

OECD Standardised Unemployment Rates

News Release

OECD Standardised Unemployment Rate remains stable at 5.5% in March 2008

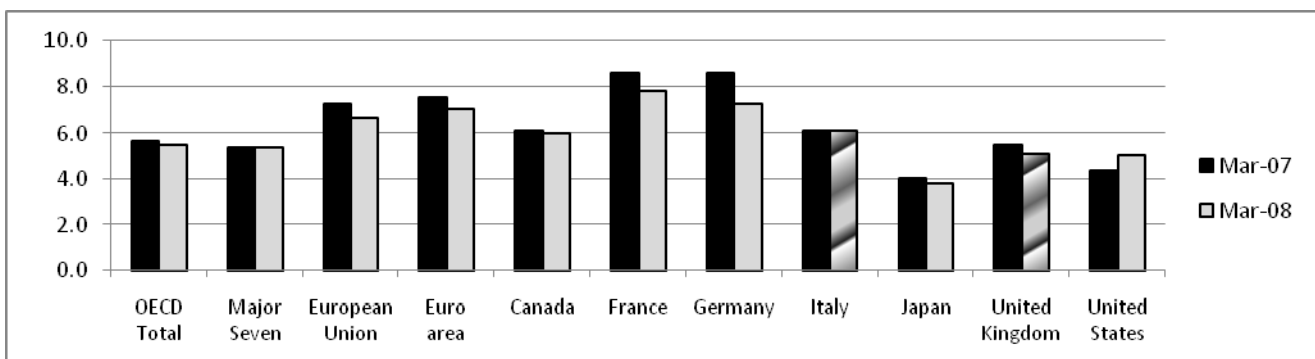
The standardised unemployment rate for the **OECD area** was 5.5% in March 2008, the same as the previous month and 0.1 percentage point lower than a year earlier.

In the **Euro area**, the standardised unemployment rate was 7.1% in March 2008, the same as the previous month and 0.4 percentage point lower than a year earlier. The **United States'** standardised unemployment rate for *April* 2008 was 5.0%, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month and 0.5 percentage point higher than a year earlier. For **Japan**, the rate was 3.8% in March 2008, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month and 0.2 percentage point lower than in March 2007.

In March 2008, the standardised unemployment rate in **France** was 7.8%, the same as the previous month and 0.8 percentage point lower than a year earlier. For **Germany**, the rate was 7.3% in March 2008, 0.1 percentage point lower than the previous month and 1.3 percentage point lower than in March 2007. For **Canada**, the standardised unemployment rate was 6.1% in *April* 2008, 0.1 percentage point higher than the previous month but 0.1 percentage point lower than a year earlier. In *January* 2008, the rate in the **United Kingdom** was 5.1%, 0.1 percentage point higher than the previous month but 0.4 percentage point lower than a year earlier. In *December* 2007, the standardised unemployment rate in **Italy** was 6.1%, the same as the previous month and 0.3 percentage point lower than a year earlier.

The standardised unemployment rates for **other OECD countries and geographic groupings**, as well as historical data, can be downloaded from the OECD online data dissemination facility OECD.stat at: <http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/Default.aspx?QueryName=251&QueryType=View&Lang=en>.

Selected Standardised Unemployment Rates
March 2007 – March 2008 ⁽¹⁾



Notes:

(1) Italy: Mar-07—Dec-07 ; United Kingdom: Mar-07— Jan-08.

NB: For methodological reasons, Standardised Unemployment Rates may differ from those published by national statistical institutes.

OECD Standardised Unemployment Rates
OECD Standardised Unemployment Rates
Percentage of civilian labour force

	2005	2006	2007	2007			2008	2007			2008		
				Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
OECD - Total	6.7	6.1	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.5
Major Seven	6.2	5.8	5.4	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
European Union	8.9	8.1	7.1	7.2	7.1	6.8	6.7	6.9	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7
Euro area	8.8	8.2	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	7.1
Australia	5.1	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.1
Austria	5.2	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1
Belgium	8.5	8.2	7.5	7.8	7.2	7.0	6.9	7.1	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.9	6.9
Canada ⁽¹⁾	6.8	6.3	6.0	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.8	6.0
Czech Republic	7.9	7.1	5.3	5.5	5.1	4.9	4.6	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.5
Denmark	4.8	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.4		3.5	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.1	
Finland	8.4	7.7	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.6	6.3	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.3
France	9.3	9.2	8.3	8.5	8.2	7.9	7.8	8.0	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8
Germany	10.6	9.8	8.4	8.5	8.3	8.0	7.4	8.1	8.0	7.8	7.6	7.4	7.3
Greece	9.9	8.9	8.3	8.4	8.2	7.9		7.9	7.9	7.9			
Hungary	7.2	7.5	7.4	7.1	7.3	7.8	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.6	7.6	7.6
Ireland	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.9	5.4	4.7	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.6
Italy	7.7	6.8	6.1	6.0	6.1	6.1		6.1	6.1	6.1			
Japan	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
Korea	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1
Luxembourg	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.5
Netherlands	4.7	3.9	3.2	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.6	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.6
New Zealand	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.4							
Norway	4.6	3.5	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.5		2.5	2.5	2.4	2.3		
Poland	17.7	13.8	9.6	9.9	9.3	8.6	8.0	8.9	8.6	8.2	8.3	8.0	7.7
Portugal	7.6	7.6	8.0	8.1	8.0	7.6	7.5	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.4
Slovak Republic	16.3	13.4	11.1	11.4	11.2	10.4	9.9	10.6	10.4	10.3	10.1	9.9	9.8
Spain	9.2	8.5	8.3	8.1	8.3	8.6	9.1	8.5	8.6	8.7	9.0	9.1	9.3
Sweden	7.3	7.0	6.1	6.2	5.8	5.9	5.6	6.0	6.0	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.6
Switzerland	4.4	4.0	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.5							
United Kingdom	4.8	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.0		5.1	5.0	5.0	5.1		
United States ⁽²⁾	5.1	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.8	5.1

Notes:

(1) Canada: April 2008 – 6.1.

