slovakia	39	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	4	2	2
Poland	44	2	2	2	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	2
Turkey	78	3	2	3	4	4	1	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	2

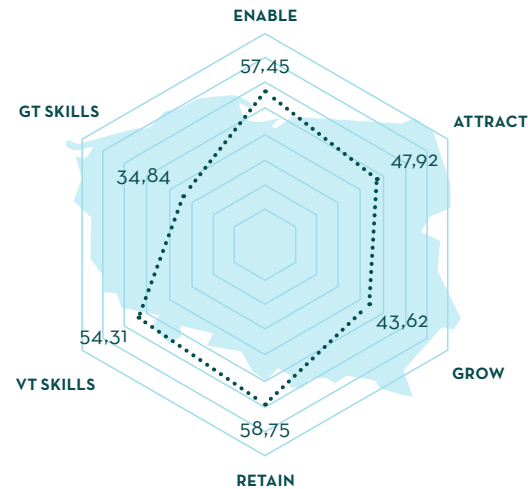
■ 1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED
 ■ 2ND QUARTILE - MIXED READINESS
 ■ 3RD QUARTILE - LESS WELL POSITION
 4TH QUARTILE - LOW READINESS

economic activity. With a health care system under pressure, affected supply chains and depressed investor sentiment, the country faces decreasing consumer demand. The impact to supply chains will lead to further recession. In such a pessimistic scenario, the economic and fiscal impact in 2020 would be more severe, with implications for employability and an increase in poverty. On the positive side, Poland holds enough fiscal and monetary resources to mitigate the adverse effects of lower global and domestic demand and shield its financially vulnerable populations (World Bank, 2020).

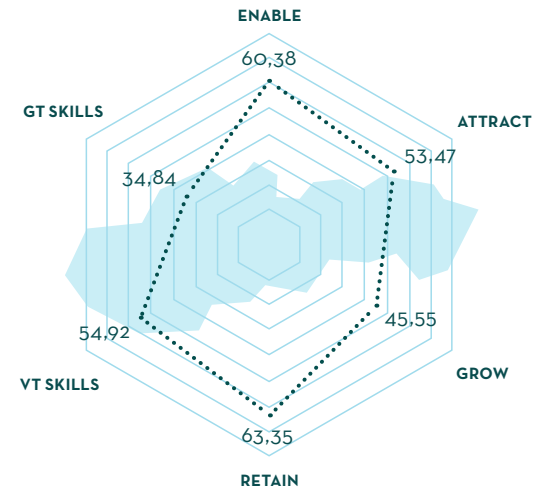
Turkey Similar size country



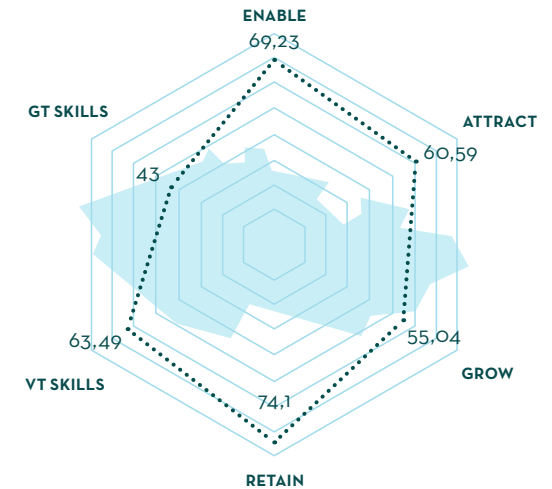
Poland



Slovakia Adecco clustered country



Czech Republic Adecco clustered country



Romania

With one of the highest economic growths in the EU in recent years, Romania ranks 64th in GTCI 2020. The country ranks well in VT Skills with a large portion of its workforce having graduated secondary education. In 2020 the World Bank changed Romania's status to a high-income economy (per capita income of \$12,630).

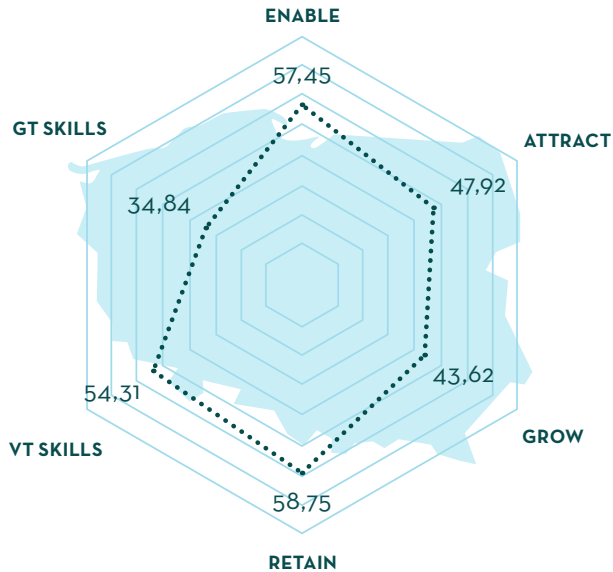
The Romanian economy shrank by 4.7% in the second half of 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was driven by a decline of 10.5% in the second quarter. So far, the Romanian economy is expected to contract by 5.7% in 2020. The sharp decline in output has led to deteriorating labour market conditions, with deeper effects noted for younger workers

COUNTRY	Overall GTCI ranking 2020	Regulatory Landscape	Market Landscape	Business Landscape	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-level Skills	Talent impact
Poland	44	2	2	2	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	2
Hungary	52	2	2	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	2	1	4	2	2
Romania	64	2	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	4	3	2

