

News Release**OECD Standardised Unemployment Rate falls to 6.1% in May 2006**

The standardised unemployment rate for the **OECD area**⁽¹⁾ fell to 6.1% in May 2006, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month and 0.5 percentage point lower than a year earlier.

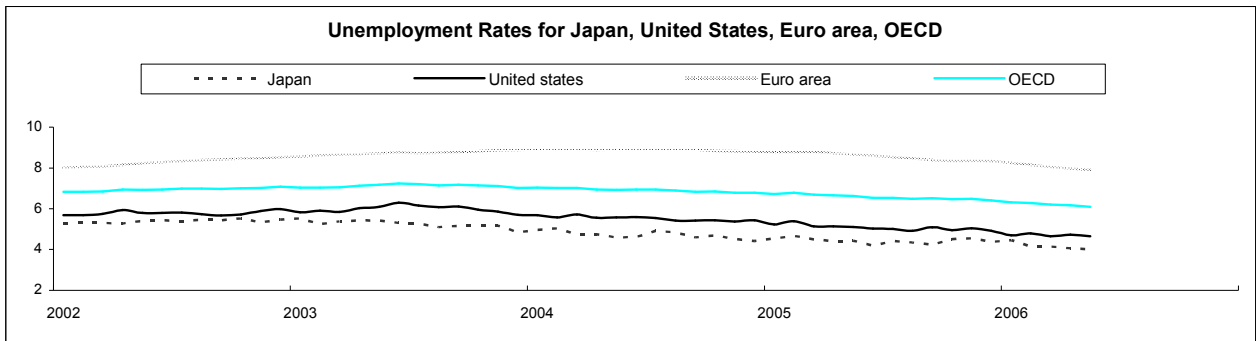
In the **Euro area**, the standardised unemployment rate was 7.9% in May 2006, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month and 0.8 percentage point lower than the same month a year earlier. The **United States**' standardised unemployment rate for May 2006 was 4.6%, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month and 0.5 percentage point lower than a year earlier. For **Japan**, the rate was 4.0% in May 2006, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month and 0.4 percentage point lower than in May 2005.

In May 2006, the standardised unemployment rate in **France** was 8.8%, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month and 0.9 percentage point lower than a year earlier. In **Germany**, the rate was 8.3% in May 2006, 0.1 percentage point higher than the previous month but 1.2 percentage points lower than in May 2005. In **Canada**, the standardised unemployment rate fell to 6.1% in May 2006, 0.3 percentage point lower than the previous month and 0.8 percentage point lower than a year earlier. In March 2006, the rate in the **United Kingdom** was 5.2%, 0.1 percentage point higher than the previous month and 0.6 percentage point higher than a year earlier. In December 2005, the standardised unemployment rate in **Italy** remained at 7.7%, 0.2 percentage point lower than a year earlier.

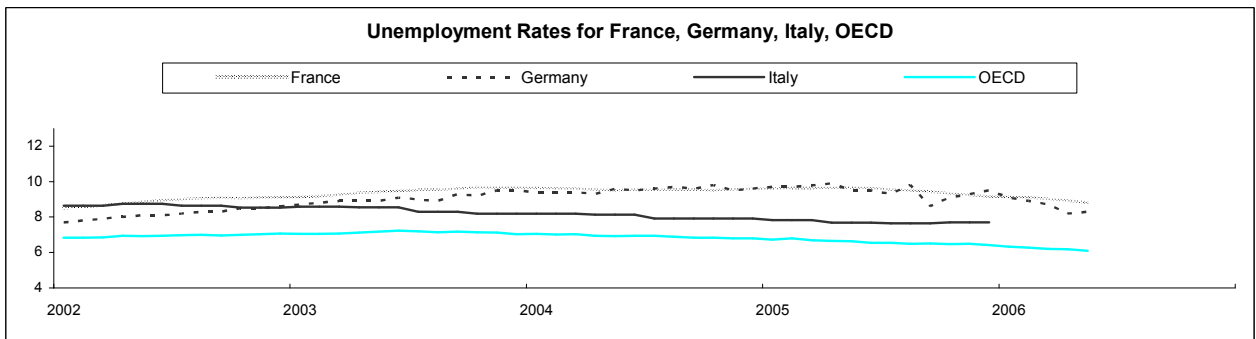
The standardised unemployment rates for the **other OECD countries** are available at www.oecd.org/statistics/data (Frequently Requested Statistics).

(1) The OECD area in this press release covers the 27 OECD member countries for which standardised unemployment rates have been estimated. These comprise the 12 member countries of the Euro area plus Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Canada, United States, Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand. Monthly figures include OECD Secretariat estimates for countries which only compile quarterly rates.

