Press release

Labour: over 5.5 million hires expected by companies in 2023 (+6.4% compared to 2022)

Difficul to recruit almost a half of the personnel sought: the hardest to find are ITS Academy graduates and specialized workers

Rome, 25 November 2023 – Over 5.5 million hires expected by companies in 2023 with fixed-term of more than one month or permanent contracts; +330 thousand hires compared to 2022 (+6.4%) and almost +894 thousand hires compared to 2019 (+19.4%). Outlining this scenario is the Excelsior Information System annual bulletin, created by Unioncamere and Anpal[1], which elaborates the employment forecasts for the whole 2023 and published on the occasion of the initiatives promoted as part of the 32nd edition of Job&Orienta, the orientation, school, training and work fair held in Verona.

The positive trend in employment in the private sector this year, despite less favorable economic conditions in the second half of the year, is due in particular to the driving effect of the tourism sector, which exceeds the one million and 100 thousand expected hires (+160 thousand compared to 2022 and +291 thousand on 2019), trade, almost 749 thousand contracts (respectively, +77 thousand and +59 thousand), construction (+40 thousand and +177 thousand, for a total of 549 thousand hires) and manufacturing industries (with 957 thousand entries, +22 thousand on 2022 and +103 thousand on 2019).

The mismatch continues to increase for all profiles sought, standing at 45.1% of hires, up by 4.6 percentage points over 2022 and by 18.7 p.p. on 2019. In particular, the share of critical issues for specialized workers reaches 60.3%.

For more than 8 out of 10 hires, candidates must have at least a secondary qualification degree: over 800 thousand contracts for profiles with a tertiary education (degree or ITS Academy) and more than 3.5 million positions offered for professions with a technical qualification -professional and vocational education and training. 65.5% of ITS Academy graduates, 49% graduates and 46.9% of professional qualifications/diplomas are difficult to find.

Professions and mismatches

In 2023, highly specialized and technical management figures will slightly exceed 1 million planned hires overall, over a fifth of which are concentrated in sales and distribution technicians (over 100 thousand entries), in healthcare and rehabilitation professions (66 thousand) and in accountants (another 55 thousand). Clerical and skilled trade and service professions represent the largest group, with more than 2 million expected hires. The companies' requests are driven by profiles linked to the tourism and trade supply chain (waiters, shop assistants with over 400 thousand hires both, and cooks, with a further 237

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[1] The Excelsior observation field refers to companies with at least one employee in industry and services and to contracts lasting more than 30 days. The forecasts for 2023 are based on a sample of 275 thousand companies interviewed through monthly surveys carried out during 2023.

thousand entries). The macro-group of specialized workers and plant operators has a demand of almost 1.5 million units; drivers of heavy vehicles are in the lead in requests (241 thousand hirings), followed by bricklayers and electricians in civil constructions (respectively, 206 thousand and 97 thousand scheduled hires). Finally, among the unskilled professions (894 thousand requests in total) office/commercial cleaning services workers and packaging and warehouse workers cover approximately two thirds of the group's total contracts.

In 2023, together with the good performance in the labour demand of companies, the effects of demographic dynamics and generational turnover of personnel, the quantitative and qualitative misalignment between the skills formed in the education system and the real labour demand of the economic system, the problems connected to lack of growth in productivity and wages, the continuous management adaptation aimed at retaining the most strategic skills for company competitiveness are among the factors that have contributed to increase to just under 2.5 million units the number of professional figures that companies have had a hard time finding. The level reached exceeds that of last year by 386 thousand units and is more than double the value of 2019. Companies report a lack of candidates for almost 1.6 million of the most critical searches, while inadequate preparation is the cause of 685 thousand positions that companies are unable to fill when the need arises. The macro-group of specialized workers holds the record in terms of the impact of the difficulty of finding them on company searches: as many as 60.3% of the almost 836 thousand profiles are problematic to find.

Going into more detail about the most difficult to find figures, highly specialized and technical figures emerge, such as information engineers (with a criticality share of 80.7% out of just under 5 thousand scheduled entries), health professions of nursing and midwifery (80.3% out of 42 thousand company searches) and civil construction technicians (with 79.3% difficulty compared to over 8 thousand hires).

Qualifications and skills

In 2023, possession of a tertiary education level (degree or ITS Academy diploma) is required for 15% of candidates for employment, a secondary education diploma is the preferred level of education for two thirds of the income while only for the 18% of contracts companies consider compulsory schooling alone to be sufficient.