(2) United States: April 2008 – 5.0.

OECD Standardised Unemployment Rates

OECD Standardised Unemployment Rates
Change of rates over the same period of the previous year

	2005	2006	2007	2007			2008	2007			2008		
				Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
OECD - Total	-0.2	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6	-0.5	-0.3	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1
Major Seven	-0.2	-0.4	-0.4	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	0.0
European Union	-0.2	-0.7	-1.0	-1.1	-0.9	-0.9	-0.7	-0.9	-0.9	-0.9	-0.7	-0.7	-0.6
Euro area	0.0	-0.6	-0.8	-0.9	-0.7	-0.6	-0.5	-0.6	-0.7	-0.6	-0.6	-0.5	-0.4
Australia	-0.4	-0.3	-0.4	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2	-0.5	-0.2	-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.6	-0.4
Austria	0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3	-0.2	-0.4	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4
Belgium	0.1	-0.2	-0.8	-0.7	-0.9	-0.9	-0.9	-0.9	-0.9	-0.8	-0.9	-0.9	-0.8
Canada ⁽¹⁾	-0.4	-0.5	-0.3	-0.1	-0.4	-0.3	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.1	-0.4	-0.3	-0.1
Czech Republic	-0.4	-0.8	-1.8	-1.7	-1.9	-1.7	-1.2	-1.7	-1.6	-1.7	-1.2	-1.2	-1.1
Denmark	-0.7	-0.9	-0.1	-0.3	0.3	-0.3		-0.3	-0.3	-0.4	-0.9	-1.0	
Finland	-0.5	-0.6	-0.9	-1.0	-0.8	-0.7	-0.7	-0.8	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	-0.8	-0.7
France	0.0	0.0	-0.9	-0.9	-1.0	-1.0	-0.8	-1.0	-1.0	-0.9	-0.8	-0.9	-0.8
Germany	0.9	-0.8	-1.5	-1.6	-1.3	-1.2	-1.3	-1.3	-1.2	-1.2	-1.2	-1.3	-1.3
Greece	-0.6	-1.0	-0.6	-0.6	-0.5	-0.7		-0.7	-0.7	-0.7			
Hungary	1.1	0.3	-0.1	-0.2	-0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3
Ireland	-0.2	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.0
Italy	-0.4	-0.9	-0.7	-0.8	-0.5	-0.3		-0.3	-0.3	-0.3			
Japan	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.1	-0.1	-0.2
Korea	0.1	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1
Luxembourg	-0.6	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	-0.2	-0.3	-0.1	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2	-0.4
Netherlands	0.1	-0.8	-0.8	-0.7	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8	-0.9	-0.8	-0.8	-0.9	-0.8
New Zealand	-0.2	0.1	-0.2	0.0	-0.2	-0.3							
Norway	0.2	-1.1	-0.9	-1.2	-0.8	-0.4		-0.5	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4		
Poland	-1.3	-3.9	-4.2	-4.4	-4.0	-3.7	-2.7	-3.7	-3.7	-3.7	-2.8	-2.8	-2.6
Portugal	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.5	-0.3	-0.7	-0.1	-0.4	-0.5	-0.7	-0.7	-0.8
Slovak Republic	-2.0	-2.9	-2.2	-2.3	-1.7	-1.8	-1.6	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	-1.6	-1.6	-1.5
Spain	-1.4	-0.7	-0.2	-0.5	-0.1	0.3	1.0	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.2
Sweden	1.0	-0.3	-0.8	-1.1	-1.1	-0.5	-1.0	-0.5	-0.2	-0.7	-0.9	-1.0	-1.0
Switzerland	0.0	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3							
United Kingdom	0.1	0.6	-0.1	-0.1	-0.2	-0.4		-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4		
United States ⁽²⁾	-0.4	-0.5	0.0	-0.2	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.7

Notes:

(1) Canada: April 2008 – -0.1.

(2) United States: April 2008 – 0.5.

OECD Standardised Unemployment Rates

Methodological Notes

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. 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 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 collecting data and calculating 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 the [Eurostat Internet site](#). This link also gives details about country specific estimations and provisional data.

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

Geographical groupings

In this news release:

- The *Euro area* covers, for all periods, the 15 current participating member countries, see note 1 of Eurostat's monthly news release at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572592&_dad=portal&_sc_hema=PORTAL for details;
- The *European Union* covers the EU 27 member countries, see note 1 as above for details;
- The *OECD area* covers the 27 OECD member countries for which standardised unemployment rates have been estimated. These comprise the 19 of the 27 European Union countries which are also members of the OECD plus Canada, the United States, Australia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland.

Contacts:

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