


# Cyprus: Mismatch priority occupations

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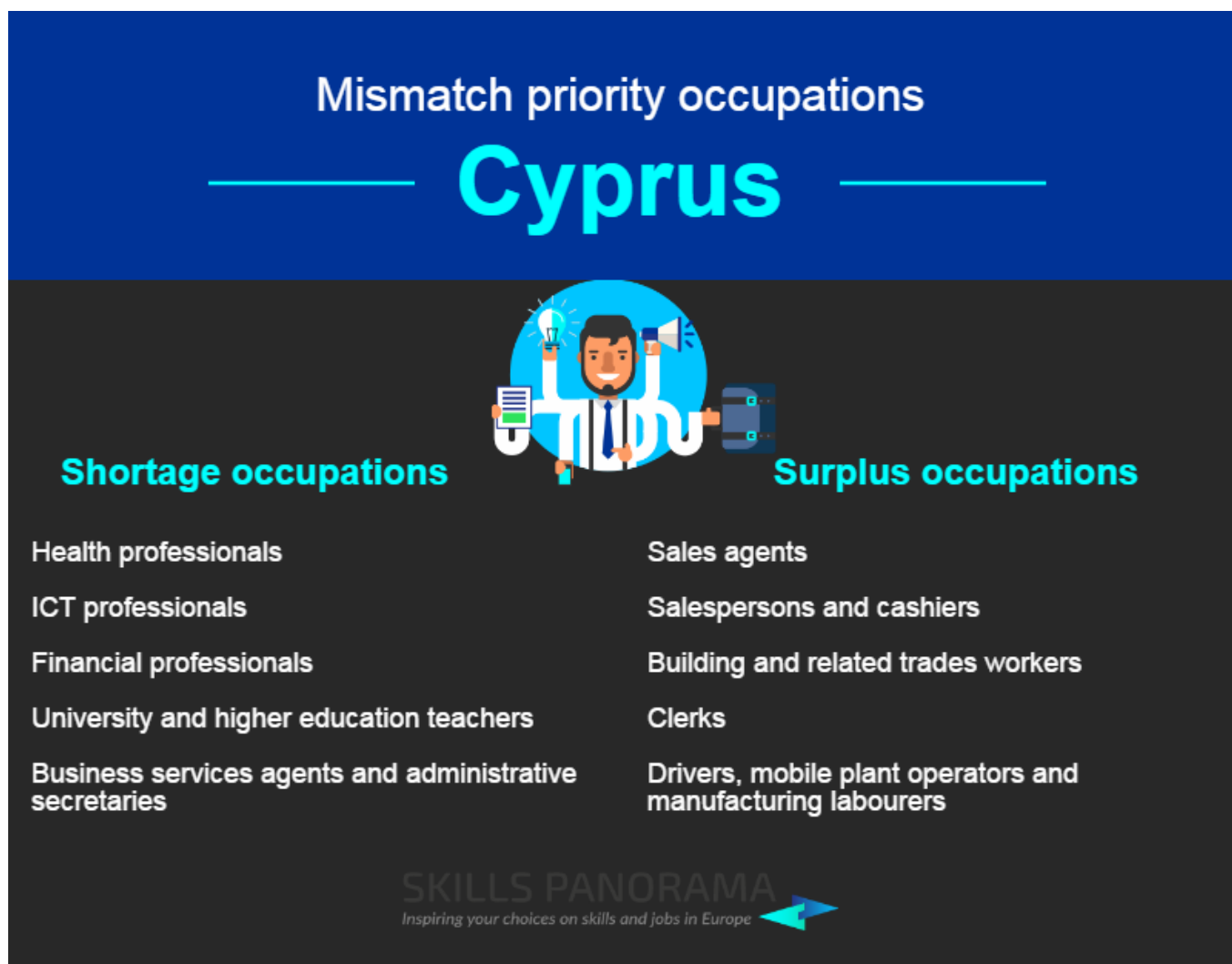
## Summary

*Health professionals belong to high shortage occupations for Cyprus.*

Looking at past, current and future trends (3-4 years), a number of occupations have been identified as **mismatch priority occupations for Cyprus**, i.e. they are either in shortage or surplus. **Shortage occupation**: an occupation that is in short supply of workers, and for which the employers typically face difficulties finding a suitable candidate. **Surplus occupation**: an occupation for which there are plenty of suitable workers available but low demand. The employers have no problems filling such posts.