Among the most requested degrees are those in economics (almost 223 thousand planned hires), followed at a distance by those in teaching and training (117 thousand) and those in healthcare and paramedical areas (62 thousand). Among the secondary school diplomas, companies mainly require the administrative branch (481 thousand expected inflows) and the tourism-hotel sector (279 thousand); among professional qualifications/diplomas, the areas linked to catering (448 thousand), mechanics (269 thousand) and logistics (228 thousand) prevail in company searches.

As regards recruitment problems, the most relevant concern graduates of the ITS Academy courses, with a share equal to 65.5% of the profiles sought. However, the percentage reaches 74.3% in the case of technicians specialized in courses relating to the mechanical area and 68.8% in those of the ICT area, which are the two most requested ITS courses. The mismatch highlighted by companies is also particularly high for graduates in the healthcare and paramedical field (equal to 67.5% of planned earnings) and for professionally qualified mechanical specialists (57.9%).

In addition to the educational qualification, companies also evaluate the skills possessed by hiring candidates: digital skills are considered important especially for candidates with a tertiary education (69.2%), but this rises to 77.2%. in the case of economics degrees and 92.6% in the case of the ICT branch of the ITS Academy. This direction is also associated with the highest importance for skills relating to "4.0 technologies and artificial intelligence applications" (64.7%) and the use of mathematical and IT methods (70.8%).

The demand for green skills is spread evenly across the different training levels (around 43% of hires), but it exceeds 50% in the case of the tourism-hotel diploma.

Among the transversal skills, those most commonly requested are flexibility and the ability to work in team, also in this case with indications of high importance more frequent for tertiary qualifications than for secondary ones.

The demand for young workers from companies

Over 1.6 million contracts that companies plan to activate in 2023 are intended for young people up to 29 years of age, 30% of total inflows. The sectors most oriented towards younger people are retail trade, with 45% of aimed at the youth component, corresponding to approximately 218 thousand entries, and IT and telecommunications services with 43%, equal to 61 thousand hirings of under 30s, but in absolute terms it is tourist services that are mainly looking for younger staff, with 425 thousand hirings planned (37% of the total).

The difficulty of finding in the case of searches for young people concerns 45.4% of the planned income. Among the figures under 30 that companies have the most difficulty finding are plumbers (77.2% of whom are difficult to find), pharmacists (75%), electricians in civil construction (71.8%) and programmer technicians (71.4%).
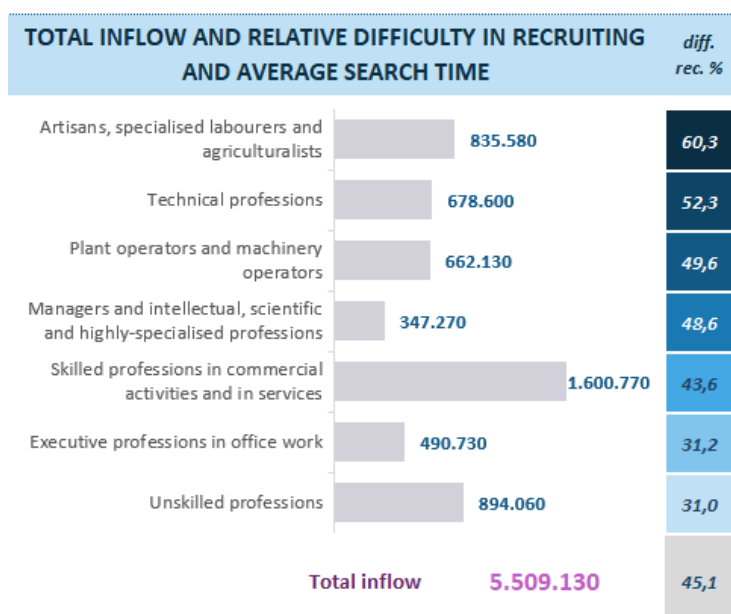
The contracts

