The OECD-area unemployment rate on a standardised basis was 7.9 per cent in March, down 0.1 percentage points from February; this compares with a 7.7 per cent rate a year earlier. The OECD-Europe unemployment rate was constant at 11.1 per cent. Among the non-European OECD countries for which monthly data are available the unemployment rate fell in three and rose in one. In March, the unemployment rate rose to 6.5 per cent in the United States; it fell to 10.5 per cent in Canada, to 2.8 per cent in Japan and to 10.2 per cent in Australia. Over the same period, the unemployment rate rose in one of the seven European economies for which monthly data are available; it remained constant in three and fell in three. The unemployment rate rose to 19.3 per cent in Finland, while it remained constant at 9.7 per cent in Belgium, at 12.2 per cent in France and at 6.5 per cent in Western Germany. The unemployment rate fell to 15.4 per cent in Ireland, to 7.8 per cent in Sweden and to 9.7 per cent in the United Kingdom.

The unemployment rate fell in five of the seven OECD countries for which April data are available and rose in the other two. The unemployment rate rose from 10.5 to 10.9 per cent in Canada and from 9.7 to 9.8 per cent in Belgium. It fell from 6.5 to 6.4 per cent in the United States, from 10.2 to 10.1 per cent in Australia, from 15.4 to 15.2 per cent in Ireland, from 7.8 to 7.4 per cent in Sweden and from 9.7 to 9.6 per cent in the United Kingdom.

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(1) Standardised unemployment rates are based on national statistics but have been adjusted when necessary, and as far as the available data allow, to bring them as close as possible to ILO guidelines for international comparisons of labour force statistics. The standardised rates are, therefore, more comparable between countries than the unemployment rates published in national sources. For further details, see the Technical Note to the table.