The list below is based on an assessment of the labour market of **Cyprus**. The occupations presented

are not given any rank. All of them present high mismatch.



## Shortage Occupations

### Health professionals <sup>[1]</sup>

The health sector is one of the priority areas that is expected to have an increase in skill demand and has been identified as such through the Smart Specialization Strategy <sup>[2]</sup> for Cyprus (S3CY) 2014-2020. The expected shortages in this occupation are a result of both **increased demand and limited supply**. The **ageing population** in Cyprus is a factor which is expected to increase the demand for health care services. According to Eurostat, the old-age dependency ratio <sup>[3]</sup> is projected to increase substantially from 19% in 2013 to 42% in 2080. Additionally, the implementation of the National Health System (NHS) in Cyprus, which will upgrade the services provided and increase the health coverage of the population, will also increase the need for highly trained health professionals. The NHS is expected to be implemented and to be fully in place in 2018 <sup>[4]</sup>. With the exception of nursing, which was provided by the Cyprus University of Technology, the subjects of medical doctors and other health professionals were until recently not available in public and private universities in Cyprus. Three universities (one public and two private ones) have established their Medical Schools from 2011 onwards, a consequence of the late

two private ones) have established their medical schools from 2011 onwards, a consequence of the **late establishment of universities in Cyprus** [5]. Students wishing to become Medical doctors and other Health professionals had to study in abroad, leading some of them to continue **working abroad** after the completion of their studies [6], a factor contributing to shortages. The increase in total employment demand (including both expansion and replacement demand) in the health sector is expected to be around 4% per year until 2024, which is above the annual percentage increase of 3% for total employment demand for the whole economy. [7]

In the S3CY 2014-2020, four areas have been identified for the health sector as priorities: promotion of e-health; clinical and genetic investigation and treatment of diseases; development of safe and effective pharmaceuticals; and promotion of medical tourism. Public and private universities have already established or are in the process of establishing Medical Schools. The public University of Cyprus [8] admitted the first students in September 2013. The undergraduate programme is a 6-year programme in Greek and hospitals are connected to it. The private University of Nicosia [9] was the first to offer medical programmes for both graduates and school-leavers. The 6-year Undergraduate Entry Medical Degree (started in October 2014) and the 4-Year Graduate Entry Bachelor in Medicine and Bachelor in Surgery (established in 2011 in cooperation with St. George's University of London) are provided in English. The private European University Cyprus [10] established its School of Medicine in 2013. Students have access to private and state-run hospitals throughout Cyprus. Teaching is conducted in English, with a minimum work load of 360 ECTS of the education and training required to complete the Bachelor of Medicine Degree over 6 years.

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## ICT professionals [11]

The Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) is one of the priority areas that is expected to have an increase in demand and which has been identified through the Smart Specialization Strategy for Cyprus 2014-2020. At the same time, the **supply is relatively limited** (e.g. there is a need to attract young people into ICT education) while it has also been identified that ICT professionals do not have the necessary skills needed by enterprises. The Cyprus Productivity Centre conducted a Gap Assessment Survey [12] for ICT professionals in 2015 which identified a **gap in university curricula** and education provided. The curricula were deemed inadequate in areas such as Project Management, Testing and Quality Assurance and Assessment of Information Security Risk. The findings of the survey also showed that ICT professionals do not have adequate development in terms of acquiring professional ICT qualifications. ICT companies that participated in the survey identified a **lack of necessary skills** for the integration of graduates into the labour market, such as the use of English, effective communication, technical presentations, ability to communicate effectively with customers, ability to find solutions to real problems of companies, ability to contribute to the development of innovative ideas, and ability to manage real risks and crises. The increase in total (employment) demand (including both expansion and replacement demand) in this occupational group is expected to be around 3% per year until 2024 according to the latest set of the HRDA forecasts.