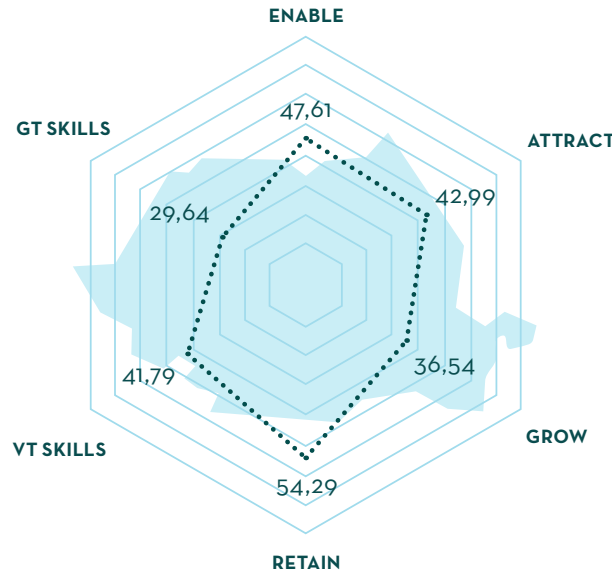
■ 1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED
 ■ 2ND QUARTILE - MIXED READINESS
 ■ 3RD QUARTILE - LESS WELL POSITION
 ■ 4TH QUARTILE - LOW READINESS

and women. Job vacancies fell between the first and second quarters of 2020, while the unemployment rate increased to 5.4% in July, from 4.1% in February. The magnitude of the 2021 economic recovery will depend on: the evolution of the health crisis and its administrative response; the impact of the national economic stimulus; and the spillovers from the stimulus pursued at the European Union (EU) level. Romania is expected to receive €79.9 billion from the EU by 2027 (World Bank, 2020).

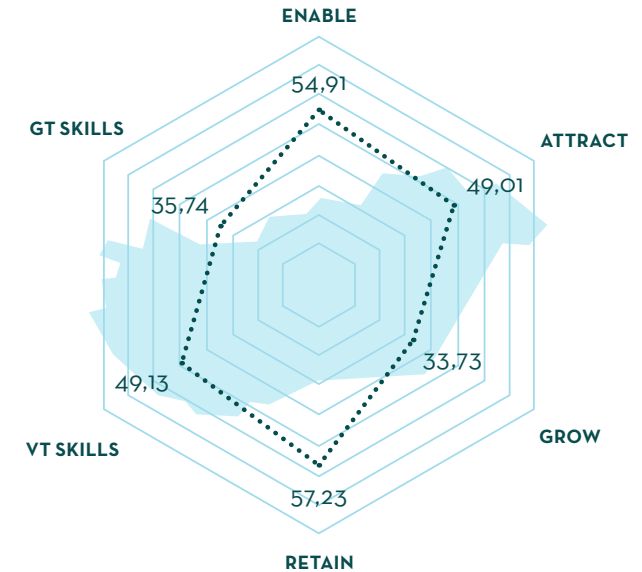
Poland Similar size country



Romania



Hungary Adecco clustered country



Serbia

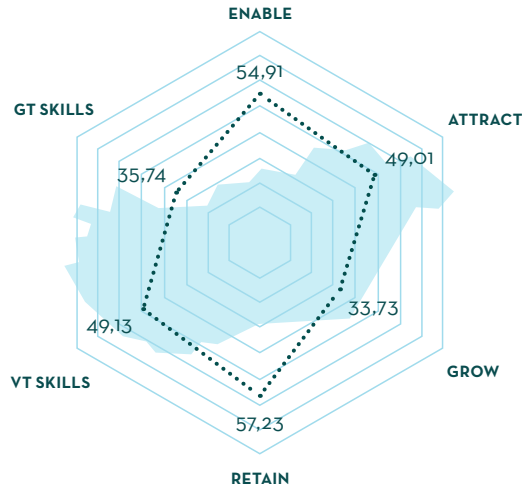
Ranked 58th in the 2020 GTCI, Serbia was considerably impacted by the pandemic. The projected decrease in real GDP is at 3% in 2020 and recovery is projected to start in 2021. The country used most of the available fiscal space early in the pandemic, resulting in an economic contraction of 6.4% in the second quarter of 2020 that was less pronounced than in neighbouring countries but still led to a small increase in unemployment and poverty. As Serbia experiences a recession and public debt sharply increases, the future fiscal space to stimulate a recovery is limited. The newly formed government in October (following June 2020 elections) is urged to continue implementing programs that address

COUNTRY	Overall GTCI ranking 2020	Regulatory Landscape	Market Landscape	Business Landscape	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-Level Skills	Talent impact
Slovenia	31	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
Hungary	52	2	2	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	2	1	4	2	2
Serbia	58	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2
Croatia	59	2	3	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	1	4	2	2

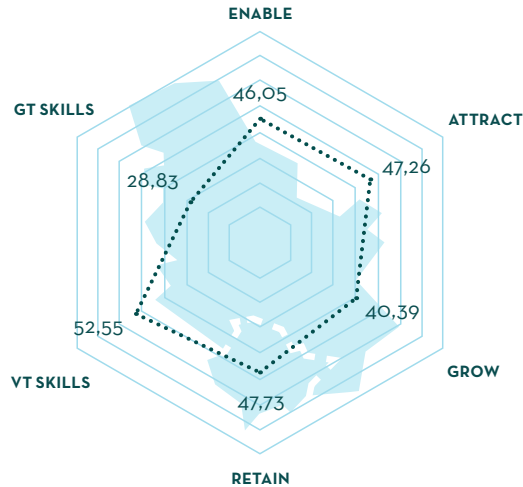
■ 1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED
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 ■ 3RD QUARTILE - LESS WELL POSITION
 4TH QUARTILE - LOW READINESS

structural weaknesses and increase public sector efficiency while maintaining macro-economic stability. Serbia is expected to introduce a green growth program to its post-Covid-19 economic recovery efforts. This is vital for responding to challenges that include a shrinking population, labour shortages and climate change. Serbia's sustained economic growth will depend heavily on the pace of the European Union accession (World Bank, 2020).

