

# BARMETAL: Digitalization, Automatization and Decarbonization: Opportunity for strengthening collective bargaining in the metal sector (101052331) Country Factsheet – ROMANIA

## National & sectoral labour market

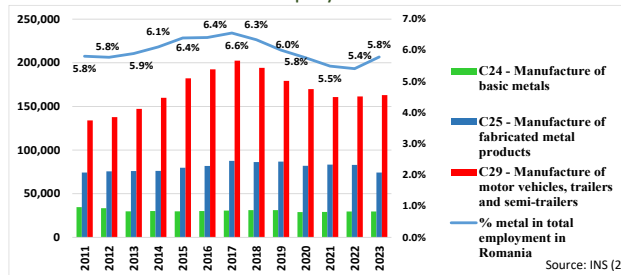
The active population in Romania is 5.13 million workers (25.85 % of the total population) (INS, 2023), while 5.7 million Romanians work abroad (MAE, 2022).

The Romanian labour market has experienced significant transformations in response to macroeconomic trends and specific challenges being characterized by: significant labour and skills deficit, a notable mismatch between the supply and demand for skills, rapid wage growth, increase of flexible work, slow pace of digitalization, low labour productivity.

In 2023, the metal sector employed 5.8 % of the total labour force in Romania (INS, 2023) (see Table 1).

Manufacturing of motor vehicles employs 3.19 % of the total labour force (163,000 workers). Automotive manufacturing contributes 14% to Romania’s GDP, and 26% to Romania’s exports.

Table 1. Evolution of number of employees in the metal sector



## Key challenges in the metal sector

- The closure of important industrial facilities had a negative impact on local communities and caused significant social and economic tensions.
- The reconfiguration of worldwide supply chains, as evidenced by recent geopolitical shifts, heightened reliance on external suppliers for raw materials and metallurgical products, and the imperative to secure the capacity to furnish critical raw materials, constitutes additional significant challenges.
- The increased demand for innovative composite materials challenges the traditional metal industry.

## Role of social partners in addressing D-A-D

- The role of social partners in addressing D-A-D is limited due to a severely deteriorating situation of social dialogue, since 2000.
- Bargaining coverage (% of employees with the right to bargain) decreased from 100% in 2000 to 15% in 2021. Trade union density was 21.4%, and employer organizations' density was estimated at 60% (in 2021) (OECD & AIAS, 2021).
- The New Social Dialogue Act (# 367/25.12.2022) is expected to boost social dialogue in Romania. It was adopted in the context of the EU directive on minimum wages and the intense promotion of collective bargaining on sectorial level at EU level.

## D-A-D in workplace

- Digitalization highly accelerated during the pandemic.
- The automation degree of industrial production is reduced in Romania. Noteworthy, the majority of robots (called ‘cobots’ – collaborative robotic arms) are concentrated in the automotive industry.
- Automation compensates for: the increase in wages in the metal sector, for the relative lack of qualified personnel and the need to assimilate products with high added value into production.

## Bargaining efforts in companies

- Transformative processes (D-A-D) have not been the subject of collective bargaining so far and have not had an impact on the contractual dimension.
- D-A-D implementation is seen as a business decision by trade unions, which so far has not negatively affected employment. To the opposite, D-A-D triggered positive effects at workplace (e.g. training that increased workers’ competences and qualifications, better working conditions, increased ease of work, cost & time optimization, improved access to data).

## Key recommendations

Considering the limited role of social partners in general, and in addressing D-A-D in particular, it is recommended to raise awareness among all social actors for actively engaging in social dialogue, to reassess traditional industrial relations in the new contexts of D-A-D, to formulate political and legislative measures for social protection, to improve workforce’s skills required by D-A-D transformative processes.

### References:

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 MAE (Ministerul Afacerilor Externe). Date statistice cu privire la cetățenii români cu domiciliul sau reședința în străinătate, la sfârșitul anului 2021, available at: [https://diaspora.gov.ro/images/content/resurse/Date\\_statistice\\_-\\_M.A.E.\\_2021.pdf](https://diaspora.gov.ro/images/content/resurse/Date_statistice_-_M.A.E._2021.pdf)  
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