In the ICT sector, the areas identified by the Smart Specialization Strategy for Cyprus 2014-2020 as

priorities, include e-tourism and culture, e-learning, e-health and quality of life, promotion of ecological technologies, and e-governance, remote working and entrepreneurship. Additional areas include the development of software in specific areas, enhancement of networks, promotion of wireless and satellite communication, and using high capacity means of transmitting such as fibre optics and photonic networks. The Lifelong Learning (LLL) strategy for 2014-2020 promotes the acquisition of transversal skills relevant to entrepreneurship, technologies/digital competences and languages, through the development of new curricula. The new competence-based national curriculum that is being developed for Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and will be introduced as of the school year 2016-17 is oriented towards learning outcomes and places more emphasis on key competences, including digital competences. Moreover, the National Coalition for Digital Jobs has been established, and composed of relevant stakeholders, including ICT companies, education and training providers, public authorities and the digital champion <sup>[13]</sup>. Moreover, three working groups have been formed (education and training, certification and awareness) in order to formulate and implement an Action Plan and a roadmap, with the aim to attract young people into ICT education and increase the supply of ICT practitioners. The Action Plan has been approved by the Council of Ministers on 18 January 2016. A website <sup>[14]</sup> has been developed and a publicity event took place on 19 November 2015, under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Cyprus. Secondary Technical and Vocational Education offers the specialisation of Computer Engineering. The subject of CISCO-CCNA Networks (CISCO Certified Network Associate), which is certified by the CISCO Academy and leads to the acquisition of a vocational qualification of network technician, was introduced during the school year 2003-2004. The CCNA Routing and Switching curriculum builds the skills students need to be employed and succeed in jobs related to networking computers and devices. Career pathways include "network technician", "support engineer", "network administrator", "network designer", "network engineer" etc.

## Financial professionals <sup>[15]</sup>

The facilitation of strategic investments has been a priority of the Cyprus government, as an important tool to help the economy to move to a sustainable growth path. The expected gradual economic recovery together with increased investments, due to the recent developments in the energy field, will lead to an **increased demand** for this occupational group. There is no data available, however, for the supply of graduates as many of them graduate from universities abroad and may remain there to work. According to the latest set of HRDA forecasts, during the period 2014-2024, the "Legal and accounting sector" is expected to exhibit one of the highest total employment demand rates (including both expansion and replacement demand) (more than 4.5% per year compared to approximately 3% per year for the total economy). "Finance professionals" and "Financial and mathematical associate professionals" account for about half of all jobs in this sector. Additionally, "Accountants" and "Accounting associate professionals" are expected to have the highest employment demand among high level occupations (occupations requiring post-secondary or tertiary level education) during the same period.

Public and private universities offer a wide range of study programmes for financial professionals. They provide students with appropriate academic qualifications that are also focused on the needs of the industry in order to offer greater employability. The programmes' curricula are developed following the national and international economic situation and trends as well as the needs of the society overall. In

general, employers are not formally involved in the design of curricula. The universities, however, may adapt the study programmes to labour market needs and may get the views of employers in specific cases <sup>[16]</sup>. The development of Cyprus as a business centre is directly linked to the various programmes especially in the field of finance, business and management.

### University and higher education teachers <sup>[17]</sup>

The continuous expansion of tertiary education in Cyprus, through the establishment of more schools, will lead to **increased demand** for related occupations. On the other hand, the supply is relatively limited as many highly-qualified university and higher education teachers prefer to stay and work abroad, although data is not available to measure the extent of this phenomenon. The tendency of Cypriot Secondary education graduates for **continuing their studies** in Tertiary Education remains high. More specifically around three out of four Secondary Education graduates continue their studies, mainly to Tertiary Education, either in Cyprus or abroad<sup>[18]</sup>. The recent economic crisis that affected Cyprus and the deterioration of the financial situation of a lot of households could affect adversely the tendency of Cypriots to continue onto Tertiary Education abroad and increase demand for Tertiary Education in Cyprus. The **increase in total demand** (including both expansion and replacement demand) in this occupational group is expected to be around 5% per year until 2024 according to the latest set of the HRDA forecasts.

Public and private universities offer attractive employment packages, including relatively high wages to teaching staff in order to attract and recruit University teachers. Additionally, they utilise “visiting faculty” (that is university teachers from abroad who come and deliver specific subjects at some time during the school year) to meet their needs and offer a higher quality of education.

### Business services agents and administrative secretaries <sup>[19]</sup>

The government policy for the development of Cyprus as a business centre and development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem that will contribute to the country’s economic growth is expected to lead to an **increased demand** for this occupational group. At the same time, **supply is high** (since public and private universities and colleges offer a wide range of study programmes for Business services agents and administrative secretaries), **but it does not match, in quantity and quality, the expected demand**. A substantial number of persons in this occupational group is employed in economic sectors which are forecasted to show high total employment demand rates (including both expansion and replacement demand) during the period 2014-2024, according to the latest set of the HRDA forecasts. More specifically, about one third of “Business services agents” are employed in Real estate activities which are expected to exhibit very high employment demand rate (around 7% per year compared to approximately 3% per year for the total economy). Moreover, one out of four “Administrative and specialised secretaries” is employed in Legal and accounting activities and in Health services which are also expected to show high rates of employment demand (approximately 5% and 4% per year respectively). The employment demand rates for “Business services agents” and “Administrative and specialised secretaries” are forecasted to be around 6% and approximately 3% respectively while at the same time these occupations will exhibit high employment demand during the period 2014-2024.