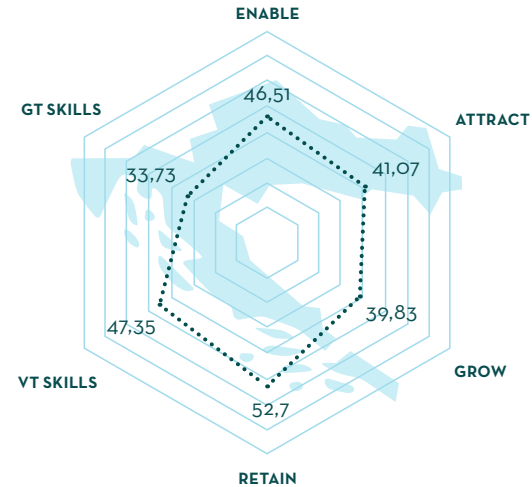
Hungary Similar size country



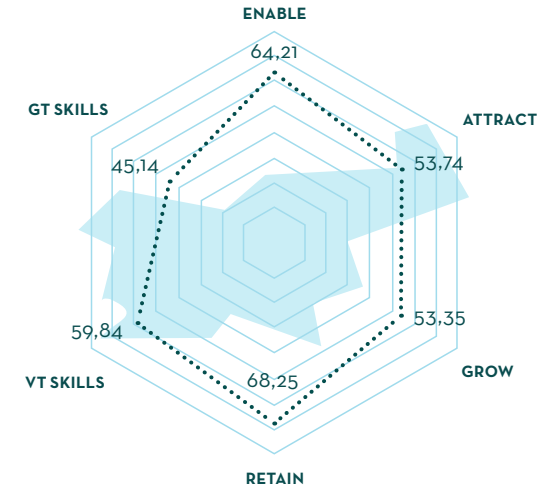
Serbia



Croatia Adecco clustered country



Slovenia Adecco clustered country



Slovakia

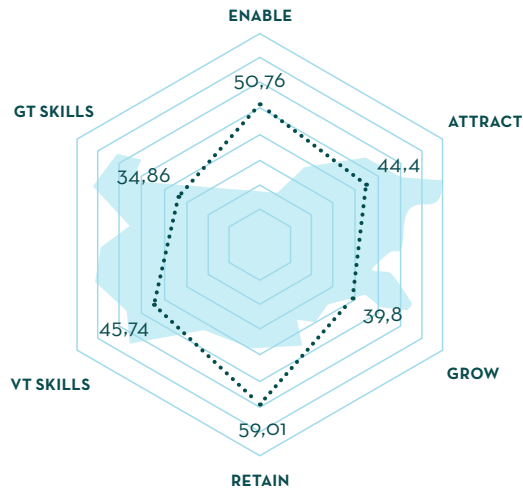
Ranked 39th in GTCI 2020, Slovakia is one of the countries impacted the most by the second Covid-19 wave. Initial available indicators pointed to a gradual recovery in Q3, following the unprecedented GDP decrease in the second quarter of 2020. The decline in industrial production eased for the fifth consecutive month, while merchandise exports rose at the strongest pace in over a year. Goods imports dropped at a softer pace in the same month, while retail sales rebounded in July–August, largely due to increased sales of electronics and recreational goods. Unfortunately, a surge in Covid-19 cases triggered the reinstatement of the state of emergency on 1 October, which could lead to new

COUNTRY	Overall GTCI ranking 2020	Regulatory Landscape	Market Landscape	Business Landscape	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-Level Skills	Talent impact
Czech Republic	25	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	1
Slovakia	39	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	4	2	2
Poland	44	2	2	2	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	2
Bulgaria	55	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	3	2	2

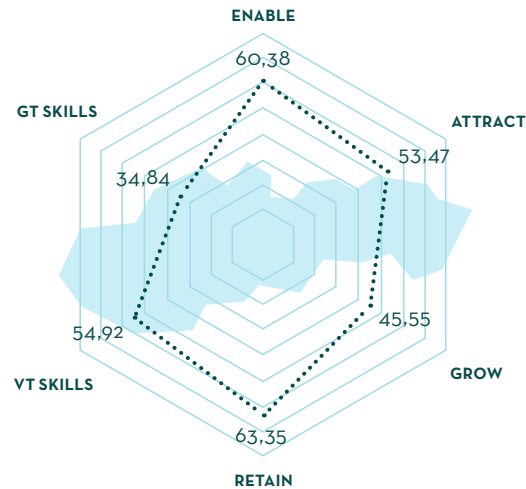
■ 1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED
 ■ 2ND QUARTILE - MIXED READINESS
 ■ 3RD QUARTILE - LESS WELL POSITION
 4TH QUARTILE - LOW READINESS

restrictions. In the second half of October, the government approved its 2021 draft budget, based on a 5.5% growth forecast while envisioning a fiscal deficit of 7.4% of GDP. The economy is contracting rapidly this year before rebounding strongly in 2021. The gradual easing of pandemic-associated restrictions, together with EU funding, should stimulate domestic activity. Reviving foreign demand is expected to bolster the external sector (FocusEconomics, 2020).