In 2023, permanent contracts planned by companies returned to exceeding 1 million units - this had not happened since 2019 - growing on an annual basis by 11.5% (+5.1 p.p. compared to the average). Fixed-term and seasonal contracts reached almost 3 million, with an increase of 9.7% (+3.4 p.p. compared to the average). Apprenticeships are also increasing (+9.2%), exceeding the 300 thousand scheduled contracts and other employee contracts (+14.5% for 193 thousand entries). On the other hand, the demand for temporary staff decreases (-5.7% with 528 thousand scheduled hires) and for occasional and VAT collaboration contracts (-17.8%, for 299 thousand total entries).
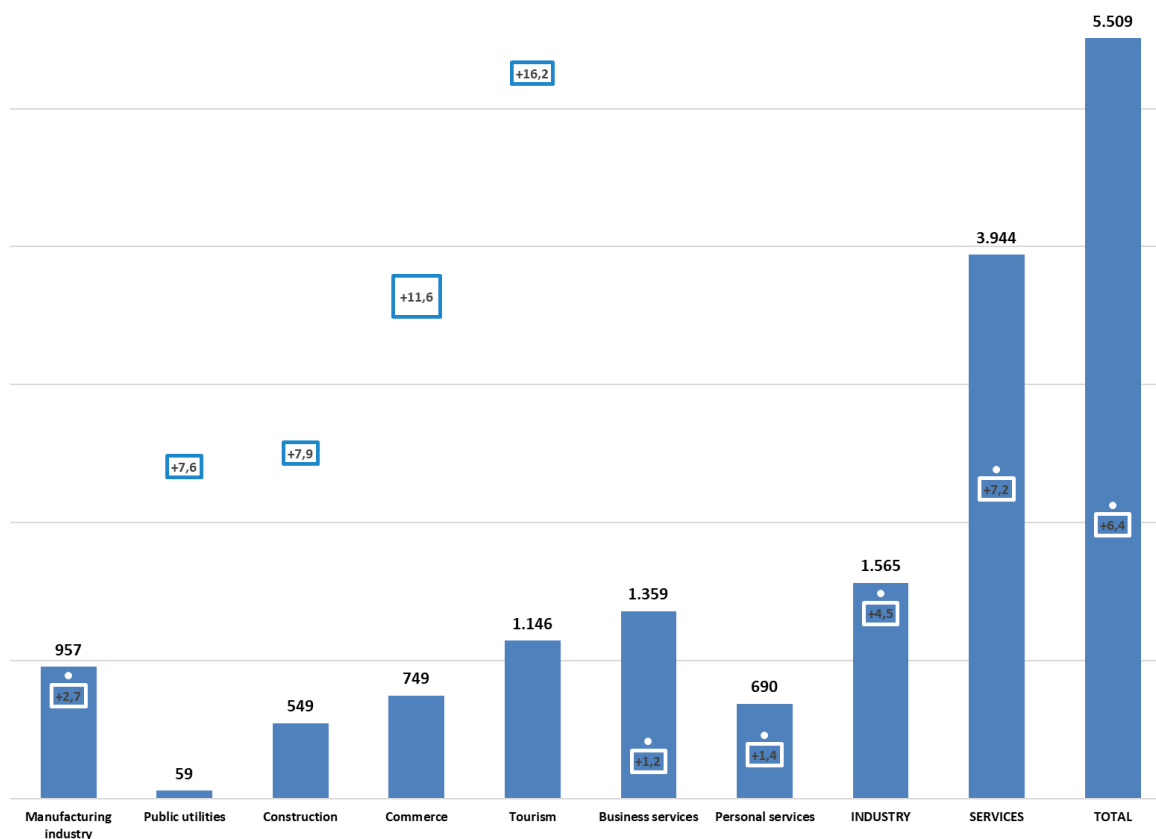
The macro-territorial areas

The planned inflows exceeds 1.6 million units in the regions of the North West, followed by the regions of the South and Islands with just under 1.5 million hirings and those of the North East, 1.3 million. For all these macro-divisions the increase in proposed contracts is around +5%. Only the Central regions show a trend higher than the average growth (+11.0%), exceeding 1.1 million hirings, thanks above all to the contribution of tourism. The most significant difficulties in recruiting are recorded in the North East area (50.4%). The critical issues emerging in the North West are close to the average value (at 45.9%), while the data are more contained for the Center (43.2%) and for the South and Islands (40.9%). However, all areas share increasing difficulties compared to 2022.

