

**Key results**

Employment rates of people aged 55-64 have improved sharply since the start of the century in most OECD countries, from 43.8% in 2000 to 61.4% in 2020 on average, although the COVID-19 crisis has interrupted this trend (Figure 6.10). By comparison, the employment rate among those aged 25 to 54 only increased by 3 percentage points since 2000. On average, 55-64 year-olds at all levels of educational attainment have experienced a marked increase in employment, with those with a medium level of education doing slightly better on average than those with low or high levels of education.

Countries with higher normal retirement ages tend to have higher employer rates for older workers, but there are a few exceptions (Figure 6.11). Iceland and Norway have retirement ages of 67 years for both men and women and also have among the highest employment rates for those age 60 to 64, at 75% and 65%, respectively, well above the OECD average of 51%.

Except for Colombia, Costa Rica and Korea where informality in the labour market is high or the pension system has not yet matured, countries with low normal retirement ages tend to have low employment rates among people aged between 60 and 64 years. This is the case in particular in Austria, Greece, Luxembourg, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia where the current normal retirement age (averaged across genders) is at 62.5 years or lower. Among countries with a high retirement age, the employment rate among older workers is low in Italy.

Employment rates of people aged between 55 and 64 have improved in almost all OECD countries since 2000, both among the 55-59 and 60-64 age groups (Figure 6.12). On average, they have increased by 17.0 percentage points for those aged 55 to 59 and by 18.8 percentage points for those aged 60 to 64, reaching 71.9% and 50.7% in 2020, respectively. By comparison, the employment rate in the 25-to-54 age group only increased, on average, from 76.5% in 2000 to 79.5% in 2020. The greatest increases for the 55-to-59 age group

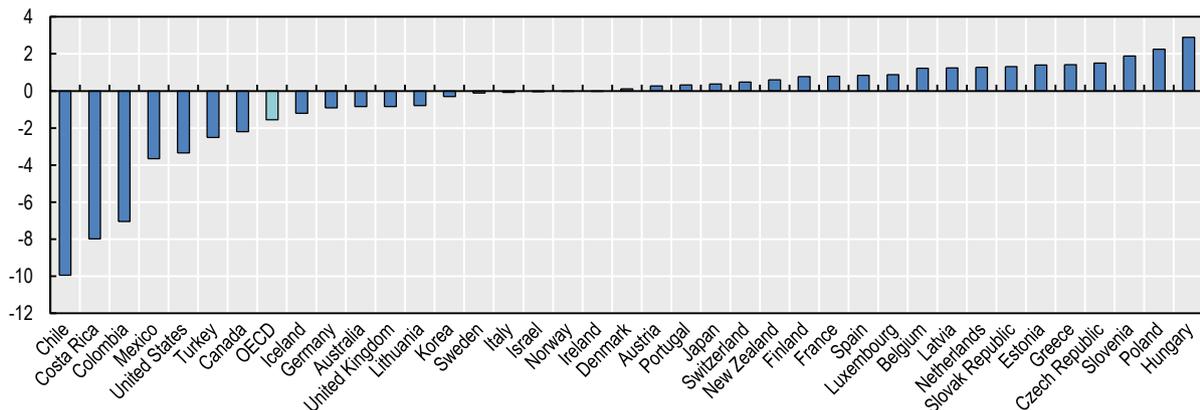
occurred in Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, all of which increased by over 40 percentage points between 2000 and 2020. For the 60-to-64 age group Germany and the Netherlands also increased by over 40 percentage points. Conversely, in Iceland and Turkey, for those aged 55-59 and 60-64 the employment rate declined over the 20-year period, as was also the case for those aged 60-64 in Mexico.

On average, 55-64 year-olds at all levels of educational attainment have experienced a marked increase in employment between 2000-19, averaging 13 percentage points for low and high levels of education and by 17 percentage points for those with a medium level of education (Figure 6.13). In terms of changes in employment rates, low-educated older workers have lagged significantly behind their high-educated peers in Belgium, Italy, Korea, Poland, Slovenia and Turkey, while it is the opposite in Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg and Mexico.

**Definition and measurement**

Employment rates are calculated as the ratio of the employed to the total population in the respective age group. Employed people are those (aged 15 or over) who report that they have worked in gainful employment for at least one hour in the previous week or who had a job but were absent from work during the reference week.

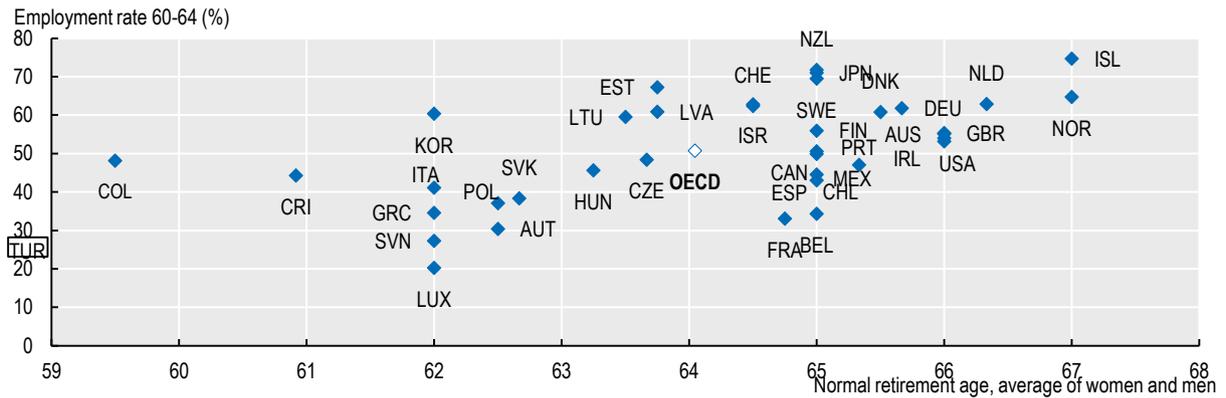
Figure 6.10. **COVID-19 has impacted the employment rates of those aged 55 to 64**  
Percentage point change in employment rate between 2019 and 2020 for those aged 55 to 64