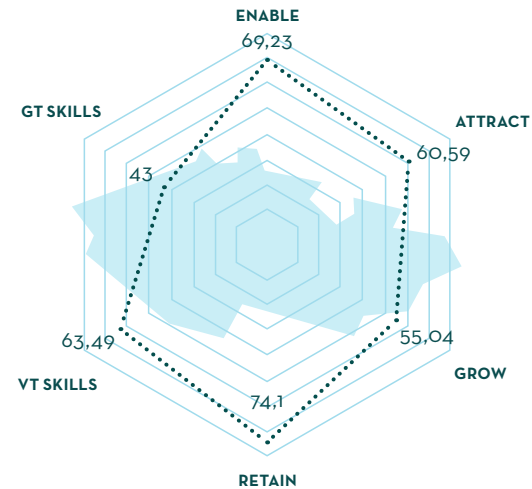
Bulgaria Similar size country



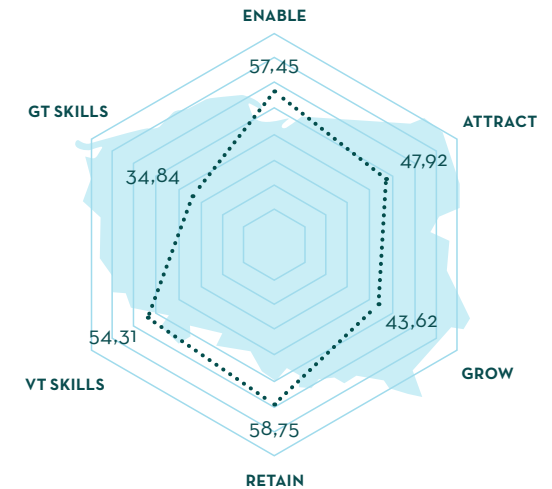
Slovakia



Czech Republic Adecco clustered country



Poland Adecco clustered country



Slovenia

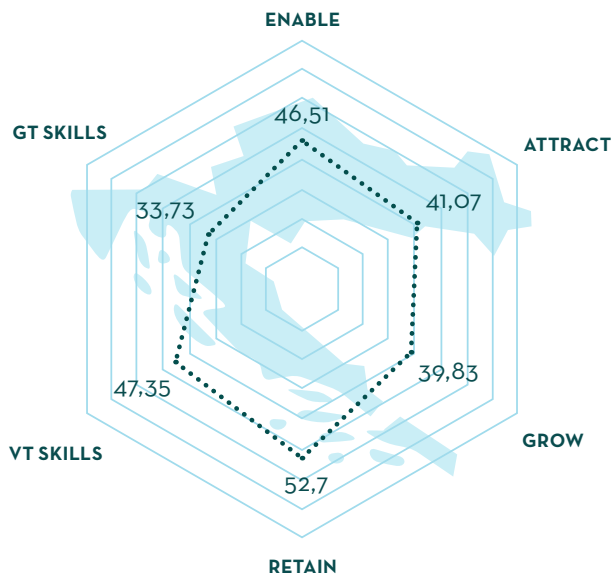
With excellent infrastructure and a well-educated workforce, Slovenia has one of the highest per capita GDPs in Central Europe, despite having suffered a protracted recession in the 2008/2009 period in the wake of the global financial crisis (CIA the World Factbook, 2020). Ranking 31st in the GTCI report, the Slovenian economy likely contracted at a slower pace in annual terms in Q3. Data for July and August indicate that conditions were less downbeat: industrial production and retail sales decreased at a slower pace compared to Q2. In Q4, a surge in Covid-19 cases led to new restrictions in October, which are likely to slow down the recovery. The country's draft budget for 2021 submitted to the European Commis-

COUNTRY	Overall GTCI ranking 2020	Regulatory Landscape	Market Landscape	Business Landscape	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-level Skills	Talent impact
Slovenia	31	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
Serbia	58	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2
Croatia	59	2	3	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	1	4	2	2

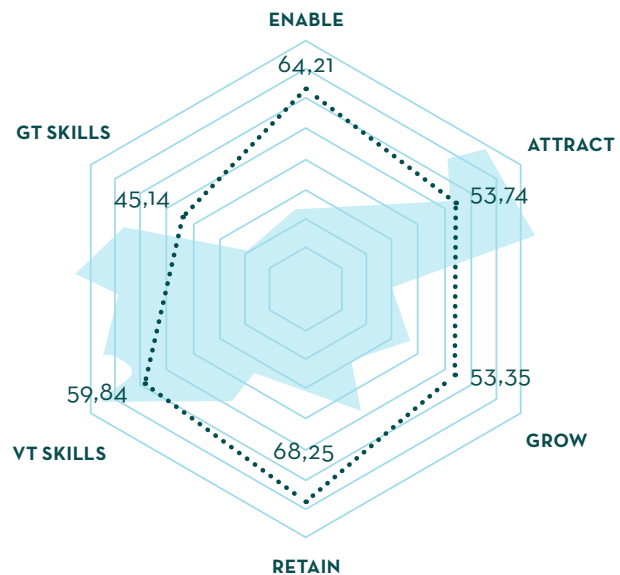
■ 1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED
 ■ 2ND QUARTILE - MIXED READINESS
 ■ 3RD QUARTILE - LESS WELL POSITION
 ■ 4TH QUARTILE - LOW READINESS

sion in October has planned higher expenditure on public investment and wage bill. Cuts to most other spending areas are in plan. The fiscal deficit is predicted to remain considerable. GDP is seen growing from the pandemic's fallout in 2021. This will be based on the rebound of private spending and recovering exports. However, the planning of vaccination campaigns against Covid-19 in 2021 remains unclear, posing a downside risk to the outlook (FocusEconomics, 2020).