The programmes for business services agents and administrative secretaries aim to provide students with **appropriate academic qualifications** that are also focused to the **needs of the industry** in order to offer greater employability for the graduates. The curricula are developed following the national and international economic situation and trends as well as the needs of society overall. The development of Cyprus as a business centre is directly linked to the various programmes especially in the field of finance, business and management. The government has proceeded with the formulation of a national policy statement and a comprehensive action plan, for the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. The policy statement aims to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem that will contribute to the country's economic growth, by providing the proper conditions for the successful development of business initiatives, ensuring the creation of added value for the whole economy. The intention of the government is to effectively contribute to the whole effort by facilitating, supporting, complementing and linking the initiatives already undertaken in this direction by the private sector and the enterprises themselves.

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## Surplus Occupations

Surpluses have been identified for the following occupations: sales agents, salespersons and cashiers [20], building and related trades workers [21], clerks [22], drivers, mobile plant operators and manufacturing labourers [23]. As a result of the **economic crisis**, for the first time in Cyprus since 1974, employment decreased significantly by approx. 3% in 2012, approx. 5% in 2013 and approx. 1% in 2014 [24]. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in unemployment rate that was more acute in manufacturing, construction and retail trade. Additionally, it led to **downsizing of the public administration and financial sectors**. The majority of persons in the aforementioned occupational groups were employed in these sectors [25], thus raising supply well above demand.

Measures have been introduced to tackle the huge increase in unemployment in Cyprus as a consequence of the recent economic crisis. Unemployment is particularly high among young people and people employed in economic sectors, which were particularly affected. Among these measures is the implementation of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment (NAP), which includes the Youth Guarantee Initiative, the promotion of labour market activation policies and the development of a new growth strategy for Cyprus. The NAP was approved by the Council of Ministers at the end of 2014, aiming at addressing the high level of unemployment in Cyprus, during the years 2015-2017. The NAP calls for the deployment of a strategy that combines measures targeting young individuals aged 15-29 that face multiple barriers to labour market integration and are exposed to longer unemployment spells. The NAP has a total budget of €47.2m financed mostly from the European Social Fund (€29.2m), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) (€11.6m) but also from the ERDF (€3.1m) and national funds (€3.3m). It encompasses a Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) to which funds of €37.6m have been allocated. The YGIP includes measures for an early intervention in the form of a Youth Guarantee (YG) to prevent school leavers and newly unemployed individuals in the younger cohort (ages 15-24) from falling into long-term unemployment and inactivity traps.

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## Note on the methodology

The list has been compiled by Cedefop in the first half of 2016 combining quantitative and qualitative methods. In particular, a list of mismatch occupations was formulated following quantitative analysis of labour market indicators. Country experts were then asked to build on and scrutinise this list. Their expert assessment and knowledge of the country's labour market has provided rich insights about the reasons behind the skills shortages or surpluses at occupational level. These are also accompanied by measures and policies that aim to tackle such mismatches. Country's stakeholders have also been included in validating the final list of occupations.

Find here more [data](#) and [information](#) about Cyprus.

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## References

[1] ISCO 08: 221 Medical doctors; 222 Nursing and midwifery professionals; 226 Other health professionals

[2] [Smart Specialisation Strategy for Cyprus](#) [accessed 05.02.2016] Read more: [www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/6966F1D9F8511C00C2257C7D0048701E/\\$file/S3CY\\_FINAL%20corrections%2031032015.pdf](http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/6966F1D9F8511C00C2257C7D0048701E/$file/S3CY_FINAL%20corrections%2031032015.pdf)

[3] The number of persons aged 65 and over expressed as a percentage of the number of persons aged between 15 and 64.

[4] These are extracts from the last Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Republic of Cyprus and the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. See more at [European Stability Mechanism](#) <http://www.esm.europa.eu/assistance/cyprus/>. However, it is noted that as from March 2016, the Cyprus government, with the support of Eurogroup, took the decision to exit the macroeconomic adjustment programme.