Figure 1 – Expected inflows by companies in 2023 by professional macro-group and the relative difficulty of recruiting (absolute values and %)
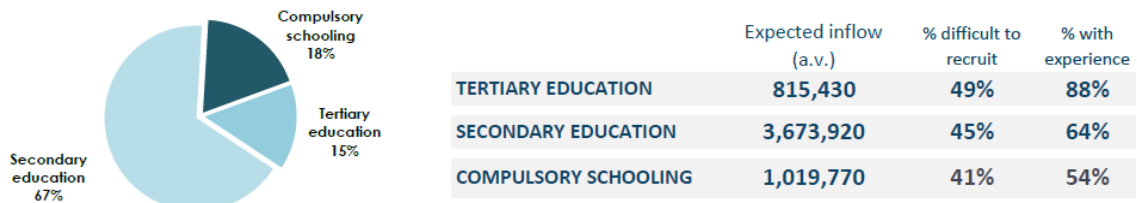
TOTAL INFLOW AND RELATIVE DIFFICULTY IN RECRUITING AND AVERAGE SEARCH TIME		diff. rec. %
Artisans, specialised labourers and agriculturalists	835.580	60,3
Technical professions	678.600	52,3
Plant operators and machinery operators	662.130	49,6
Managers and intellectual, scientific and highly-specialised professions	347.270	48,6
Skilled professions in commercial activities and in services	1.600.770	43,6
Executive professions in office work	490.730	31,2
Unskilled professions	894.060	31,0
Total inflow	**5.509.130**	45,1

Source: Unioncamere - ANPAL, Excelsior Information System, 2023

Figure 2 – Expected inflows by companies in 2023 by economic macro-sector (absolute values in thousands and % change on 2022)

Sector	Value	% change
Manufacturing industry	957	+2,7
Public utilities	59	+7,6
Construction	549	+7,9
Commerce	749	+11,6
Tourism	1.146	+16,2
Business services	1.359	+1,2
Personal services	690	+1,4
INDUSTRY	1.565	+4,5
SERVICES	3.944	+7,2
TOTAL	5.509	+6,4

Source: Unioncamere - ANPAL, Excelsior Information System, 2023

Figure 3 – Expected inflows by companies in 2023 by level of education and the relative difficulty of recruiting (absolute values and %)

	Expected inflow (a.v.)	% difficult to recruit	% with experience
TERTIARY EDUCATION	815,430	49%	88%
SECONDARY EDUCATION	3,673,920	45%	64%
COMPULSORY SCHOOLING	1,019,770	41%	54%

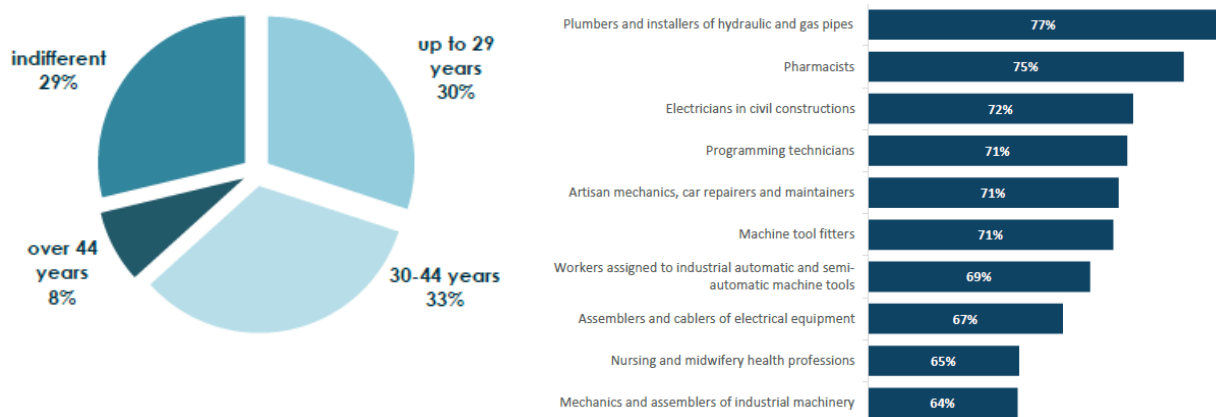*Source: Unioncamere - ANPAL, Excelsior Information System, 2023*

Figure 4 – The skills considered very important* by companies in 2023 by education level (% values)

	Soft				Green	Technological				Communicative	
	Work in a group	Problem solving	Work autonomously	Flexibility and adaptability	Energy saving and environmental sustainability	Use mathematical and computer methods and languages	Use digital skills	Use "4.0" technologies to innovate processes	Communicate company information in Italian	Communicate company information in foreign languages
TERTIARY EDUCATION	81%	79%	67%	84%	43%	44%	69%	30%	58%	37%
SECONDARY EDUCATION	55%	40%	42%	66%	43%	13%	19%	11%	35%	14%
COMPULSORY SCHOOLING	37%	21%	28%	53%	38%	5%	2%	5%	19%	3%

