

THE HUNGARIAN LABOUR MARKET
REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
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FOREWORD BY THE EDITORS

The goal of our labour market yearbooks is to review the main developments in the Hungarian labour market and to give an in-depth analysis of key issues. The subsequent chapters present “stylised facts” and recent research results together with their shortcomings. Our further intention is to guide readers in finding other relevant publications and reliable statistical sources. The contributions related to the selected themes: wages and incomes support to the jobless give analyses on institutions, rules and market forces that shape wages, or unemployment benefits and look at resulting costs and revenue changes that have occurred over a decade. Last but not least we consider some open questions, and review problems of interpretation and methodology.

The variety of subjects precludes a work with a uniform theoretical framework organised around one (or even several) contentious issues. However, if it fails to offer competing attempts to explain the various problems or the struggling efforts to interpret facts – in other words, if it does not help in figuring out what to do with the data presented – that is because of shortcomings in Hungarian research itself. Often there are only one or two researchers working on a subject area, and empirical investigations have sometimes had to do without the control of theory, while theoretical analyses have sometimes been developed in the absence of a fact-based hinterland.

We do not intend to offer any economic or social policy recommendations but would instead prefer to promote dialogue between science and policy, by re-wording research findings in a manner that is comprehensible to a broader audience – and by underlining the areas still to be researched.

The closing chapter presenting selected statistical data gives comprehensive information on the main economic developments, demographic trends, labour market participation, employment and unemployment, inactivity, wages, education, labour demand and supply, spatial disparities, migration, commuting, labour relations, together with some international comparisons. Data series are presented on wage and income differentials as well as on the territorial dimension of labour market developments at lower levels of governments and spatial units.