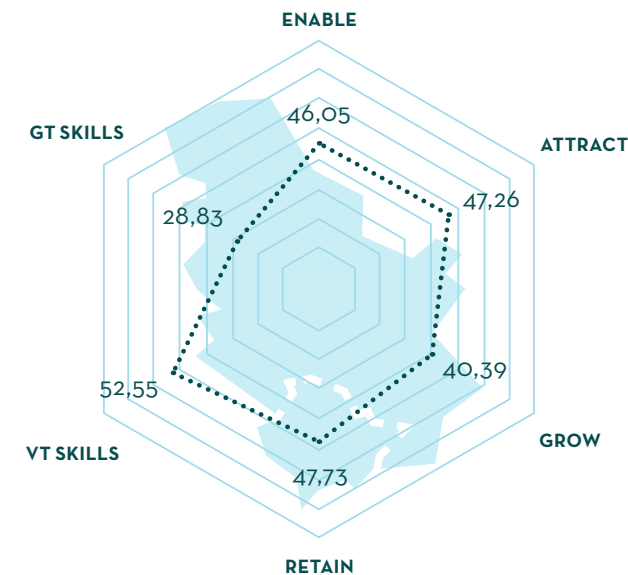
Croatia Similar size country



Slovenia



Serbia Adecco clustered country



Tunisia

Tunisia's economy faced many challenges exposed by the 2008 global financial crisis that helped trigger the 2011 Arab Spring revolution. The country ranks 79th in GTCI 2020 and in recent years has been facing a declining tourism sector alongside slow economic growth and rising unemployment (CIA the World Factbook, 2020).

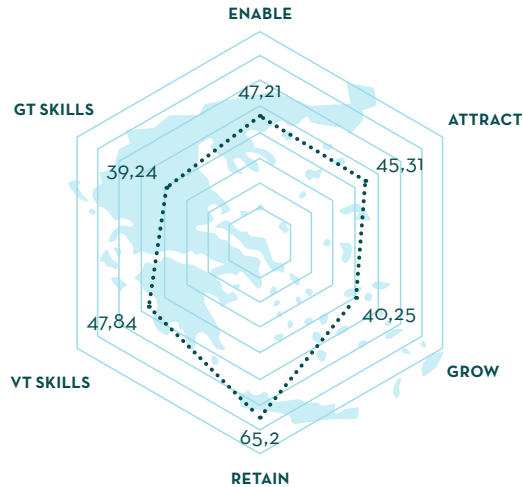
The economic landscape remains discrete in the second half of the year. Merchandise trade indicators for Q3 show a decrease in exports as low demand from important external markets affected the mining and energy sectors. Moreover, the inhibited state of global tourism has hit the hospitality sector considerably. Revenues from tourist activities are expected

COUNTRY	Overall GTCI ranking 2020	Regulatory Landscape	Market Landscape	Business Landscape	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-Level Skills	Talent impact
United Arab Emirates	22	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	2
Greece	47	2	2	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
Turkey	78	3	2	3	4	4	1	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	2
Tunisia	79	3	3	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2

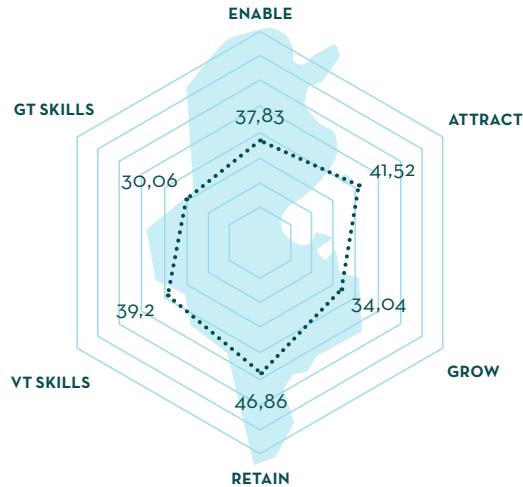
■ 1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED
 ■ 2ND QUARTILE - MIXED READINESS
 ■ 3RD QUARTILE - LESS WELL POSITION
 4TH QUARTILE - LOW READINESS

to have plunged across the third quarter. The economy is projected to rebound strongly in 2021. Growth in household and capital spending should boost domestic demand, while the expected return of higher levels of tourism is likely to bolster the external sector. However, uncertainty regarding the duration of the pandemic and available vaccines clouds the outlook (FocusEconomics, 2020).