* Companies give each skill a score from 0 (skill not required) to 4 (skill of maximum importance); "very important" skills are those to which companies give a score of 3 or 4.
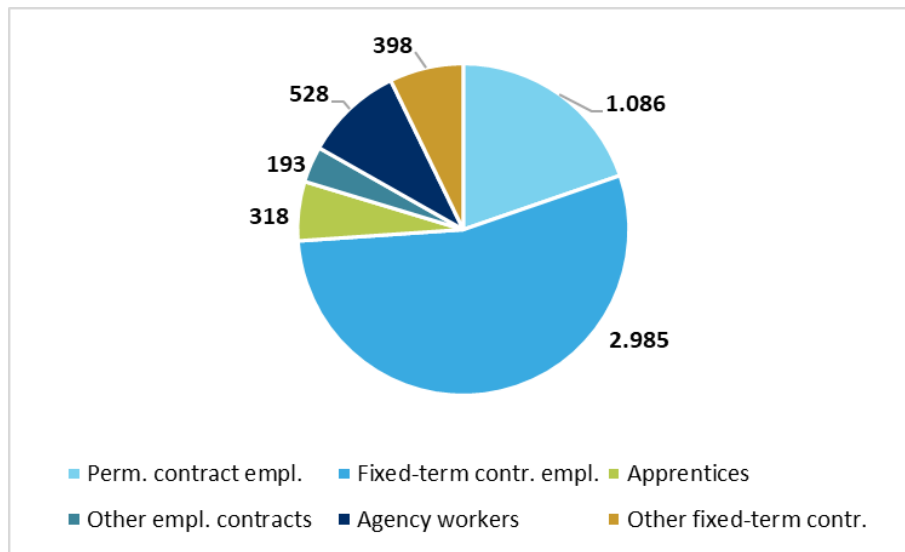*Source: Unioncamere - ANPAL, Excelsior Information System, 2023*

Figure 5 – Expected inflows of young people (up to 29 years old) planned by companies in 2023 and the most difficult professions to find (% values)
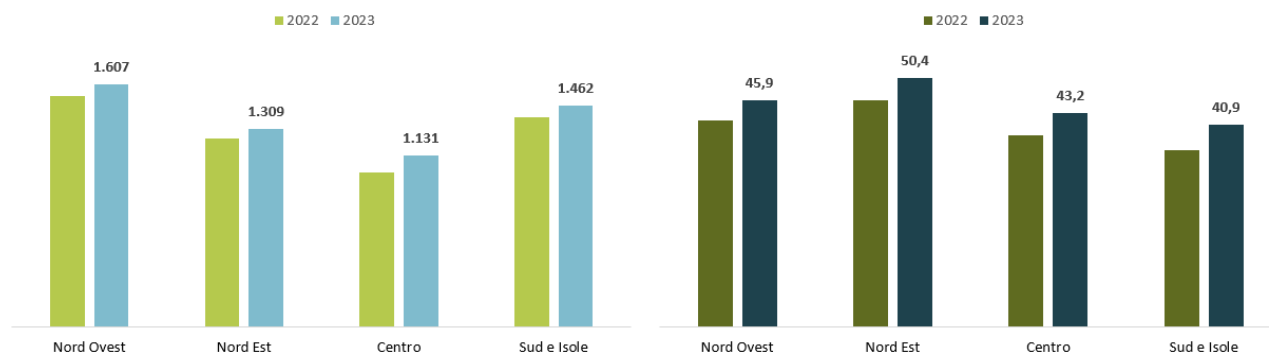

Source: Unioncamere - ANPAL, Excelsior Information System, 2023

Figure 6 – Expected inflows by companies in 2023 according to the type of contract (absolute values in thousands)

- Perm. contract empl.
- Fixed-term contr. empl.
- Apprentices
- Other empl. contracts
- Agency workers
- Other fixed-term contr.

1.086 · 2.985 · 398 · 528 · 193 · 318

Source: Unioncamere - ANPAL, Excelsior Information System, 2023

Figure 7 – Expected inflows by companies in 2023 by macro-area and the relative difficulty of recruiting (absolute values in thousands and %)

2022 · 2023

Nord Ovest 1.607 · Nord Est 1.309 · Centro 1.131 · Sud e Isole 1.462

Nord Ovest 45,9 · Nord Est 50,4 · Centro 43,2 · Sud e Isole 40,9

Source: Unioncamere - ANPAL, Excelsior Information System, 2023