

Methodological Notes

The OECD harmonised unemployment rates, compiled for 34 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. For example, 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 unemployment rates shown here are calculated as the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force (i.e., the unemployed plus those in employment) and are seasonally adjusted.

The unemployment rates for the European Union (EU) member countries and their aggregates, Norway and Turkey are produced by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). The OECD is responsible for collecting data and calculating unemployment rates for the remaining OECD member 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 the [Eurostat Internet site](#). This link also gives details about country specific estimations and provisional data.

All figures are seasonally adjusted. Area aggregates compiled by OECD assume that the unemployment rates for the countries without estimates for the most recent period remain unchanged at the level observed in the latest available period.

Geographical groupings

- The *Euro area* covers, for all periods, the 17 participating member countries, see note 1 of Eurostat's monthly news release at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/publications/collections/news_releases for details;
- The *European Union* covers the EU 27 member countries, see note 1 as above for details;
- The *OECD total* covers 33 OECD member countries for which unemployment rates have been estimated. These comprise the 21 of the 27 European Union countries which are also members of the OECD plus Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Iceland, Israel, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States

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