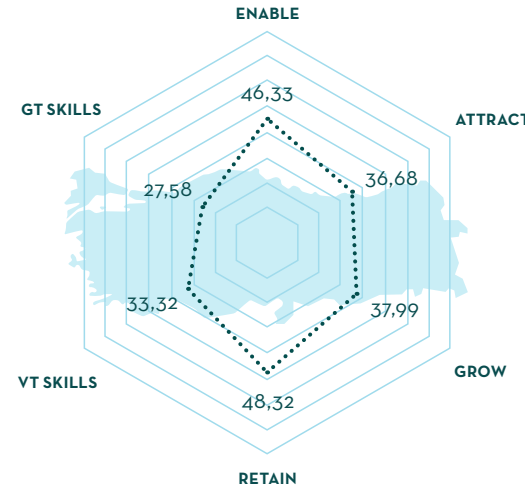
Greece Similar size country



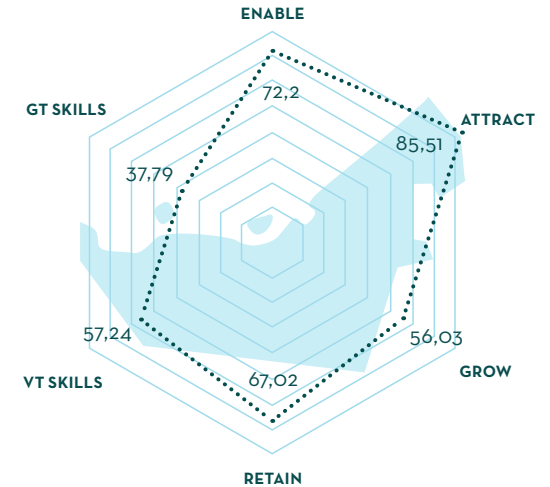
Tunisia



Turkey Adecco clustered country



United Arab Emirates Adecco clustered country



Turkey

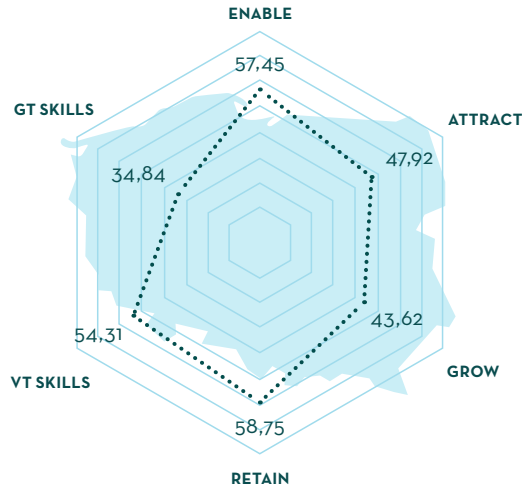
Ranked 78th in the GTCI 2020 Turkey, for most of the period since 2000, focussed on long-term reforms with ambitious improvements in many areas. Government programs have targeted vulnerable groups and lagging regions. Turkey's economic and social performances have been impressive, leading to good employment rates and rising incomes for the workforce.

However, in recent years, increasing fiscal vulnerabilities and changing external context have threatened to undermine those achievements. Thanks to massive urbanisation, strong macroeconomic and fiscal policy frameworks, opened foreign trade, harmonised laws, and regulations with European Union the country is achieving

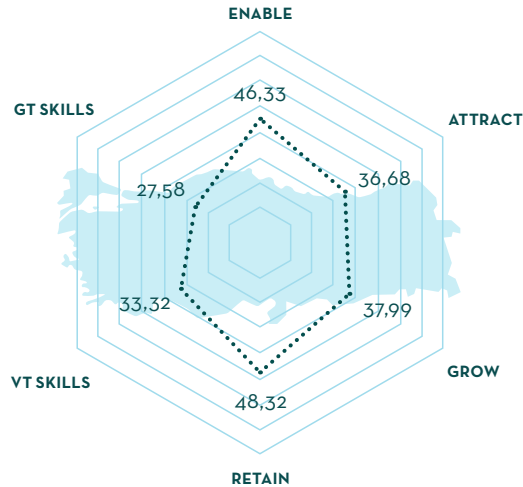


an upper-middle-income status. Turkey's response to the Syrian refugee crisis has been exemplary. The management of the influx of approximately 3.6 million refugees has proven to be a model to other countries hosting refugees. In the current Covid-19 crisis the overall macroeconomic picture is more vulnerable and uncertain. With rising inflation and unemployment, and contracting investment, an elevation in corporate and financial sector vulnerabilities is obvious. The impact from the corona crisis is expected to have a severely negative effect in Turkey, further weakening economic and social gains (World Bank, 2020).

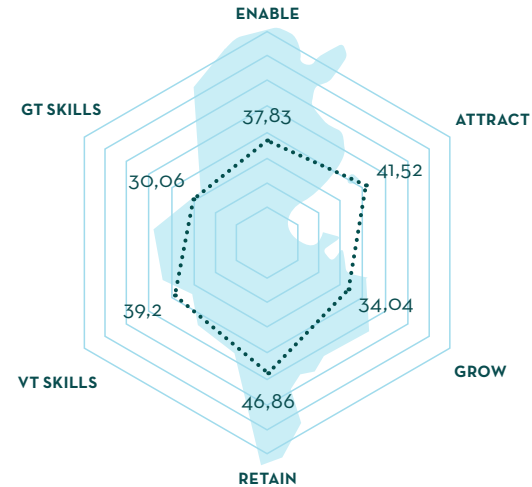
Poland Similar size country



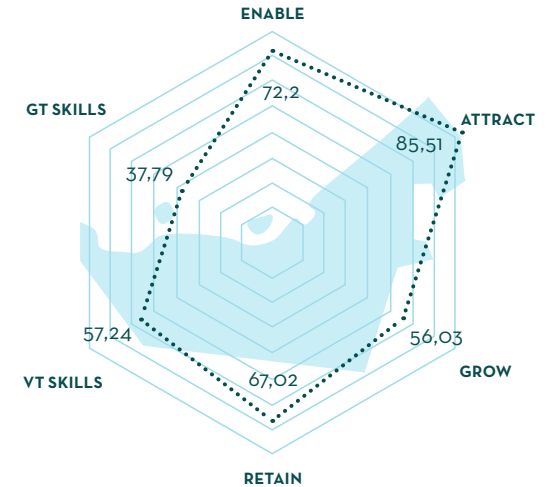
Turkey



Tunisia Adecco clustered country



United Arab Emirates Adecco clustered country



United Arab Emirates

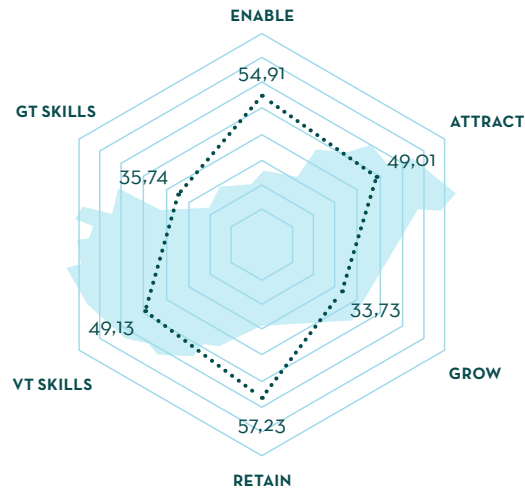
Ranked 22nd globally with a score of 62.63, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is leading the region in terms of competitiveness. The UAE has an open economy with a high per capita income and a sizable annual trade surplus. Successful efforts at economic diversification have reduced the portion of GDP from the oil and gas sector to 30% (CIA the World Factbook, 2020). Investments in the country have been impacted due to the pandemic. The economy seemingly started to recover in the third quarter, after initial sharp contraction. However, employment levels continued to decrease, though at a slower pace than in previous months. At the same time oil production hit an almost decade low in the third quarter.