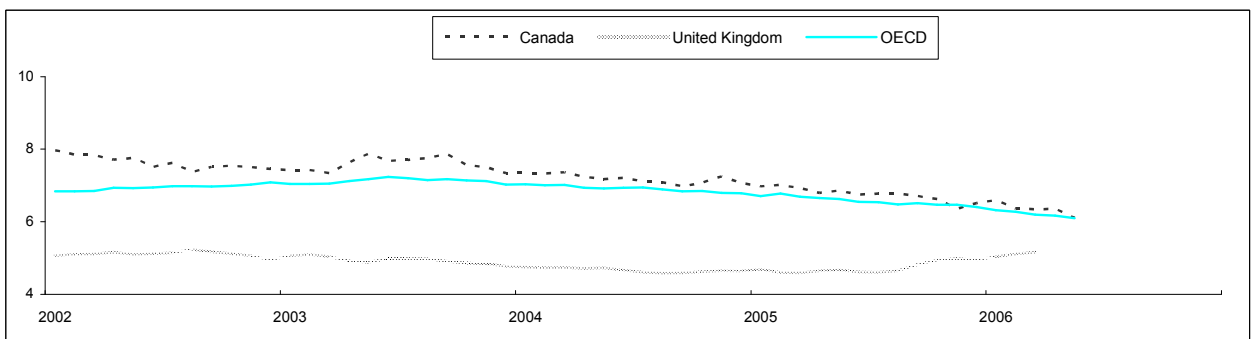
Japan, United states, Euro area, OECD



France, Germany, Italy, OECD



Canada, United Kingdom, OECD



OECD Standardised Unemployment Rates - percentage of civilian labour force

	2005								2006				
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
OECD-Total	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	6.1
EU15	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.4
Euro area	8.7	8.6	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.0	8.0	7.9
Major seven	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.9	5.9	6.0	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.6
Canada	6.9	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.1
France	9.7	9.6	9.6	9.5	9.4	9.3	9.3	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.0	8.9	8.8
Germany	9.5	9.5	9.3	9.8	8.6	9.1	9.3	9.5	9.1	8.9	8.7	8.2	8.3
Italy	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.7	7.7	7.7					
Japan	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0
United Kingdom	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.9	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.2		
United States	5.1	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.1	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.6

OECD Standardised Unemployment Rates - change of rates over 12 months

	2005								2006				
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
OECD-Total	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5
EU15	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3	-0.4	-0.5	-0.6	-0.5
Euro area	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6	-0.7	-0.8	-0.7	-0.8
Major seven	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.5	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5
Canada	-0.3	-0.4	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.5	-0.8	-0.6	-0.4	-0.6	-0.6	-0.4	-0.8
France	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	-0.1	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6	-0.7	-0.9
Germany	-0.1	0.0	-0.3	0.1	-1.0	-0.7	-0.2	-0.1	-0.6	-0.8	-1.1	-1.7	-1.2
Italy	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2					
Japan	-0.2	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.4	-0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	-0.6	-0.4	-0.3	-0.4
United Kingdom	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.6		
United States	-0.5	-0.6	-0.5	-0.5	-0.3	-0.5	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5

OECD total comprises 27 countries.

Area totals for standardised unemployment rates include Secretariat estimates when data are not available.

The OECD standardised unemployment rates, compiled for 27 OECD member countries, are based on definitions of the 13th Conference of Labour Statisticians (generally referred to as the ILO guidelines). Under these definitions, the unemployed are persons of working age who, in the reference period, are without work, are available for work and have taken specific steps to find work.

The uniform application of the definitions results in estimates that are more internationally comparable than those based on national definitions. National unemployment data in some countries only include persons registered at government labour offices. Under the ILO definition, persons without work who are seeking employment through other means can also be classified as unemployed and registrants can be excluded if they worked or were not available for work. The standardised unemployment rates shown here are calculated as the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the civilian labour force (i.e the unemployed plus those in civilian employment). The standardised unemployment rates are seasonally adjusted.

The standardised unemployment rates for the European Union (EU) member countries and Norway are produced by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). The OECD is responsible for the collection of data and calculation of standardised unemployment rates for the remaining countries.

In September 2000, Eurostat adopted a new unemployment definition through a Commission Regulation. Details about the new definition and its implementation are available on [Eurostat Internet site](#).

The Euro area covers the following 12 countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

The EU15 area covers the Euro area plus Denmark, United Kingdom and Sweden.

The OECD area in this press release covers the 27 OECD member countries for which standardised unemployment rates have been estimated. These comprise the 19 of the 25 European Union countries which are also members of the OECD plus Canada, United States, Australia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland.

Monthly figures include OECD Secretariat estimates for countries which only compile quarterly rates

The next publication date of the OECD's standardised unemployment rates will be on 8 September 2006.

For further information, journalists are invited to contact the OECD's Media Relations Division on (33) 1 45 24 97 00 or e-mail news.contact@oecd.org.