[5] The first public university, the University of Cyprus was established in 1989 and received the first undergraduate students in 1992. The Open University of Cyprus (OUC) was legally established in 2002. The Cyprus University of Technology was established in 2003 and received its first students in 2007. Final approval for the operation of the five private universities (European University Cyprus, Frederick University, University of Nicosia, Neapolis University and University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus - UCLan Cyprus) was granted in 2012.

[6] There are no actual data on the number of Medical doctors and other health professionals, who after completing their studies in universities abroad, remained and are working abroad.

[7] [Employment forecasts in the Cyprus Economy 2014-2024](#), [accessed 05.02.2016] Read more: [www.anad.org.cy/easyconsole.cfm/page/project/p\\_id/221](http://www.anad.org.cy/easyconsole.cfm/page/project/p_id/221)

[8] Medical School University of Cyprus [accessed 16.03.2016] Read more: [www.ucy.ac.cy/medical/en/](http://www.ucy.ac.cy/medical/en/)

[9] Medical School University of Nicosia [accessed 16.03.2016] Read more: [www.unic.ac.cy/schools-programmes/medical-school](http://www.unic.ac.cy/schools-programmes/medical-school)

[10] School of Medicine European University Cyprus [accessed 16.03.2016] Read more: [www.euc.ac.cy/en/schools--departments/school-of-medicine](http://www.euc.ac.cy/en/schools--departments/school-of-medicine)

[11] ISCO 08: 133 Information and communications technology service managers; 251 Software and application developers and analysts; 252 Database and network professionals; 351 Information and communications technology operations and user support technicians

[12] The study is in Greek and published on the [National Coalition for Digital Jobs website](http://www.nationalcoalitionfordigitaljobs.gov.cy) Read more: [www.digitaljobs.cyprus-digitalchampion.gov.cy/el/file/sLLfLxujPWmplLfzaoxC7g==/](http://www.digitaljobs.cyprus-digitalchampion.gov.cy/el/file/sLLfLxujPWmplLfzaoxC7g==/)

[13] Digital Champions are ambassadors for the Digital Agenda, appointed by their Members States to help them and the [European Commission](http://www.europeancommission.eu) promote the benefits of an inclusive digital society. Read more: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Commission](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Commission) They also advise the European Commission on the implementation of the [Digital Agenda for Europe](http://www.digitalchampion.gov.cy). Read more: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_Agenda\\_for\\_Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_Agenda_for_Europe) In Cyprus, the Digital Champion is Dr Stelios Himonas, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism. He was appointed by the Council of Ministers in October 2012.

[14] [Cyprus Digital Champion](http://www.digitalchampion.gov.cy) [accessed 16.03.2016] Read more: [www.digitaljobs.cyprus-digitalchampion.gov.cy/](http://www.digitaljobs.cyprus-digitalchampion.gov.cy/)

[15] ISCO 08: 241 Finance professionals; 331 Financial and mathematical associate professionals

[16] The University of Cyprus did this in the case of study programmes for the natural gas sector and similarly the Cyprus University of Technology in the case of study programmes for the pharmaceutical sector.

[17] ISCO 08: 231 University and higher education teachers

[18] According to the Statistics of Education 2012/2013 of the Statistical Service of Cyprus, the percentage of graduates of upper secondary level who pursue further studies in Cyprus and abroad for 2010/2011 was 78% (latest available).

[19] ISCO 08: 333 Business services agents; 334 Administrative and specialised secretaries

[20] ISCO 08: 332 Sales and purchasing agents and brokers; 522 Shop salespersons ; 523 Cashiers and ticket clerks

[21] ISCO 08: 711 Building frame and related trades workers; 712 Building finishers and related trades workers; 713 Painters, building structure cleaners and related trades workers



workers, 715 Painters, building structure cleaners and related trades workers

[22] ISCO 08: 411 General office clerks; 412 Secretaries (general); 432 Material-recording and transport clerks

[23] ISCO 08: 832 Car, van and motorcycle drivers; 834 Mobile plant operators; 932 Manufacturing labourers

[24] According to Labour Force Survey data from the Statistical Service of Cyprus.

[25] According to Labour Force Survey data from the Statistical Service of Cyprus, for 2015 (three quarters) 59% of persons in these occupations were employed in the Manufacturing, Construction and Retail trade sectors.

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