

Labour Statistics

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Labour Force Statistics

Purpose

To provide relevant, reliable key annual and short-term labour force statistics for internal OECD users (in particular, the Economics Department), member country government agencies and other external users in academic institutions and private enterprise.

Objectives and outputs

The main objective is to provide long time series for key annual statistics on population, as well as annual and selected short-term indicators on the labour force such as employment and unemployment. Data are disseminated in the OECD Main Economic Indicators (MEI) database, a monthly press release on standardised unemployment and in the Annual Labour Force Statistics (ALFS) publication.

The MEI database contains monthly, quarterly and annual indicators on employment, unemployment, labour compensation and for some countries indicators on vacancies, hours worked, labour disputes, etc.

The ALFS database contains annual statistics for OECD member countries comprising: population, total employment, unemployment, civilian employment by sectors, part-time employment, duration of unemployment. Published output also includes participation and unemployment rates by gender and detailed age groups as well as comparative tables for the main components of the labour force.

Data are available for all 30 OECD member countries and for key series (civilian employment, unemployment, hourly earnings) aggregates for OECD-Total, Major seven, OECD-Europe, EU15 and Euro area.

IN MEI series are accompanied by summary metadata outlining key concepts, coverage, etc. In ALFS, published output are also accompanied by target OECD and ILO international statistical standards (definitions, etc) and summary methodological information (national definitions, coverage, collection, calculation, series breaks, sources) used by individual OECD member countries in the compilation of the statistics published in the ALFS.

A significant achievement in 2006 was the inclusion of ALFS data and associated metadata into OECD.stat and MetaStore. An ALFS CD-ROM was also developed. The metadata were revised to ensure consistency between overlapping series in ALFS and MEI.

The labour force hierarchy was also reviewed and key series from the suppressed QLFS publication were incorporated into the MEI database primarily to meet the needs of the OECD Economics Department.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa

Databases

ALFS_POP_VITAL ALFS_POP_LABOUR ALFS_EMP ALFS_SUMTAB

Main Developments for 2008

General aspects:

Further revision of explanatory text to incorporate (initial) summary reasons for differences between labour force estimates and estimates compiled by national accountants for labour input measures to national accounts.

Continuation of initiative for the 2007 publication where analytical metadata on key issues that impact on the comparability of headline labour series was presented.

Data collection:

Small number of countries slow at responding to the annual questionnaire will be requested to speed up their response. The collection of further data and metadata for NMEs, in particular, China and India.

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Labour Market Statistics

Purpose

To provide statistical information to support analyses for discussion at international meetings on labour policies and for preparatory work for international statistical guidelines. To produce a comprehensive set of statistics to monitor developments in OECD labour markets, improving their international comparability.

Objectives and outputs

Collection, production and dissemination of labour statistics containing labour force, performance (i.e. earnings levels, earnings distribution, etc.) and institutional variables (i.e. minimum wages, ALMP data, EPL index, trade union membership, collective bargaining coverage, etc.) to support labour market analysis. Data are used to produce the statistical annex of the Employment Outlook and the internal and on-line Labour Force Statistics database. Some of the data series are also shown in the Annual Labour Force Statistics publication.

Non-member countries involved in the activity:

Brazil, China, India, Russian Federation

Databases

Labour Market Statistics

Main Developments for 2008

General aspects:

The expansion of the LFS database will gain momentum to improve country coverage and comparability regarding job tenure and wage earnings data and to compile data in the area of youth and workforce ageing, family related labour market statistics, statistics to characterise inactivity, etc.

Time permitting a closer look at statistics to characterise informal employment will be attempted based on existing international guidelines on this subject.

Work underway to consolidate earnings related statistics and to improve their comparability.

Continuation of the assessment of annual working time statistics to improve their international comparability with the aim of publishing of comparable estimates on annual hours actually worked per employed person in the statistical annex of the Employment Outlook.

Migration of remaining data and metadata related to labour market statistics to OECD.Stat for internal and external web based dissemination.

Data collection:

Where possible, development of capability for direct access to labour force survey (public use) microdatasets in non-EU countries.

Data management:

Migration of the database achieved in 2006 from the CDE to OECD.Stat and of the metadata to Metastore. Most of the the remaining statistics were transferred in 2007. Earnings data will be transferred in 2008.

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Working Time Measurement

Purpose

The purpose of the activity is to contribute to the revision of existing international guidelines and recommendations on working time measurement. The absence of comparable statistics on working time, particularly annual working time statistics, is one of the major impediments to the development of internationally comparable productivity measures.

Objectives and outputs

The process for revising existing international guidelines and recommendations on working time measurement is for the OECD to play a leading role in the work of the Paris City Group on Labour and Compensation Statistics. The Group comprises experts in this field from national agencies and international organisations.

The work of this Group in 2007 was devoted almost entirely to issues in this area, specifically: working time arrangements; measurement of hours worked, in particular (but not only) annual hours; use of hours worked-statistics in derived products such as productivity.

The output of the work of the Paris Group has been specifically designed to feed into the deliberations of the ILO's International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) which at its November-December 2003 meeting afforded high priority to the revision of the 1962 ICLS Resolutions on working time measurement.

Main achievements in 2007 entailed the: further preparation of a draft revised ICLS Resolution on working time measurement and of a list of issues in the SNA (primarily Chapter XVII) in the context of working time measurement that require clarification in the current SNA update.

Main Developments for 2008

General aspects:

Finalisation of the revised ILO Resolution on working time measurement for discussion at the ILO tripartite meeting scheduled to be held early in April 2008. The output from this meeting will then be considered at the ICLS at the end of 2008. This will conclude the work of the Paris Group.