Source: OECD database Labour Market Statistics by sex and age: employment-population ratio.

StatLink <https://stat.link/lc34qt>

Figure 6.11. Employment rate at ages 60-64 vs. normal retirement age in 2020

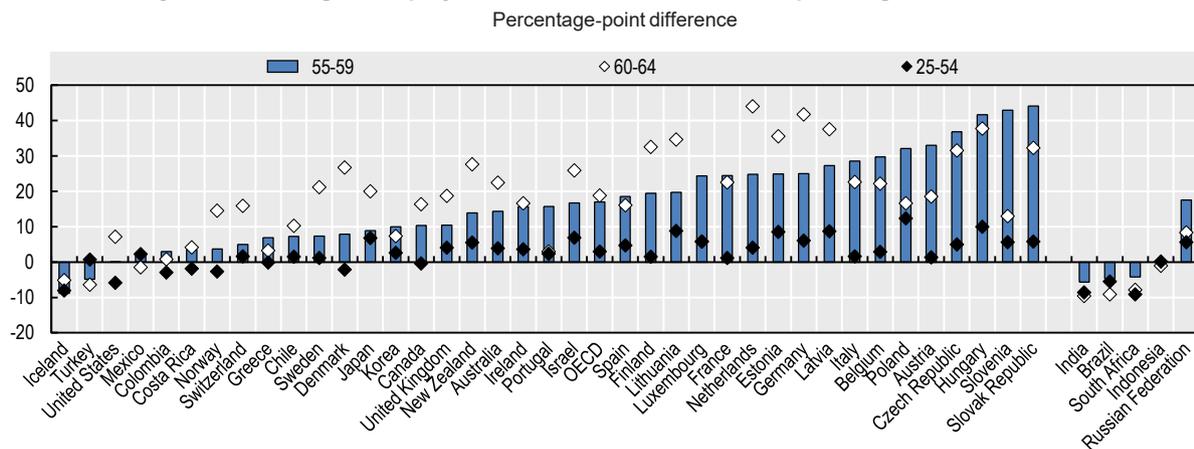


Note: For better visibility, the scale of this chart excludes the lowest observed value for the normal retirement age in Turkey, which is 50.5 (average of 49 and 52 for women and men respectively), with the employment rate equalling 25.7%.

Source: OECD database Labour Market Statistics by sex and age: employment-population ratio. Normal retirement age data: See Chapter 3.

StatLink <https://stat.link/bysdok>

Figure 6.12. Change in employment rates of older workers and prime-age workers, 2000-20

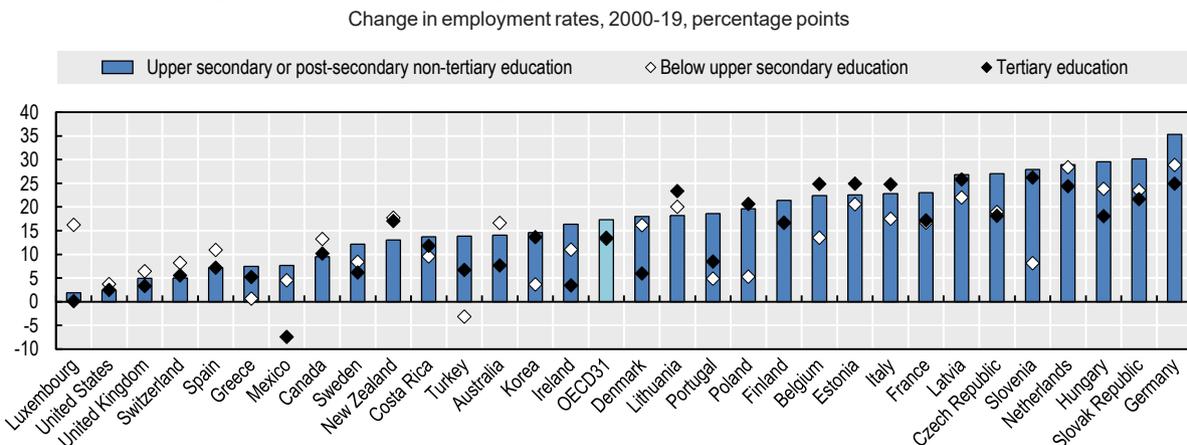


Note: Data for Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa refer to period 2001-20, 2000-19 and 2001-20 respectively.

Source: OECD database Labour Market Statistics by sex and age: employment-population ratio.

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Figure 6.13. Growth of employment rates of older workers by education level



Source: OECD.Stats database, Labour Force Survey.

StatLink <https://stat.link/dy9ub4>



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