COUNTRY	Overall GTCI ranking 2020	Regulatory Landscape	Market Landscape	Business Landscape	External Openness	Internal Openness	Formal Education	Lifelong Learning	Access to Growth Opportunities	Sustainability	Lifestyle	Mid-level Skills	Employability	Higher-Level Skills	Talent impact
United Arab Emirates	22	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	2
Hungary	52	2	2	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	2	1	4	2	2
Turkey	78	3	2	3	4	4	1	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	2
Tunisia	79	3	3	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2

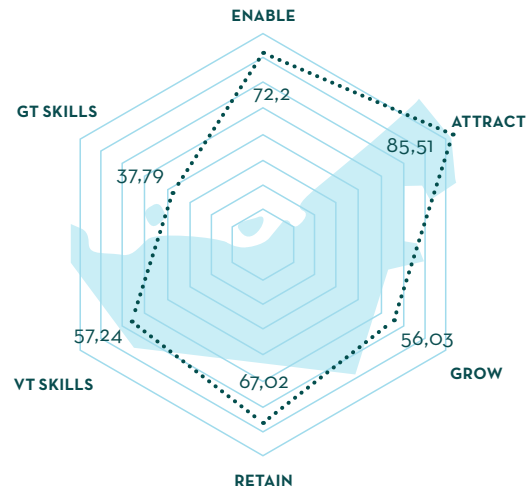
■ 1ST QUARTILE - WELL POSITIONED
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Together with low global prices, this weighed heavily on government finances. Additionally, the sharp increase in new Covid-19 waves are threatening the recovery, as new restrictions could come into effect again. The economy will continue to contract until the end of the year, as the second pandemic wave, together with low oil prices, weigh on the economy. In 2021, GDP is expected to recover, fuelled by more demand as economies reopen globally (FocusEconomics, 2020).

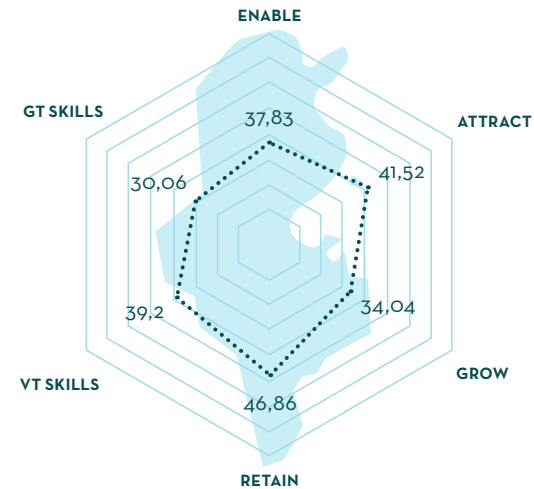
Hungary Similar size country



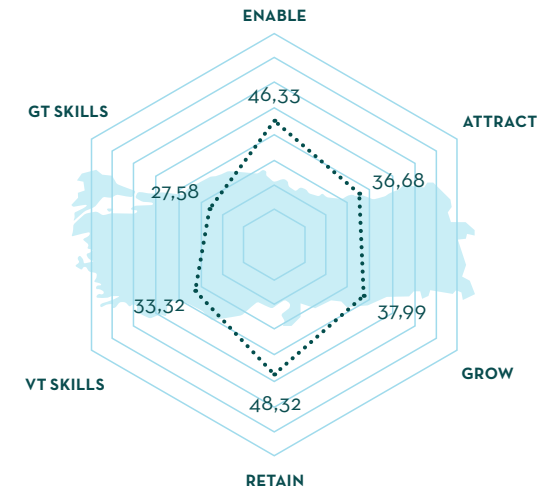
United Arab Emirates



Tunisia Adecco clustered country



Turkey Adecco clustered country



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SPECIAL THANKS

Dr Ioannis Nikolaou

Dr Ioannis Nikolaou is a work and organisational psychologist, an associate professor in organisational behaviour, and director of the MSc in Human Resources Management at Athens University of Economics and Business. Dr Nikolaou gained wide working experience as an assistant manager for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Greece at the department of Global Human Resources Solutions and as Head of the Training Department at Egnatia Bank before starting his academic career. He has written the books *Organizational Psychology & Behaviour*; *Managing Human Capital – Greek Case Studies* (in Greek); *Contemporary Issues for Theory and Practice* (Routledge/Psychology Press); and co-edited *Employee Recruitment, Selection, and Assessment* with Janneke Oostrom. He has also published internationally in peer-reviewed academic journals, and his research interests lay in the field of organisational behaviour and human resources management, specifically in employee recruitment, selection and assessment. He teaches undergraduate courses in organisational psychology and personal skills development, and post-graduate courses in: Employee Selection; Performance Appraisal and Development; Organisational Behaviour

& Human Resources Management; and Personal Skills Development at the department of Economics and Business at Athens University. He maintains active links with the industry through human resource consulting projects at, for example: the National Bank of Greece; Emporiki Bank; Kantor Management Consulting; and Attika Bank. He is also an executive trainer. His most recent collaborations in executive training and management consulting include companies such as: Metro; OTE Academy; EFG Eurobank; Ethniki Asfaltiki; Misko-Barilla; Lion Hellas; Pfizer; SEAT; Infote; Dodoni; OSE; Metaxas Diagnostics; Intracom; and AB Vasilopoulos.



Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB)

The Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB) was founded in 1920 under the name of Athens School of Commercial Studies. It was renamed in 1926 as the Athens School of Economics and Business, a name that was retained until 1989 when it assumed its present name, the Athens

University of Economics and Business. It is the oldest university in Greece in the fields of Economics and Business, with roots tracing to the establishment of a Merchant Academy in Athens. Up to 1955 the school offered only one degree in the general area of economics and commerce. In 1955 the duration of study at the School increased from three to four years, with two cycles of study leading to two separate degrees: one in economics and the other in business administration. In 1984 the school was divided into three departments, namely the Department of Economics, the Department of Business Administration and the Department of Statistics and Business Informatics, the latter renamed to the Informatics Department in 1995. In 1989, the university expanded to six departments. From 1999 onwards, the university developed even further and nowadays it includes eight academic departments, offering eight undergraduate degrees, 28 Master's degrees and an equivalent number of doctoral programs.

Irina Yoncheva, PhD, Chartered MCIPD

Has a doctorate in psychology, holds a Master's degree in Business Psychology from Sofia University, Bulgaria, also has a Master's degree in Management from the Czech Republic from the University of Warwick, UK. Since 2018 she is a professional member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), UK, which is a recognition of the achieved professionalism on an international level. She is a part-time lecturer at Sofia University, teaching Psychology and Organisational Behaviour. Irina has numerous publications in the field of HR. Apart from her university work, she has more than 15 years of experience in management positions in the field of human resources management and development, nine of which in the outsourcing sector in international companies. She is a holder of various individual and team academic and business awards, including the best knowledge management system of BAUR. Since April 2019 she is the head of the HR department of Adecco Bulgaria.



The Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" is the first higher educational institution in Bulgaria. Its history is an embodiment and a continuation of centuries of cultural and educational tradition in this country dating back to 1888. The Sofia University is exemplary in terms of its scientific research and educational activities, both of them enjoying wide cultural and social significance. It forms the nucleus of the Bulgarian scientific and cultural elite and enlightens the Bulgarian national self-consciousness. The university plays an active role in preparing and conducting policies of national, regional and international significance. Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" has the mission to safeguard, enrich and carry through the centuries the spirit of knowledge and the aspirations of humanity to knowledge and truth. The University is the centre of development of science and the education of students in all domains of life; it also cultivates highly educated, nationally responsible personalities who will lead the Bulgarian nation to spiritual feats and social welfare.

Ludwikowska Katarzyna Ph.D.

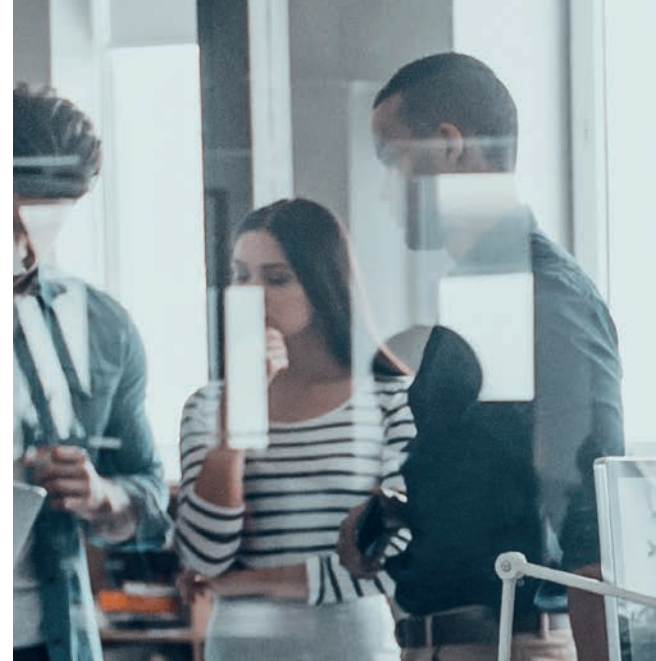
Research and didactic assistant professor at the Department of Labor Pedagogy and Andragogy of the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz.

The author of 30 scientific studies, published in monographs as well as scientific and trade journals. Actively participates in conferences and national and foreign seminars. An active career counsellor and a member of the Association of School and Vocational Counsellors of Poland. Social skills trainer, certified academic tutor. The technical editorial assistant in the scientific journal School-Profession-Work and the head of the Polish Profesiological Society branch in Bydgoszcz. Scientific supervisor of the Circle of Professional and Personal Advisers UKW. The author and co-author of numerous concepts of research and implementation projects. Her scientific interests oscillate around the issues of transformations of the contemporary labour market, academic education, categories of employability and professional suitability, educational and professional counselling and andragogical educational implications, especially in the perspective of competence development.



Kazimierz Wielki University, Poland

Kazimierz Wielki University is one of the youngest broad-profile universities in Poland, but it has a 50-year tradition that dates back to 1969. The Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz is a dynamically developing university in Poland, the largest in the city, and the second in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian region, both in terms of the number of professors, the number of courses offered and forms of education, as well as in terms of the number of students and graduates. Knowledge at the university is imparted by over 600 academic teachers. Among them there are about 160 professors. Much attention is paid to the development and potential of the staff, which is why employees participate in training, research projects, and cooperate with Polish and foreign units. The rich educational offer consists of almost 60 fields of study at three levels of education. The University also offers nearly 40 postgraduate study programs that broaden qualifications and grant new powers. In recent years, the university admits around 3,000 students to its first year. Currently, 9,000 students study here.



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